

# Greenwich High School Wreadin Writin n Wreminiscin

Weekly Wreader

03 December 2004



## The Ruwe Pencil Company



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Interesting  
postcards!



Did you know, that Mr. Ruwe's daughter and grandchildren, all still live in town? Just this summer, I was given a box of old Ruwe pencils when one of them was cleaning out her attic. Also, you may remember an episode of Mr. Rogers at the Ruwe Pencil Company. It was a beautiful day in our neighborhood and was really interesting. I remember it, from when my kids were little.



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I worked at Greenwich Auto during the summers in college. It was next door to Ruwe Pencil. It was a family owned operation, and, at the time was one of the largest in the country. They only made pencils and pens, but the pencils were by far the largest part of their operation. Their main business was with school systems - supplying them with pencils. They sold little to stationary outlets. It was always a busy operation. Trailer trucks would deliver the cedar slabs which were pre-grooved to hold the lead. At Ruwe the lead was placed in the grooves, then another cedar slab was glued on top. The raw pencils then were cut apart

and lacquered with the famous yellow and the printing. The erasers were put on in an extra step. I talked to a guy who worked there at the time and all he did all day long was feed the ends into the machine that put the erasers on the pencils. It always seemed to a busy and profitable business. My guess is that the family had no one to pass the business down to and eventually sold out. I'm not sure if the building was built by Ruwe or if they just purchased it later on. In any case, it definitely had some style and class for it being a factory.



Way back in the early days of WWNW, I asked if any one remembered Rich's Restaurant. I thought for sure someone from O.G. or Riverside would remember. From my memory (not always 100% I'm sure) is that it was a rather grand structure which I think was part hotel, part restaurant. I'm sure it was closed for many years, it was located smack-dab where exit/entrance 5 for the thruway is today.



The tearing down of houses in Greenwich, New Canaan, Darien, etc. is radically changing the area to the point where in short time little will be left except a bunch of big houses on small plots - none with any character, none with any charm, and none with any class. Sadly, money always seems to win out.

The article on the Fourth Ward, which takes in the area just west of the Hospital, William Street, Church Street, Division Street, Sherwood Place, and (I believe it's called) Northfield Street is probably the last family neighborhood in central Greenwich. I recall many friends from North Street School living there: Brian

Burke (whose father was Police Captain at the time), Gordon Gall, Gerry Slater (whose dad worked for Round Hill Farms), Patricia Fink, and others. Round Hill Farms had their milk plant at the end of Northfield Street (long since converted to housing). There were a few mom & pop stores (a few still there). After turning 21 and graduating from the bars in Port Chester, many of us during college years hung around a local bar on William Street called the Town & Country. Lots of student nurses from the hospital also hung out there. It was one of the few local neighborhood style bars - pool table, dirty floors, and the "regulars" who were always there. Even some of the Greenwich cops were frequent customers. Once 1 am rolled around, legally it had to close, but often after setting up on the counter three or four more rounds many stayed till the wee hours of the morning. It is now a fabric store or something like that.

People today have no regard for history, or are willing to restore the older houses. I see houses less than 10 years old being torn down along with a number of very grand older houses. Although some huge houses take their place, I have yet to see one that really has the character and class of some of the older

houses built in the 20s, 30s and even earlier in Greenwich and the area. They might cost a zillion bucks, but they have zero class. My house in New Canaan is over 200 years old (most of it), my barn over 150. Although all fixed up and modernized where needed, I'm starting to think more and more that when we do sell (no plans of doing so right now) some one will merely buy the land and level everything. The house does have some history as the family that built the house (and lived in it for many years) had members that served in the Revolutionary War, the Civil War, and possibly others. I'm sure this will mean zilch to the s-head who would purchase it. I don't know the feasibility of doing it, but I might just dismantle the barn and the old part of the house and rebuild it somewhere else and take the history with me.

## Going Postal and Road Rage



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The Historical Society's Visitor's Center (43 Strickland Road) next to the Bush-Holley House is in fact the old Cos Cob post office pictured in the post card Jane sent you. My parents lived in that house from the mid-60's for about 20 years until they died.



And as to Kent Remington's pulchritude-induced car accident, it's more likely (given my surname) that I was distracted by another part of her anatomy.



## Up from the Islands



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Meanwhile, I received the following from my sister with regard to Rich's Restaurant:

I have a faint memory of a restaurant by that name in that area (now we will find out that it hasn't existed since 1935!!) but that is all I know. There was a Jane Rich in Riverside school with me...maybe her family had something to do with it. Haven't heard yet from my 3 brothers - maybe they will be able to add info.



## Tugboat Sinks in Cos Cob



The tugboat Karen S. Nygaard sank in Cos Cob Harbor yesterday, spilling more than 100 gallons of diesel fuel into the Mianus River.

By Michael Dinan Staff Writer The Greenwich Time  
29 November 2004

The tugboat a Glenville man once steered 5,500 miles in remembrance of his late wife was found at the bottom of Cos Cob Harbor before dawn yesterday after spilling more than 100 gallons of diesel fuel into the Mianus River.

Oddvar Nygaard said he found his beloved red-and-black tugboat named after his wife, Karen S. "Cayah" Nygaard, when he arrived at 4:45 a.m. at the riverfront company he founded, Fjord Catering and Charters.

By low tide yesterday afternoon, the tug was slumped over in a bath of red fuel that emergency workers from the Greenwich Fire Department, Greenwich Police Department, state Department of Environmental Protection, and U.S. Coast Guard contained in a ring of booms and swabbed with absorbent pads.

Several friends, employees and relatives joined Nygaard under a gray and drizzling sky to help lay the white pads on the surface of the contaminated water. The workers used long, steel spars to pull the pads back onto the slippery wooden dock once they had absorbed the red fuel.

"Someone, as far as I'm concerned, opened up a valve or something," said Nygaard, 56, pointing to a broken yellow chain designed to block the stairway to the tugboat's dock. The chain was secure when he left Saturday night, he said.

Officials said they would have to lift the 60-foot tug from the river to determine why the boat sank and leaked fuel. To do that, the spill must be cleaned up, which could take several days, Fire Chief Daniel Warzoha said.

"That (there was foul play) is what they (Nygaard, his family and friends) are saying, and we're not here to dispute that," Warzoha said. "Our concern right now is for fire safety and the environment. The last thing we need is for this thing to spread when we have the ability to contain it."

The fire department received a call about the incident at 9:39 a.m. yesterday and responded immediately with a team of hazardous material technicians, Warzoha said. By early yesterday afternoon, more than 10 firemen were unloading and applying absorbent pads to the water surrounding the tugboat.

The boat was a favorite of Nygaard's wife, Cayah. She died of brain cancer in May 1999, before the couple had the chance to take a trip they had long planned. Four months after she died, Nygaard, known as "Pappa Fish" to his friends, placed his wife's ashes in the tug and set off with just memories on a healing, 62-day trip. The Karen S. Nygaard traveled up the Hudson River, across the Great Lakes, down the Mississippi River and out to sea. Nygaard, a father of three, lost 35 pounds on the trek.

"This boat has tremendous sentimental value for me," Nygaard said yesterday as he directed the cleanup team around the sunken boat. "It was a trip we had planned on taking, and finally we did."

Late yesterday afternoon, emergency workers were awaiting a vacuum truck to help suck the fuel from the river. "The basic strategy is to contain and remove," said Ron Wofford, emergency response coordinator with the state DEP. "We're all working together as a team to meet the same objective."

Since the Mianus River is a navigable waterway, the U.S. Coast Guard will probably lead an investigation into why the tugboat sank and spilled fuel, Wofford said. U.S. Coast Guard Lt. j.g. Robert Bilbo said the Coast Guard's New Haven office received a call about the tugboat at 9:30 or 10 a.m. yesterday and would work with Nygaard, fire and environmental officials in a joint investigation.

"We want to work with everyone to find out the who, what, why and when of what happened here," Bilbo said. The rain had subsided by early evening yesterday, as emergency crews waited for the vacuum truck from Environmental Remediation Services of Bridgeport. Nygaard continued to circle the tugboat, laying white pads around the area where it sat slumped in the river. "Everything has it's time, I guess," he said.

## Footnote

When we first conceived of the event of 03 October 2004, we had considered using one of Nygaard's Fleet of Boats.

## Webbster n Button



## Flashback 1997

The 35<sup>th</sup> Reunion was held the weekend of 10 October 1997, and there was a small multi-paged compilation of thoughts, words and a directory, that was given to me at the 03 October 2004 Picnic at the Point, by Lynn Deyber Alexander. The following are a few clips from that pamphlet:

## Do You Remember When

It was a big deal to drive the family car to school and arrive early, so you could sit in the parking lot with your friends and smoke... Penny **JOHNSTON** Kemp

Fire Drills always occurred during the showers after Gym Class... Bob **McMillan**

Fortunately I don't... Mike **TAYLOR**

I was called "Kidney Beans"... Robert **KENNEDY**

Sputnik went into space... Peter **ORBANOWSKY**

Sex was dirty... Peter **DODD**

There was someone who could do an exact forgery of the Nurse's signature... Amy **LONGO** Walker

More than half the school cut classes the whole day to see the astronaut's ticker tape parade in NYC... Maureen **BREUEL** Bohning, Lynn **DEYBER** Alexander, Sandy **YEAGER** Cozzolino, Pat **OLSEN** Greene, Peter **DODD**, Ginny **MITCHELL** Drapeau, John **FAIRGRIEVE**.

Mr. Ridlon would throw a blackboard eraser at Bill Shockley, every day and Bill would throw it back and get detention... Suzi **SMITH** Lynch

I crashed my VW in front of the school and 10 volunteers picked it up and put it on the sidewalk... Peter **HENS**

Greenwich Police drove Edsel police cars... David **AVANN**

Getting the "first" parking space was a status symbol... George **STABY**

Mr. Bella checked to be sure our skirts touched the ground when we kneeled down... Cindy **OTIS** Lindmeyer

We had a pep rally at the Island Beach parking lot to prepare for the Hillhouse football game... Otto **SORENSEN**

The Caroline Lodge closed... Bill **SHOCKLEY**, George **DEVOL**

Guy Cardin was the only one who had a backpack for his books... or was he ahead of his time?.. Alden **JOHANSON**

We skipped to the beach on Senior Skip Day – got detention – and had to make it up by graduation... Rosemarie **GENTILE** Chiapetta

I did not have detention... Bruce **HANSEN**

## My Most Distinct Memory of GHS is

As this section has many, many names after each "line of text"... I will only print the text and let you each ruminate on whether you might have picked the specific memory. Also, it will save me a lot of typing and formatting for all the "bold-faced" names.

Graduation in the Rain...

The early morning "cigarette" breaks in the parking lot...

Getting my driver's license...

Great friends, cars, music...

Senior Vaudeville...

How smart and funny all my friends were and how much we laughed...

Going to Whitman's Bakery

Cokes were a nickel...

Getting my ears pierced on a school trip to Puerto Rico...

The Last day of School – talking Billy Schwartz down from the roof...

The days that I didn't attend...

Running to get the train home...

Smoking in the bathroom...

Being pulled out of class to meet with the Greenwich Police detectives...

A VW Bug was assembled and left on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor...

A car was put on the balcony of the girl's gym...

Senior Chorus Trip to Europe...

Mr. Ainsley clicking his yellow teeth in American History...

Getting from the basement to the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor on the other side of the building in less than 5 minutes...

Senior Prom...

Hating Senior English...

Cutting class...

The narrow minds of the Administration...

Homeroom with Barbara Armstrong...

The time I was locked in Mr. Liptak's office by a janitor who caught me some place I wasn't supposed to be and I climbed out the window...

Lunch behind the gym – a sandwich and a smoke...

The last day...

## Care to Give it a GO...

The categories are as stipulated above... bring it up to date and lets hear for as many of you who would care to participate in a little memory "shake"... served at the third table from the entrance at Nielsen's on Putnam Avenue...



*Neilson's*  
**The Ideal Family Restaurant**