

Greenwich High School
Wreadin Writin n Wreminiscin

Weekly Wreader

25 March 2005



Cousin George



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Thank you for my first official "WW-N-W". And look whose picture is in it! My cousin, Georgie Lamonica! You know, those of us from GHS who are Italian, are probably related to 25% of any given class. George's mother, my mother, and Jo-Anne Tripodi's mother-in-law (if you are following this; that is, Joe Loparco's mother) are all sisters, so Joe, me and Georgie are first cousins...we have lots more first cousins, but hey, maybe in the next issue I'll see another one of them.

Since you wrote so nicely about my upcoming book readings, I have heard from quite a few GHS'ers, some from your class, and a few from other classes who manage to be on your list, or at least know someone on your list. It has been great to "e-talk" to all of them....As a matter of fact, I got a call the other day from Sharron Castronovo Restivo. Her sister Barbara's daughter lives up my way and has seen one of the newspaper articles about Immigrant Family Goes to Greenwich, Ct, and contacted her as Sharron had lived on Davis Avenue also. This "six degrees of separation" stuff really works! It is AMAZING how many links there are to GHS! I hope I will see a few more GHS'ers at Just Books Two (April 2nd) or The Cos Cob Library (May 6th).

And to Jeff Tunick, please say hi to your sister, Roberta, for me. I tried to write to her, but evidentially, it didn't get through. I have included a picture of me (59 yearbook, and now) and scanned them to you. It is absolutely amazing that I am more blonde now than I was 43 years ago. Amazing!



Old Greenwich School Steps Fail to Meet Code

By Vesna Jaksic Staff Writer
The Greenwich Time

22 March 2005

Abandoning plans to appeal a state building inspector's decision, education officials are now trying to decide whether new stairs at Old Greenwich need to be rebuilt and who should foot the bill.

The school PTA funded the approximately \$260,000 project to renovate the front entrance and stairs as part of the elementary school's centennial celebration. The project was supposed to be completed last fall but the stairs are still not being used because they are not up to code.

The Office of State Building Inspector ruled the stairs do not meet code because the difference between the width of the smallest and largest tread -- the horizontal part of a stair -- is five-eighths of an inch, which exceeds the three-eighths of an inch difference allowed under state code, Deputy State Building Inspector Daniel Tierney said. The school district appealed the decision to the state Codes and Standards Committee, but withdrew the appeal on March 8, Tierney said.

The school district withdrew its appeal based on Town Attorney John Wetmore's recommendation. In a March 8 memo, Wetmore said withdrawing the appeal "is the most prudent course of action to take at this time" because of liability issues, but did not further explain his decision. Wetmore has not returned repeated calls for comment since last week.



Sue Wallerstein, assistant to the superintendent for business services, said the district has been trying to determine what to do next.

"We're actually continuing to meet with the Law Department and we're informally consulting with the Department of Public Works to develop a plan or some options for getting this project finished in a suitable way," she said.

Wallerstein said it is too early to say whether the stairs will have to be rebuilt. She said the district has

also not determined who would pay for any additional work that needs to be done to bring the stairs up to code. School officials are likely to have more information by the next Board of Education meeting, which is scheduled for next Thursday, she said.

Amy Denton, the school's PTA president, did not return two calls for comment yesterday. In last week's PTA newsletter, Denton wrote that "it is not foreseeable for the stairs to remain as it is" and that the PTA would continue to evaluate the situation.

Because of the problems that have surfaced, the project has raised a long-standing question about whether the school district should accept gifts for work on its property, which it is liable for if something goes wrong.

"It's unfortunate that a PTA that wanted to do something good is faced with such disappointing results," Superintendent Larry Leverett said in a recent interview. "All those funds were raised with good intention but the school district has to look for the lessons learned."

Hollywood Squares



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(Editor's Note: Aside from the fact that we still do not have a photo of Suzi Smith Lynch, we are publishing this "internet humor" originally sent by Suzi to Breu and now we pass it along to you. I am sure you all remember the Hollywood Squares and names like Paul Lynde, Charlie Weaver, Don Knotts, George Gobel and Rosemarie)

If you remember the original Hollywood Squares and its guests, this will bring a tear to your eyes. These great questions and answers are from the days when game show responses were spontaneous and clever, not scripted and (often) dull as they are now. Peter Marshall was the host asking the questions.

Q. Do female frogs croak?

A. Paul Lynde: If you hold their little heads under water long enough.

Q. If you're going to make a parachute jump, at least how high should you be?

A. Charley Weaver: Three days of steady drinking should do it

Q. True or False, a pea can last as long as 5,000 years.

A. George Gobel: Boy, it sure seems that way sometimes.



Q. You've been having trouble going to sleep. Are you probably a man or a woman?

A. Don Knotts: That's what's been keeping me awake.

Q. According to Cosmo, if you meet a stranger at a party and you think that he is attractive, is it okay to come out and ask him if he's married.

A. Rose Marie: No, wait until morning.



Q. Which of your five senses tends to diminish as you get older?

A. Charley Weaver: My sense of decency.

Q. In Hawaiian, does it take more than three words to say "I Love You"?

A. Vincent Price: No, you can say it with a pineapple and a twenty.

Q. What are "Do It," "I Can Help," and "I Can't Get Enough"?

A. George Gobel: I don't know, but it's coming from the next apartment.

Q. As you grow older, do you tend to gesture more or less with your hands while talking?

A. Rose Marie: You ask me one more growing old question Peter, and I'll give you a gesture you'll never forget.

Q. Paul, why do Hell's Angels wear leather?

A. Because chiffon wrinkles too easily.

Q. Charley, you've just decided to grow strawberries. Are you going to get any during the first year?

A. Charley Weaver: Of course not, I'm too busy growing strawberries.

Q. In bowling, what's a perfect score?

A. Rose Marie: Ralph, the pin boy.

Q. It is considered in bad taste to discuss two subjects at nudist camps. One is politics, what is the other?

A. Paul Lynde: Tape measures.

Q. During a tornado, are you safer in the bedroom or in the closet?

A. Rose Marie: Unfortunately Peter, I'm always safe in the bedroom.

Q. Can boys join the Camp Fire Girls?

A. Marty Allen: Only after lights out.

Q. When you pat a dog on its head he will wag his tail. What will a goose do?

A. Paul Lynde: Make him bark?

Q. If you were pregnant for two years, what would you give birth to?

A. Paul Lynde: Whatever it is, it would never be afraid of the dark.

Q. According to Ann Landers, is there anything wrong with getting into the habit of kissing a lot of people?

A. Charley Weaver: It got me out of the army.

Q. While visiting China, your tour guide starts shouting "Poo! Poo! Poo!" What does this mean?

A. George Gobel: Cattle crossing.

Q. It is the most abused and neglected part of your body, what is it?

A. Paul Lynde: Mine may be abused but it certainly isn't neglected.

Q. Back in the old days, when Great Grandpa put horseradish on his head, what was he trying to do?

A. George Gobel: Get it in his mouth.

Q. Who stays pregnant for a longer period of time, your wife or your elephant?

A. Paul Lynde: Who told you about my elephant?

Q. When a couple have a baby, who is responsible for its sex?

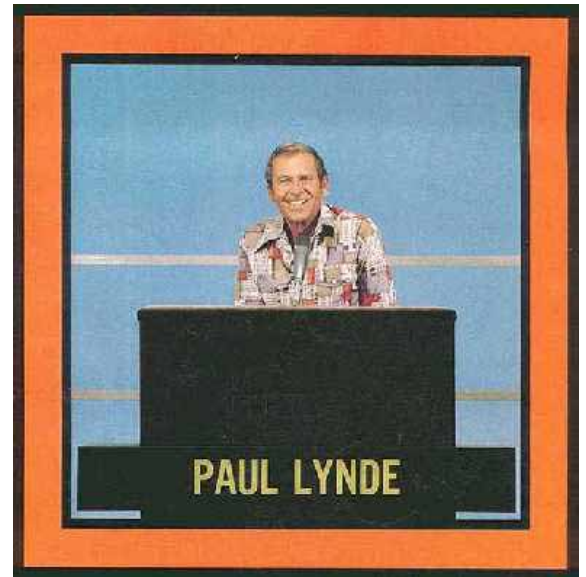
A. Charley Weaver: I'll lend him the car, the rest is up to him.

Q. Jackie Gleason recently revealed that he firmly believes in them and has actually seen them on at least two occasions. What are they?

A. Charley Weaver: His feet

Q. According to Ann Landers, what are two things you should never do in bed?

A. Paul Lynde: Point and laugh.



Yes, I Like Being Old!



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The other day a young person asked me how I felt about being old. I was taken aback, for I do not think of myself as old. Upon seeing my reaction, she was immediately embarrassed, but I explained that it was an interesting question, and I would ponder it, and let her know.

Old age, I decided, is a gift. I am now, probably for the first time in my life, the person I have always wanted to be. Oh, not my body! I sometime despair over my body-- but I don't agonize over it for long.

I would never trade my amazing friends, my wonderful life, and my loving family for less gray hair or a flatter belly. As I've aged, I've become kinder to myself, and less critical of myself. I've become my own friend. I don't chide myself for eating that extra cookie, or for not making my bed, or for buying that silly cement gecko that I didn't need, but looks so avant-garde on my patio. I am entitled to overeat, to be messy, to be extravagant. I have seen too many dear friends leave this world too soon; before they understood the great freedom that comes with aging.

Whose business is it if I choose to read until 4 am, and sleep until noon? I will dance with myself to those wonderful tunes of the 50's & 60's, and if I at the same time wish to weep over a lost love, I will. I know I am sometimes forgetful. But there again, some of life is just as well forgotten - and I eventually remember the important things. Sure, over the years my heart has been broken. How can your heart not break when you lose a loved one, or when a child suffers? But broken hearts are what give us strength

and understanding and compassion. A heart never broken is pristine and sterile and will never know the joy of being imperfect.

I am so blessed to have lived long enough to have my hair turn gray, and to have my youthful laughs be forever etched into deep grooves on my face. So many have never laughed, and so many have died before their hair could turn silver. I can say "no", and mean it. I can say "yes", and mean it. As you get older, it is easier to be positive. You care less about what other people think. I don't question myself anymore. I've even earned the right to be wrong.

So, to answer the question, I like being old. It has set me free. I like the person I have become. I am not going to live forever, but while I am still here, I will not waste time lamenting what could have been, or worrying about what will be. For the first time in my life, I don't have to have a reason to do the things I want to do. If I want to play games on the computer all day, lie on the couch and watch old movies for hours or don't want to go to the beach or a movie, I have earned that right. I have put in my time doing everything for others, so now I can be a bit selfish without feeling guilty.

I sometimes feel sorry for the young. They face a far different world than I knew growing up, where we feared the law, respected the old, the flag, our country. I never felt the need to use filthy language in order to express myself. And they too will grow old someday. I am grateful to have been born when I was, into a kinder, gentler world.

Yes, I like being old!

From 62 to 62



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Back in 1962 the furthest thought in our minds was retirement. That was somewhere far into the future and I doubt any of us gave it any thought. Of course that was back in the last century, and, although most of us won't be 62 for another year, retirement is now at the forefront of our thoughts.

Bob's recent appeal for "More participation" for the newsletter is something that all should contribute to. Many have taken the time to bring us up to date on their lives since the waning days of 1962, so now might be a good time to share thoughts and ideas on a number of subjects. I thought it might make it a little easier for everyone to add their "two cents" if all they had to do was to respond to some questions, rather than having to ponder what to write.

For the first topic, I choose retirement as it is something that we may be thinking about. Everyone has their own approach and own thoughts about retirement and I think we can all benefit from hearing from others on the subject - what better group than someone we all know, the grand GHS Class of 1962. Best of all, unlike school there are no right or wrong answers, so I hope each of you will take a few minutes to share their thoughts and ideas on retirement.

(Editor's Note: First of All let me thank George for having put this together, as he truly has a brilliant idea here and I greatly appreciate the assistance that he has offered in structuring the format of "your homework". In the accompanying eMail, the Questions will be listed and you can simply complete any of the following questions and "Return Reply" in eMail format)

1) ARE YOU ALREADY RETIRED, IF NOT, WHEN DO YOU PLAN ON RETIRING?

I retired a little over a year ago. It was something I always wanted to do, retire before I turned 60. I realize everyone has a different approach, and while I did enjoy my work of publishing a monthly newsletter about cruises, I had some outside interests that were being put off due to not having enough time to do them. I've always believed that it is very important to have some outside interests before you retire. I'm sure there are many people who have worked long and hard hours at their jobs that never had the time to pursue other outside interests. For this kind of person, retirement is very hard - they go from working 100 mph to stop and simply don't know what to do. Fortunately I enjoy working on my cars, taking them for a ride or longer trip and working around the house. I must confess that my first year in retirement was more about getting organized and hopefully this year I will get more accomplished.

2) HOW DID YOU PLAN, OR HOW ARE YOU PLANNING FOR RETIREMENT?

Because I was self-employed for almost my working life, I knew that if I was eventually going to retire that it was totally up to me to save and make the right investments. I began in earnest around 1984 to fund my retirement accounts. Although it didn't seem to grow very much for the first 10 years, it finally began to gain momentum and I could see the accounts growing. Another step that I took was to pay the mortgage on the house down as much as possible, so that when I retired I would be nearly debt-free. With a little luck and planning when I finally took the big step and sold the newsletter, I was comfortable that I can "make it to the end" without having to work anymore. Hopefully, this will all prove true.

3) THOUGHTS AND APPROACH ON THE RETIREMENT YEARS

My thoughts on retirement are that there are three stages that we might go through. The first is from retirement up to age 70. This period of time will be the most active. Mostly continuing at the same pace I currently am doing. It's also the best time to do any long distance traveling. The second stage is from age 70 to 80. I expect the pace will slow, a few aches and pains will set in, and still hopefully be active, but perhaps not traveling as far on trips. From age 80 to 90+ (yes, I hope to make it that far) it will be more about enjoying what I have. Still a little traveling if not too strenuous. Still active enough to enjoy my cars (if gasoline is still around then).

4) A SECOND HOME, OR A MOVE TO A DIFFERENT AREA OF THE COUNTRY?

Our long range plan is to buy a second home to escape the doldrums of the N.E. winters. Initial thoughts are to buy a place maybe in Georgia, around the St. Simons region, or northern Florida, very far north around the Fernandina Beach, Amelia Island area. To us the part of Florida from Orlando down simply all looks the same and it is too long a drive before you begin to see something different. If we buy a second home we would not rent it out when where not there. Too many potential problems, plus, we don't like the thought of strangers abusing or using our home or belongings. I also like the Southwest area of the U.S., Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, but it would be a difficult seasonal shift because of the distance. I don't think we will ever give up a place in New England, at some point in time though we might move from New Canaan to another area - Vermont, N.H. maybe.

5) WHAT ARE SOME OF THE THINGS THAT YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO DO THAT YOU PUT OFF UNTIL RETIREMENT?

We have been fortunate to have traveled to many countries because of my work, and while some foreign travel still might be in the cards, we are looking forward to seeing more of the U.S. All at a leisurely pace, driving in a car and not by plane. One thing that I always wanted to do is to drive the Alaska Highway from beginning to end.

6) ARE YOU LOOKING FORWARD TO RETIREMENT, OR IS IT SOMETHING THAT SCARES YOU?

I looked forward to retiring as almost every job always has you pinned down for one reason or another. Without that constraint you can do what you want, when you want. The only downside is that we are not as young as we once were and age is certain to begin to take its toll as the years pass by.

7) WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST PROBLEMS WE FACE IN THE RETIREMENT YEARS?

The biggest single problem that I see is medical care. It's the big wild card. The government has developed a real skill in mandating medical care, but then is faced with the problem of how to pay for it! Medical costs in general today are out of control - no one seems to have a solution. I cross my fingers and hope that we remain healthy for a long time. The only other problems that I can see is possibly inflation getting out of control, or some other unforeseeable event.

I hope others will take some time to answer these questions. It can be one word or many, but what is most important is that others will take a little time to share their thoughts. We've all made it this far, but that's not to say that we can't still learn something from others.