

Greenwich High School  
Wreadin Writin n Wreminiscin  
Weekly Wreader  
Christmas Eve 24 December 2004



## Recollections



Patricia **ROSE** Bishel . Colchester . CT  
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I was shocked and saddened to hear of Lillian Mertz's death. I remember her very well at GHS. We were in Senior Chorus together, and we were also on Bus C together on the trip to Vienna during the Summer of '61. She was a fun person, and I always enjoyed her company. I stayed in contact with her parents for years later. They had a cottage on Lake Pocatapaug in East Hampton, where the family spent a lot of vacation time. Lillian had moved to Massachusetts and I only saw her a couple times after high school. She had a daughter who looked just like her. Lillian stayed an extra year at GHS to do a Post Graduate year. I guess she wasn't quite ready for college yet. I felt sorry leaving her there, but she did fine and went to college the year after that. Did anyone from GHS keep in contact with her in Massachusetts?

## Remember This?



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The following were some comments made in the year 1957:

"I'll tell you one thing, if things keep going the way they are, it's going to be impossible to buy a week's groceries for \$20.00."

"Have you seen the new cars coming out next year? It won't be long when \$5,000 won't buy a new one!"

"If cigarettes keep going up in price, I'm going to quit. A quarter a pack is ridiculous."

"Did you hear the post office is thinking about charging a dime just to mail a letter?"

"If they raise the minimum wage to \$1, nobody will be able to hire outside help at the store."

"When I first started driving, who'd have thought gas would someday cost 29 cents a gallon. Guess we'd be better off leaving the car in the garage,"

"Kids today are impossible. Those guys with ducktail hair cuts are the ones you can't trust. Next thing you know, boys will be wearing their hair as long as the girls,"

"I'm afraid to send my kids to the movies any more. Ever since they let Clark Gable get by with saying 'damn' in "Gone With The Wind", it seems every new movie has either 'hell' or 'damn' in it."

"I read the other day where some scientist thinks it's possible to put a man on the moon by the end of the century. They even have fellows they call astronauts preparing for it down in Texas."

"Did you see where some baseball player just signed a contract for \$75,000 a year just to play ball? It wouldn't surprise me if someday that they'll be making more than the President."

"I never thought I'd see the day all our kitchen appliances would be electric. They're even making electric typewriters now"

"It's too bad things are so tough nowadays. I see where a few married women have to work to make ends meet."

"It won't be long before young couples are going to have to hire someone to watch their kids so they can both work."

"I'm just afraid the Volkswagen car is going to open the door to a whole lot of foreign business."

"Thank goodness I won't live to see the day when the Government takes half our income in taxes... I sometimes wonder if we are electing the best people to Congress."

"The drive-in restaurant is convenient in nice weather, but I seriously doubt they'll ever catch on."

"I guess taking a vacation is out of the question now days. It costs nearly \$15.00 a night to stay in a hotel."

"No one can afford to be sick any more, \$35.00 a day in the hospital is too rich for my blood."

## Shoe



## Greenwich Hardware



Harry **NEWMAN** . Alexandria . VA  
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I would add another manufacturing plant to George's list: Fawcett on lower Greenwich Avenue, across from the movie theater. Think they published books, comic books, and magazines.

Of course, the other one we all remember was over in Port Chester, but impossible to miss - the Life Saver plant with large replicas of their famous products alongside the building.

There was also an apple cider processing plant at the front of the Palmer Marine property on River Road in Cos Cob. I remember touring it with a Cub Scout den about 1953. That building was later used for a publishing plant.

## It all Began Just after Midnight

12:31 am to be exact and the date was 05 October 1944, the location was the **UNITED HOSPITAL** in Port Chester, New York. The event was a repeat of a similar one that happened 351.25 days earlier with my Brother Phillip. I was introduced to the bright lights of the O.R and the beaming face of a grungy old man named Dr. Dietrich (First names were never used, or I never cared to catch it in passing). Dr. D was 200 years old when I was born and much older when my father died 40 something years later... but he was still the family doctor and the Hospital was still the center for "family health" until around the 1980's when we switched over to Greenwich. I would guess that there are about 150 of the other classmates of '61 and '62 who have a fond connection to UNITED... so I found the following in the Westchester papers.

## Hospital's Closing Stirs Sadness

By Hannan Adely THE JOURNAL NEWS  
(19 December 2004)



PORT CHESTER — When Josephine Yusi was a girl riding in her family's car, she would always shut her eyes when she passed the big brown building on Route 1.

The building was United Hospital in Port Chester, where her brother died at age 14 from a bad infection. "I couldn't stand to look at it," she said. It was years before Yusi created good memories at the hospital, after she gave birth to three children there.

Now 88, Yusi said she was stunned by the news that her local hospital was going to close. Now called New York United Hospital Medical Center, the hospital said Friday that it had filed for bankruptcy and would shut its doors within 120 days of getting approval from the state.

For Yusi and others who ate lunch yesterday at the Carver Center, a community center in Port Chester, the 115-year-old hospital was a place of milestones. Every person at Yusi's table yesterday had tales of life, loss, friendship or work.

"It's sad, sad, sad," said 90-year-old Carolyn Brattoni. "All the people of Port Chester, Mamaroneck and Rye depend on it."

Brattoni's story started with her father, a foreman who helped build the hospital. Over the years, she had mammograms, X-rays and routine checkups there. Both her parents died there.

"All the family was there," she said. "It goes back ages."

Twelve years ago, her husband suffered a heart attack and spent three weeks at United Hospital. The staff, she said, was gracious and kind.

"I used to go in the morning for visiting hours," said Brattoni, who lives in Port Chester. "They never threw me out. I'd stay until 8 or 9 at night."

One night, a hospital worker called her at 2 a.m. to send a message from her husband that he wanted her to come back to the hospital. "He wasn't feeling well, and he was nervous being alone," Brattoni recalled.

He made it through the night, and Brattoni never forgot the treatment they received there. She said yesterday she hoped the community could find a way to keep the facility open.

For Antoinette Petrucciano, the closing wasn't so unexpected. Petrucciano volunteered at United for five years, and her daughter was born at the hospital and later worked there as a nurse.

But Petrucciano said that in recent years, she would visit other hospitals because service at United had declined. It seemed there weren't enough nurses to take care of the patients, she said.

As the hospital battled financial problems, many of the staff left, including nurses who sought jobs with more stability and better pay. The 224-bed facility cut services and saw fewer patients over the years, as it accrued \$70 million in debt.

"Years ago it was beautiful, but lately it's not too good," Petrucciano said.

Some of Port Chester's younger residents also said they relied on other hospitals.

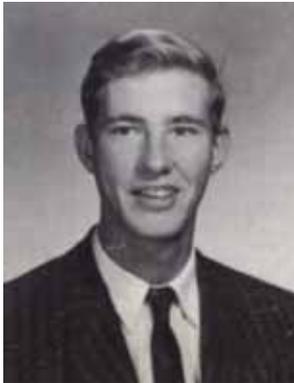
Elizabeth Gonzales, 23, of Rye, said she uses Westchester Medical Center in Valhalla for all her family's medical care. On one occasion, she brought her 2-year-old son to the United Hospital because of an ear infection, but was dismayed because the visit took three hours, even though the emergency room seemed nearly empty.

Still, Gonzales does not believe the hospital should close because, she said, the village at least needs emergency services.

For Port Chester's longtime residents, the loss was hard to process.

"I feel lonely about the hospital closing," Yusi said. "It was something we knew all along and something we could depend on."

## Obsolete Words and Phrases



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Trying to recollect obsolete words, I recalled a few:

Heinie-Binder... the small belt & buckle assembly on the back of our pants, Jr.

High years

Spats - another word for fender skirts. To our parents, spats were a shoe & ankle cover.

Fluid Drive was a Chrysler Corp early automatic shift.

Vacuum clutch - worked the clutch w/o a clutch pedal, was an electro-mechanical system.

Vacuum windshield wipers - worked when coasting but rarely worked when needed.

Grease fittings (nipples, Zerks) --- try to find one on a car these days. "Lubed for life." Whose life?

Car heaters - when they were optional equipment, if available at all.

Vent windows- front of front windows, back of rear windows, provided draught through the car

Overdrive- the Borg-Warner auxiliary transmission & freewheel unit

Freewheel, freewheeling -- a really bad idea, but popular for a decade or more

Hill-Holder - only Studebaker had it, kept car from rolling back when starting up a hill from a stoplight

I remember the steering wheel knob as a "necker knob" Those of us who drove small cars was told by those who drove Detroit Iron that these were very nice to have, especially if the car had an automatic transmission.

Egyptian Cotton -- best sailcloth ever, we thought. Now called Pima cotton in clothing and forgotten about for sails, superseded by Dacron / Terylene, Kevlar and other test-tube wonders.

We still use regularly two gen-u-wine, built-in-Old Greenwich, Electrolux vacuum cleaners. One needed a new hose recently. It was available, at \$110. Ouch, that's pricey, considering that there are dozens of vacuum cleaners that Consumers Reports says work well, at less than the cost of the Electrolux hose. I bought the hose. The Electrolux will run another 20 years or so.

## Webbster n Button



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# A Visit From Old St Nick

Clement Moore



T'was the night before Christmas,  
when all through the house  
Not a creature was stirring,  
not even a mouse;  
The stockings were hung  
by the chimney with care,  
In hopes that St. Nicholas  
soon would be there.  
The children were nestled  
all snug in their beds,  
While visions of sugar-plums  
danced in their heads;  
And mamma in her 'kerchief  
and I in my cap,  
Had just settled down  
for a long winter's nap,



When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,  
I sprang from the bed to see what was the matter.  
Away to the window I flew like a flash,  
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash.  
The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow  
Gave the lustre of mid-day to objects below,  
When, what to my wondering eyes should appear,  
But a miniature sleigh, and eight tiny reindeer,

With a little old driver, so lively and quick,  
I knew in a moment it must be St. Nick.  
More rapid than eagles his coursers they came,  
And he whistled, and shouted, and called them by name;  
"Now, DASHER! now, DANCER! now, PRANCER and VIXEN!  
On, COMET! on CUPID! on, DONDER and BLITZEN!  
To the top of the porch! to the top of the wall!  
Now dash away! dash away! dash away all!"

As dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly,  
When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky,  
So up to the house-top the coursers they flew,  
With the sleigh full of toys, and St. Nicholas too.  
And then, in a twinkling, I heard on the roof  
The prancing and pawing of each little hoof.  
As I drew in my hand, and was turning around,  
Down the chimney St. Nicholas came with a bound.  
He was dressed all in fur, from his head to his foot,  
And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot;  
A bundle of toys he had flung on his back,  
And he looked like a peddler just opening his pack.

His eyes -- how they twinkled! his dimples how merry!  
His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry!

His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow,  
And the beard of his chin was as white as the snow;  
The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth,  
And the smoke it encircled his head like a wreath;  
He had a broad face and a little round belly,  
That shook, when he laughed like a bowlful of jelly.

He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf,  
And I laughed when I saw him, in spite of myself;  
A wink of his eye and a twist of his head,  
Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread;  
He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work,  
And filled all the stockings; then turned with a jerk,  
And laying his finger aside of his nose,  
And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose;  
He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle,  
And away they all flew like the down of a thistle.  
But I heard him exclaim, ere he drove out of sight,  
"HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO ALL, AND TO ALL A GOOD-NIGHT."



Snow Covered Cottage with Figures  
Vincent Van Gogh  
Saint-Remy: March-April 1890  
Caracas – Collection Ernesto Blohm