

Greenwich High School
Wreadin Writin n Wreminiscin

Weekly Wreader

02 May 2005



From 62 to 62



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

We have just moved to New Bern NC from Greensboro NC. I left my job at High Point University because of the move. I don't consider myself retired yet. I plan on taking 6 months or so to get to know the area and see if there are any opportunities for me. Full-time? Part-time? I'll see what happens.

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

We have always been very conservative spenders and savers throughout our marriage. My husband works part-time from home as a systems consultant so we do have some regular income coming in. So far, so good. We don't have to worry.

THOUGHTS AND APPROACH ON THE RETIREMENT YEARS?

Luckily we are healthy and young enough to appreciate what we have accomplished. We are living on the water with our boat in our backyard---Boat Heaven!!!

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

We moved to North Carolina in 1993 because of my husband's job. Because we have been here for more than 10 years we know the state well and have spent many weekends visiting different towns and cities within the state. We wanted to live near the water because we are boaters. We came down to NC by way of the ICW with the boat that we owned in Connecticut in 1993. We chose New Bern NC because it reminds us of New England towns and because it is so reasonable to live on the water here.

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

We can now take extended vacations on our boat without worrying about having enough vacation days or having to come back from weekends to go to work on Monday.

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

I don't think retirement for our generation is the same as our parents' version was. We seem to keep busier and stay healthier. I don't think "scary" is a word I would use. Being able to adapt to change and knowing that change is inevitable is a good way to look at the future.

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

I think there are many people who have not saved enough money along the way or have made bad decisions in the past. Health problems are also a worry for people who are getting older. You have to do all that you can to stay healthy.

How Far is it to 62?



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(Editor's Note: Coming from Sandy in Chatham, New York, 100 Miles north of Me, and down to Micanopy, Florida through REM, even though I know it's from the internet, or an eMail pass-along, I loved it and will run it here.)

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Have you noticed that stairs are getting steeper, groceries are heavier and everything is farther away? Yesterday I walked to the corner and I was dumbfounded to discover how long our street had become!

And you know; people are less considerate now, especially the young ones. They speak in whispers all the time! If you ask them to speak up they just keep repeating themselves, endlessly mouthing the same silent message until they're red in the face! What do they think I am a lip reader? They also talk so fast. I can't even think that fast.

I also think they are much younger than I was at the same age. On the other hand, people my own age are so much older than I am. I ran into an old friend the other day and he has aged so much that he didn't even recognize me.

I got to thinking about the poor guy while I was combing my hair this morning and in doing so, I glanced at my own reflection. Well, REALLY NOW, even mirrors are not made the way they used to be!

Another thing, everyone drives so fast these days! You're risking life and limb if you happen to pull onto the freeway in front of them! All I can say is; their brakes must wear out awfully fast, the way I see them screech and swerve in my rear view mirror.

Clothing manufacturers are less civilized these days. Why else would they suddenly start labeling a size 40 or 42 suit as 50 or 52? Do they think no one notices that these things no longer fit around the waist?

The people who make bathroom scales are pulling the same prank, but in reverse. Do they think I actually "believe" the number I see on that dial? HA! I would never let myself weigh that much! Just who do these people think they're fooling?

I'd like to call up someone in authority to report what's going on... but the telephone company is in on it too. They've printed the phone books in such small type that no one could ever find a number in there!

All I can do is pass this warning along: We are under attack! Unless something drastic happens, pretty soon everyone will have to suffer these awful indignities.

PLEASE PASS THIS ON TO EVERYONE YOU KNOW AS SOON AS POSSIBLE SO WE CAN GET THIS EPIDEMIC STOPPED!

PS: I am sending this to you in a larger font size, because something has caused my computer's fonts to be smaller than they once were.

Memories For Sale at Hamilton Avenue



By Keach Hagey, Staff Writer
The Greenwich Time

Published 29 April 2005

Robert Genna, a former substitute teacher at Hamilton Avenue Magnet School, takes one of his purchases with him yesterday.

They may have told their spouses that they were bargain hunting, but most of the people in the nearly empty halls of Hamilton Avenue Magnet School during yesterday's tag sale had come to take home a memory.

The 94-year-old Chickahominy building is scheduled to be demolished in June. After moving most of the useful items to the new modular building behind Western Middle School, the school district opened the old building one last time for the community to pick over what was left -- and to say goodbye.

"This is so sad. The memories here are so thick. My grandfather helped build the addition when he came here from Italy," said Marisa Nigro, 43. She and her mother attended the school. Her grandfather, Sebastian Bazzoni, took naturalization classes there to learn English after coming over from Sardinia, Italy.

As she walked through vacant classrooms sizing up file cabinets and bookshelves, Nigro remembered when the school and St. Roch's Church across the street formed the center of a tightknit Italian-American community.

She recalled spaghetti dinners, field days, penny carnivals and staging musicals in the gymnasium. She also remembered the sound of the air-raid drill sirens during the Cold War, when students were herded into the basement to crouch down along two sturdy walls.

"If you could go to any elementary school in town, this was the one to go to," she said. "It was such a joy to be able to walk to school."

Eleven-year-old Cassie Gerardi, a fifth-grader who lives nearby, agreed. "I just wanted to finish my school here," she said, adding that the new, modular building was "OK, but kind of small." Her mother, Susan Gerardi, had picked up a bookshelf for \$5.

"I'm getting it because it's a piece of the school, but don't tell my husband that. We need a bookshelf, don't we?" she asked, elbowing her daughter.

"About 60 percent of the stuff was gone in the first hour," said Eugene Watts, senior buyer for the school district. "People are just walking in and taking a little bit of everything -- chairs, desks, cubbies." Chairs cost \$2, while larger items cost \$5. A box of hand-held word-processing computers sat at the front door, available for \$10 each. "Whatever doesn't get sold today will be disposed of," Watts said.

That's likely to include large items such as the old intercom system with faculty names taped to its buttons and an upright piano that had darkly yellowed keys but still held its tune. "It's really spooky," said former student John Cappiali, 13, now an eighth-grader at Western Middle School. "The janitor used to tell us that there were ghosts down in the orchestra room so we wouldn't go down there."

Hamilton Avenue fifth-grader Ursula Wilson had hoped she, too, would finish her elementary school education in the old building, but said that the new modular building has some advantages, such as central air conditioning. After gleefully using the once-forbidden faculty bathroom, she went from room to room, writing "Goodbye, Hamilton Ave." on the chalkboards.

"My friends and I are really going to miss this place," she said. "We have some great memories here."

Resource for young and old alike marks 50 years

By Michael Dinan, Staff Writer
The Greenwich Time

Published 01 May 2005



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Stamford police Assistant Chief John Geter, 61, says he and his restless teenage friends had a fun, safe place to spend Friday nights while growing up in Greenwich in the late 1950s.

Geter and his pals danced, clowned around and played ping pong and pool at the Teenage Canteen, a weekly club on East Putnam Avenue that drew more than 700 highschoolers at a time.

"It gave me a place to go in my spare time, where you had good leadership and role models," recalled Geter, a Norwalk resident and 1962 Greenwich High School graduate who heads the department's youth bureau. "That's what's missing with youth today. Nothing to do, nowhere to go, just hangs around the Movie Theater and downtown area and get into trouble."

There is nothing for teens to do and nowhere to go. In 1953, Greenwich's community planners had the same problem. That year, the Community Chest -- today called United Way of Greenwich -- decided to organize three existing youth centers under one name. They called the new organization Community Centers Inc. and charged it with helping teens find work and constructive social outlets and organizing events for mentally handicapped residents.

Creating the Teenage Canteen was one of Community Centers' first jobs. Since then the organization, which marks its 50th anniversary this month, has evolved into an essential resource for the town's neediest residents.

"We respond to clients' needs as they arise," said Barbara Nolan, 72, Community Centers' executive director since 1958. "We say, 'What is it



you like? What do you think we need here?' We're in a constant state of metamorphosis."

Defying racial prejudice in the 1950s and '60s, Community Centers formed its own football teams when black people were not accepted in town leagues.

The organization fought neighborhood opposition in searching for a permanent home through the 1960s. Located since 1973 in First United Methodist Church's parsonage, opposite the Greenwich Family YMCA, the organization has endured financial woes, fires, noise complaints, discrimination and other setbacks.

"We've survived against great odds," said Nolan, a Manhattan native who moved to Greenwich in 1955, after earning a master's degree in social work from Fordham University.

Today, Community Centers has a \$700,000 annual operating budget to help about 1,400 kids, families and seniors who live in public housing do their homework, take recreational and educational trips, meet others, avoid unwanted pregnancy and solve family problems.

The organization's staff is constantly on call, Nolan said. In recent years, they've supported Greenwich's burgeoning Hispanic population in courts and schools, helping non-English speakers communicate with lawyers, PTA groups and teachers.

"Advocacy is a big piece of what we do," Nolan said. "We're filling a need, a very special need. We've carved out a niche for ourselves."

Contrary to popular belief, many Greenwich residents need help paying their bills, buying food and affording health care, said Winston Robinson, 53, a former Community Centers client and town resident who works at the Greenwich Housing Authority.

"There is a great dependence on CCI for many segments of our community," said Robinson, a 1970 Greenwich High School graduate and Community Centers board member since 1989. "A lot of people just do not have the means to do what we take for granted. It really enhances their daily lives."

According to the state Department of Social Services, during an average month in fiscal year 2004: 367 Greenwich residents received food stamps; 98 received welfare; 127 aged, blind or disabled residence received cash assistance; 1,782 were enrolled in Medicaid, the state's health insurance program for the indigent; and 897 children under age 19 were enrolled in HUSKY, a subsidized health insurance program to help Connecticut families afford coverage for their children.

Deborah Orellana, 34, a Wilbur Peck Court resident who moved to the United States from Guatemala 12 years ago, said her husband takes the family's car to work.

Without Community Centers, her four oldest kids wouldn't be able to visit playgrounds, the beach and swimming pools during the summer.

Her oldest son Manuel, 12, a sixth-grader at Central Middle School, said if it wasn't for the organization, he'd just stay at home watching TV after school.

"I go there every day," Manuel said. "I like to play with friends -- I've made a lot of friends there -- and I like to go to the Garden (Education) Center to decorate plants."

Brandon Foster, 16, a Community Centers client as a young boy, remembers sneaking upstairs to watch movies at the center, playing video games and taking field trips to professional baseball games and Radio City Music Hall.

"Nothing bad ever happened," recalled Foster, whose family moved to Stamford in 1998 and who is now a senior at the city's Academy for Information Technology who plans to study psychology in college. "There weren't any fights. You could go there and didn't have to worry about peer pressure and all that. It was something to do instead of staying at home watching TV."

Being involved in Community Centers as a teenager shaped Geter's commitment to helping kids, he said. "In retrospect it made me interested, as I got older, in helping youth that were maybe headed for trouble," said Geter, a school resources office in Stamford, former basketball coach and Troop 6 Boy Scouts Scoutmaster in Greenwich. "It seems like it sort of put me on a course with youth, working with kids. Community Centers were a wonderful adult role model at that time, almost like a surrogate mother."

Enough About Me, Let's Talk About You

That's only the beginning of the joke. To end it, the question continues with:

So What do You Think of Me?



Bob **McMILLAN**. Scarsdale. NY
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Now isn't that one of the angriest photographs that you will ever see. I look as though someone "Cut One" and won't admit to it. But then again that is me and it was taken by a professional headshot person, I actually have makeup done by a stylist. As to the time period, it was just around the holidays of 2004 and the location was the entrance to the



offices of Beyer Blinder Belle in NYC.

Now you might ask yourself, "Why is he talking in the past tense?" Or even better, "What da...? I have chosen to write about myself and tell people what I have done in the 40+ years since I left GHS in 1962. I know that I have taken the opportunity to tell you about various events in my life, but last week, I experienced the most important event I can imagine. There is a subject called "Ageism" and there are many of us that have been unfairly treated by the "younger" among us.

Not that what happened to me is a result of age, but instead... I hit the ceiling. Granted, I am an extremely tall person, and have hit the ceiling on many occasions. However, this ceiling when referred to in the "business" world, means that you make too much money to be profitable to the firm. So let the wars begin. I was taken over "hostile" perhaps you could use that word. The takeover was in the simple form of an offer to buy me out and I would start my own company.

So it's effective, introducing:

The McMillan Group of Companies

(tentative until recognized by the state of New York)

Yes that's right. I have combined a number of companies under a single umbrella and will be absorbing the WW-N-W into the group as the publishing arm. In the near future, we will be changing the eMail addresses and establishing a website. The McMillan Group will be in the Practice of Architecture, initially as a consultancy but the clients are already signing up and if all goes well, we will be forced into "heavy"

insurance premiums and other "P.I.T.A" (pain in the a**) expenses. Our location will be announced in the near future as well as phones, faxes and electronic connections.

Actually, a Little Bit about Me

I have been working in the field of Architecture, since I left GHS. I started in the third floor offices of Nino Tamucci in lovely downtown Port Chester, where I would sit at a drafting table that overlooked the platform of the New Haven Railroad and had Vahsen's off in the distance across the railroad parking lot. That was the summer of 1963. I had left Central Connecticut State College and transferred to Pratt for the fall semester. In the 42 years, there after, I have finally come full circle and for the first time in my Life, I will truly be Self Employed. Admittedly, with ownership in Beyer Blinder Belle, I was self employed, but there was no "liability" and worst of all, there would never be an opportunity to put my name on my creations.

That's a bummer, when you work in a creative field and you watch someone else get the credits for what you have created. In these 42 years, I have successfully completed and built in excess of 200 buildings. Now that seems almost impossible, but when you have a firm the size of BBB the work is always flowing in and in order to turn a "buck"... you turn the project around "fast". We went out of our way, to prevent the "cookie-cutter" and the "schlock, and produced buildings of quality. I can attest to that and will defend my statement to the death.



My favorite will always be the Myriad Gardens Crystal Bridge in Oklahoma City which is shown in the attached photos. I designed this project from the very scratch of a surface, in the true sense of the word. The water that sits in the bottom of the canyon that the bridge floats over is the water-table or "lost" underground river which we excavated and exposed. It now thrives and has reached maturity as a Botanical Garden in wind swept OKC.

I can not claim the credit for this work as the firm at the time was, Conklin Rossant and I had no money involved, beside a paycheck. This all has changed... At age 60.5 I am finally "free to say" this was brought to you by:

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(Until Further Notice)

