

Brown University Class of 1958 Newsletter

Volume 1, Number 2

July 2014



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Welcome to Our Second Issue

Contributions Encouraged!

Welcome to the second issue of the Brown Class of 1958 Newsletter, designed to complement the Class Notes that appear in the *Brown Alumni Magazine*.

The newsletter's material is largely written by classmates eager to communicate with each other. We hope that these newsletters will not only interest you but also stimulate you to think about what you would like to contribute. It doesn't need to resemble what's in the first two issues. The volunteer newsletter staff will provide editorial support as needed.

Mini-Reunion Coming Up in September

(See last page of this newsletter)

From Class Secretary Jill Hirst Scobie: Coming at us fast!! Our next mini-reunion will be held early this fall—on September 26, 27, and 28--in Providence. Highlights will include a welcoming reception at the home of Martha and Art Joukowsky, along with Martha's reflections on changes over the years to Brown's Petra project and to the Mideast in general; the Brown-Harvard game; events surrounding Brown's 250th anniversary; and a clambake in Westport, MA.

Registration details will follow as soon as they're firmed up. A block of rooms has been reserved at the Wyndham Gardens Hotel for \$95.00 per room, per night (double or king sized bed). For reservations, please call 401-272-5577 before September 1, being certain to mention that you are with the Brown Class of 1958.

Inside this issue:

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Do You Remember This Classmate?

His Son Seeks Recollections of Alfred M. Chapman



Class Secretary Jill Hirst Scobie shares this letter from Henry L. Chapman, who is “interested in hearing from anyone in your network who may remember my father as a scholar, athlete and gentleman, and might be willing to share any personal anecdotes or memories of him.”

Henry Chapman can be reached at
355 Lonely Goose Circle
Harleysville, PA 19438 or
Henry.L.Chapman@gmail.com



Dear Ms. Scobie:

I am responding to your offer to send any news of members of the Class of '58 ([Brown Alumni Magazine](#), vol. 114, No. 2, November/December 2013, p. 49) on behalf of my father, Alfred M. Chapman.

As you may know, my father was an All-American swimmer and Captain of the Brown Bears swim team under Coach Joseph Watmough beginning his freshman year. He majored in the Classics and, after his graduation from Brown in 1958, attended the American School of Classical Studies in Athens, Greece. He became a Housemaster at the Lawrenceville School, married in 1960, earned a Master's in Latin at Columbia University in 1961, then began teaching at a private day school in Toledo, Ohio. During this time he advised Chess, Classical and Student Council clubs, coached swimming and tennis teams, belonged to a semi-pro soccer team and was involved in numerous community associations.

In February 1965, Mr. Chapman's promising family was the subject of a story in the [Toledo Blade](#), “*Family Puts Fun in Learning*”. That summer they moved to Ann Arbor, MI where he and his wife had their third child (I am his eldest). He then earned a second Master's degree – an MA in Greek – at the University of Michigan. That year, as my father began working on his doctoral thesis, he underwent an unexpected and radical transformation in perception, mood and behavior. In the autumn of 1966, Mr. Chapman was diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia.

The family relocated to the Philadelphia area in 1967 where my father took a teaching position at Episcopal Academy. Ultimately, however, his psychosis worsened and his condition became chronic. Unable to work or manage his own affairs, Mr. Chapman spent the next 15 years in and out of state hospitals, halfway houses and programs intended to re-acclimate him into everyday society. He has been homeless, arrested, and on one occasion apparently went missing for six weeks before turning up out-of-state where he was picked up by State Police who held him as a John Doe until he was identified and returned to the Institute of Pennsylvania Hospital in Philadelphia where he lived at the time.

In 1984 my father was finally moved to a long term psychiatric facility in Philadelphia where he has lived for the last 30 years.

The severity and impact of my father's illness is difficult to imagine. My sisters and I grew up in a void, separated from him and encouraged not to ask questions or get involved. (My mother, whose divorce from him was finalized in 1976, re-married nine years later.)

In 1994, after I had nothing left to lose, I went to see my father for the first time in almost two decades. Over the twenty years since, I have worked to re-establish my relationship with him, gradually becoming more attuned to the experiences of families who struggle with mental illness on an everyday basis.

In September 2009, given my father's advancing age and declining physical condition, I was appointed his plenary guardian.

My father will be 78 years old in June and has been suffering from paranoid schizophrenia for almost half a century. His story is not atypical of individuals who have suffered from serious mental illnesses (including the 2.6 million victims of schizophrenia in this nation alone), yet they remain one of the most maligned, misunderstood and disenfranchised demographics in our nation.

I'd be interested in hearing from anyone in your network who may remember my father as a scholar, athlete and gentleman, and might be willing to share any personal anecdotes or memories of him.

Thank you in advance, Ms. Scobie, for your attention and interest.

Sincerely Yours,

Henry L. Chapman
Guardian, FBO Alfred McCrea Chapman
Advocate for Mental Health Care Reform



Brown Awards Honorary Doctorate to Classmate Lois Lowry *'Champion of Literature as a Gateway to Better Understanding of the World'*

Brown has conferred an honorary doctor of letters (Litt.D.) degree on classmate Lois Lowry for her distinguished contributions to literature.



Classmates may remember her as Lois Hammersberg.

In bestowing the degree at the 246th commencement in May, the University said in part: “Acclaimed and beloved author, mother, grandmother, and champion of literature as a gateway to better understanding of the world, you have written more than 40 books that have touched the lives of children around the globe.”

Lois Lowry—then Lois Hammersberg—entered Brown in 1954 as a member of the Class of 1958 and remained at the university for two years before marrying Donald Grey Lowry, a naval officer, and moving frequently before ultimately settling in Portland, Maine.

She has twice received the Newbery Medal, given annually for the work judged to be the most distinguished contribution to children’s literature by an American author. The award was made to her in 1990 for *Number the Stars* and in 1994 for *The Giver*.

The Giver, her best known work, is the story of a society that has traded emotional highs and lows for safety and sameness. A 12-year-old boy named Jonas who is assigned to receive and retain the memories of the society learns about emotional range and is forced to choose between safe monotony and risk.

Lois’s account of her path to Brown as a member of the Class of 1958, entitled “Train Rides,” is included in *The Brown Reader*, a 250th anniversary collection of writings about life at Brown by 50 Brown alumni who are authors.



Overseas Canary

Humanity’s Battle Against Environmental Degradation Is Already Being Lost

By Edward Flattau '58

United Nations sponsored scientists have issued a report containing grim projections for the human race if climate change is not promptly addressed. But just a few days earlier, another UN report was released that showed humanity’s battle against environmental degradation was already being lost. The report originated from the World Health Organization, and its chief finding was that an estimated seven million people perished from air pollution in 2012, the latest year on record.



True, the overwhelming number of those victims were from the financially pressed developing world, compared to the United States and other industrialized countries which could point to varying degrees of improvement in their air and water quality.

Yet in the big picture, environmental victories in the wealthier nations are no more than temporary respites. That is because the battlefield is not a single country. It is the entire planet. No more living in splendid isolation. In this day and age, the heavy volume of pollution generated by modern technological mechanization and burgeoning human populations is not static. It is carried around the world by wind and water currents, ultimately creating a connectivity between all members of the human race, rich and poor, rural and urban, educated and illiterate. And it's not just contaminated air and water that bind us to a common destiny. Species of fish migrate from their spawning grounds to places where they are overharvested or victimized by pollution, thereby depleting an important food staple for many human populations.

Specific examples of the migratory nature of modern day pollution and its effects are rife. Inhabitants of California are experiencing a preview of what potentially lies ahead as they grapple with air pollution wafting across the Pacific from China. Waste discarded in Asian waters has occasionally washed up on the shores of our West Coast. Last April Fool's Day was no joke to London. Pollution from the European mainland sent air quality soaring to dangerous levels while the British capital's structures were covered by a thick layer of dust originating from the Sahara Desert.

Environmental degradation can also cause *human migration*. Severe ecological degradation in developing countries can result in civil strife or worse, leading to an exodus of "environmental refugees". These folks can easily become a destabilizing force wherever they end up, merely by upsetting the established order.

Clearly, no one country can solve its own environmental problems by itself, let alone those that circle the planet. But better off nations can share their technological expertise with the pollution-ridden Third World countries, provide resources when possible, and follow a lifestyle that sets a sustainable example. Such a lifestyle would encompass an emphasis on energy efficiency, clean, renewable energy use, emission reduction technology, and modern waste disposal. Developed countries should also promote more environmentally sustainable transportation networks, land use, and agricultural practices not just within their own borders but beyond.

The human race must face the reality that it will be unable to achieve lasting victory against environmental degradation unless and until everyone is a victor.



Nationally syndicated environmental newspaper columnist Edward Flattau has published twice-a-week commentary since 1972 and is the longest running columnist in the field. His prize-winning column first appeared in June of that year when he took over the assignment from the late former Interior Secretary Stewart Udall. Udall had started the column on the nation's first Earth Day in 1970 out of concern about the void of environmental commentary in American newspapers.

Ed has written more than 3,700 columns on pivotal environmentally related events and personalities from his Washington base and around the country as well as from Europe, Asia, Africa, and South America. His work has appeared regularly in as many as 120 daily newspapers throughout the past four decades, and he is the recipient of ten national journalism awards.



Art and Wit: Judith Hillery '58

Since graduation, Judith Hillery has been a fiction writer and editor. In 1964, she married Judiah Higgins, a financial analyst and literature lover; they had one son, Ned. After living in Paris and London, the family moved to Princeton, NJ (Jud was a Princeton graduate). Judith published stories in *The Atlantic*, *The Texas Quarterly*, and *The Southern Review*, among others. In the '80s, she wrote profiles of contemporary English and Irish artists for *ARTnews* and *Art in America*. In addition, she co-authored *The New British Painting* (Phaidon Press, 1988).



Older Me

In following her lifelong love of drawing, she recently put together a book of cartoons and life studies which she hopes to publish.



Stylish Friend

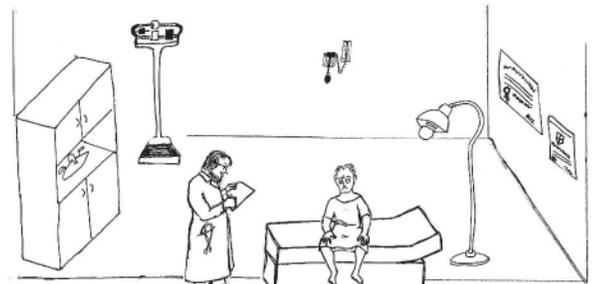


Face Lift



Sympathetic Shrink

Judith remembers fondly her days at Brown, and would welcome the chance to reconnect with classmates. Her email address is judithllry@aol.com.



"We'll do an autopsy just to be sure."



Bohr Speaks

An Alumnus of the Brown Daily Herald Recalls the Story He Didn't Cover

By Jim Furlong '58

Weren't those the days? Brown offered so much! We had friends and freedoms. We had programs right on campus with Eleanor Roosevelt! Robert Frost! Niels Bohr! ...

—From “Thoughts Fifty Years Later,” by Jane Bertram Miluski, '58, in the *Brown University Class of Nineteen Fifty-Eight Fiftieth Reunion Yearbook*

Indeed, Niels Bohr. That name takes me back to a memorable day—November 12, 1957.

Niels Bohr, the Danish scientist who won the 1922 Nobel Prize in physics, was scheduled to speak that day in Alumnae Hall at Pembroke. I was a reporter then for the *Brown Daily Herald*, but another reporter, (the late) Bob Sugarman '60, had been assigned by the newspaper to file on the lecture.

I planned a relaxed, non-working attendance.

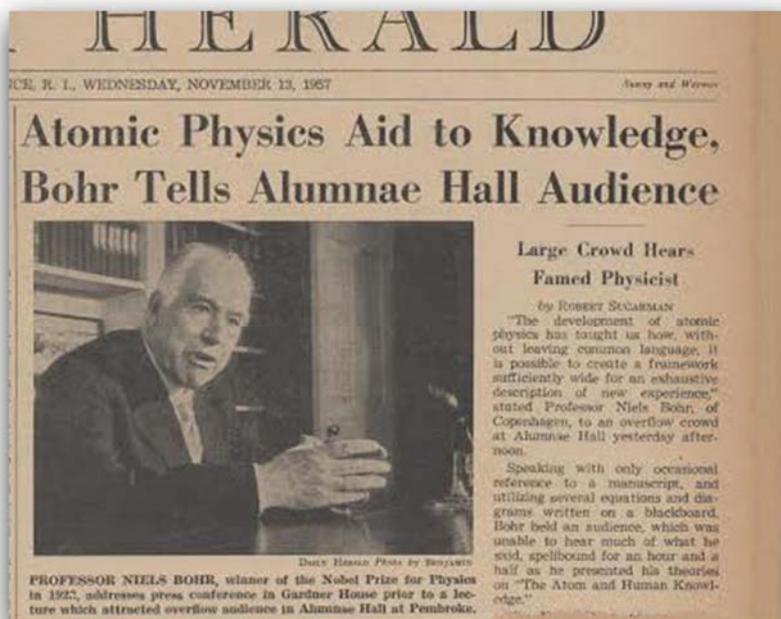
It didn't work out that way.

Shortly before the lecture was to take place, the editor on duty at the *Herald* told me that Bob Sugarman had been unavoidably delayed. Niels Bohr was my story until and unless Bob showed up. I braced for what could be a long day that would have me struggling to explain something about atomic structure and quantum mechanics—first to myself and then to *Herald* readers.

I was not a good science student, though my classmate Tom Cowl had coached me effectively through Physics D-1 to a respectable result, and I had at least heard of waves, particles and wavicles. Tom's invaluable advice, much more tactfully and gently delivered, boiled down to what I mentally translated as: “Practice the problems, Stupid!”

At any rate, an editor's orders were not to be disobeyed, and I showed up at Alumnae Hall, in the best journalistic tradition, with sharpened pencil poised above a long slim notebook and with little idea about the subject I was about to report on. (I once heard a cynic say: “Journalists first understand tomorrow what they write about today.”)

Bohr was introduced by Dean R. Bruce Lindsay of the Graduate School, who I recently learned had studied under Bohr in 1922-23 at the Institute of Theoretical Physics in Copenhagen. (For a Lindsay





reminiscence about those days, see the *Brown Daily Herald* digital archive and search “All Issues” for “Niels Bohr”.)

In 1957 Bohr, a former avid soccer player, was a vigorous-looking 72 year old. His assistant set up a board on which Bohr would write equations. Bohr began talking, and my pencil descended to the paper. But what the devil? Bohr was talking confidently and at good volume, but I could neither understand any sentence he uttered, nor most of the individual words. I put down my pencil in despair.

As I tried to figure out what to do, I saw Bob Sugarman stride into the room. He saw me and hand-signaled, “I’ll take it from here.” He somehow found a seat in the well-filled auditorium and looked up alertly, pencil and notebook poised for action.

A minute or two later, I looked at him again. His face reflected the same despair I felt. He had put his pencil down.

I believe it is safe to say that next to no one in that auditorium, with the exceptions of Professor Lindsay and Bohr’s assistant, understood what the famous atomic scientist said.

When it ended, Bob bounded up to the front of the hall and began questioning Bohr and the assistant. The next day, the *Herald* displayed Bob’s story as the lead on Page 1. The article truthfully noted that “Bohr held an audience, which was unable to hear much of what he said, spellbound for an hour and a half as he presented his theories on ‘The Atom and Human Knowledge.’ ”

In preparation for this newsletter story, I did some research on Bohr’s speaking style and came across Lindsay’s comments in an interview. (Conducted on May 6, 1964 by Henry Margenau at Yale. Niels Bohr Library & Archives, American Institute of Physics, College Park, MD, USA. http://www.aip.org/history/ohilist/4744_1.html)

Lindsay said that many great scientists, including Bohr, have been poor speakers. The interviewer notes that he had heard Bohr speak once or twice, “in English, and of course that always handicaps.”

Lindsay replies: “Bohr couldn’t even speak Danish well. He actually had an impediment in his speech which hampered him no matter what language he used. But in addition to that he had such an intense desire to be precise in his utterance that he made it very difficult for both himself and his audience... It would have been far better if when he gave a speech, he had read it from a manuscript. He refused to do so almost always, and this was much, you might say, to his credit...”

*. . . this is the day we celebrate Bohr
Who gave us the complementarity law
That gives correspondence (as Bohr said before)
That holds in the shell as well as the core
That possesses the compound levels galore
That make up the spectrum
That’s due to the modes
That belong to the drop
That looks like the nucleus
That sits in the atom
That Bohr built.*

—by R. E. Peierls, to celebrate
Niels Bohr’s seventieth birthday

Barbara Lovett Cline, in her 1965 book, *Men Who Made a New Physics*, comments that “unlike Einstein who possessed a flair for using words and expressed his thoughts easily, clearly and vividly,



Bohr spoke tentatively and it was hard at times to make out his meaning. This was only partly due to the fact that his voice was soft and that he had a slight speech impediment. There was also the fact that...often when he talked he was not reporting a conclusion but working toward it as he spoke. Once one got to know Bohr and understand his way of speaking, conversation with him could be exciting, especially if one questioned his ideas. In argument he was at his best.”

The 1957 speech was the second Bohr had given at Brown and the second introduced by Lindsay. In 1933, Bohr delivered the principal address at the graduate convocation. (It would be eight years later, in 1941, that Bohr and German physicist Werner Heisenberg met in German-occupied Denmark for talks whose exact content still is uncertain and which formed the basis for Michael Frayn’s 1998 play, *Copenhagen*. Bohr fled to Sweden in 1943 and later was flown to Britain. He played a significant part in the Manhattan Project at Los Alamos.)

Given what Lindsay knew about Bohr’s public speaking, why did he invite Bohr to Brown for the 1957 speech?

The answer, I think, is in Lindsay’s closing comment in 1957. As I sat listening to Bohr that day, I had no idea what Lindsay could possibly say about a speech that virtually no one understood. When I heard Lindsay’s words, they filled me with admiration for the dean’s ability to say the true and right thing. He said, approximately:

“We have watched a brilliant mind wrestling with the most important problems of physics.”

That’s what Lindsay wanted. He wanted us to watch a genius at work, a profound man full of excitement about his ideas. We did that, and it was unforgettable.



I’m a Canoe. How Do You Do?

Transcribed by Peter B. Howard '58

My name is Herman. I’m a canoe. Pete made me in ’53 from plans published in *Boys’ Life* the year before. I was made in the basement of his family’s apartment in Taylor Dorm, Loomis School, Windsor, Connecticut. The school is on the Farmington River, less than a mile from where it flows into the Connecticut River.

My keel, stems, ribs and gunnels are made from a white ash tree harvested from the school’s property near the river. Pete cut the tree into manageable pieces and, with his father Bert’s help, trucked it to a local sawmill. My planking is clear fir ripped from standard 2x4 lumber in the school’s shop. My thwarts are made from salvaged hickory baseball bats. My hull was originally covered with 10 ounce white duck and painted with light green airplane dope. My wooden parts are spar varnished.

I have spent most of my 60-plus years hanging in a garage. This gives me lots of time to remember my many trips. Usually Pete paddled in my stern, but many different people have paddled bow and have traveled as passengers.

I remember my first trip. My hull was still unpainted. Pete couldn’t wait to try me out. He carried me to the hockey pond, launched me, scrambled in and paddled me with a board. I floated! We were a proud pair.



Soon after that Pete carved a long pine beaver tail paddle, and Bert presented us with a small machine-made paddle. Bert also made us a removable carrying yoke. Pete and his younger brother, John, paddled me down the Farmington and up the Connecticut a few miles to the rapids at Windsor Locks. We discovered the hard way why there was a canal around this stretch of the river. No matter how hard we paddled, we made no headway. We turned back when Pete cracked the pine paddle. Soon after, he crafted two standard paddles from fir. One of them we still have.

Our most memorable trip from that era when Pete was in high school or college was an overnight trip from Windsor down the Connecticut to near its mouth at Essex. Steve, Pete's youngest brother, mostly rode along and kept a spirited journal. We met little traffic and enjoyed fair weather. The hardest paddle was across the river at Essex, where Bert picked us up.

A year or so later, *Boys' Life* published plans for a sailing rig. Pete outfitted me with a clamp-on thwart to hold mast and leeboard, a mast with a vertical gaff, and a clamp-on rudder. Pete's mother, Louise, sewed a sail from light cotton canvas. We learned how to sail on the Connecticut River. I could never make much headway upwind but, before the wind, I sailed much faster than they could paddle.

Pete sometimes tied me on Bert's car roof rack and drove me 25 miles to Barkhamsted Reservoir. Here there was plenty of room to sail. The clean water also made this a good place to tip over and then let the crew get the water out and climb back in. This was more fun for the boys than for me. One time coming home, the ropes holding me to the rack let go and I hit the ground behind the car and rolled and bounced. Fortunately, I survived with only scratches. Ever since, when going any distance, Pete ties my bow to the front bumper and stern to the rear bumper. I haven't fallen off since.

My biggest sail was on Lake George in New York State. Pete's family car topped me to a house near Hulett's Landing owned by Pete's family friends, the Olneys. They had a big dock where they launched me. With Cindy Olney sitting on the windward gunnel and a brisk breeze blowing from the north, we sailed east toward the far shore, which they could barely see. My ribs creaked and my clamp-on sailing gear rattled. But we made it all the way across and back. Pete never sailed that far out again.



Herman carries Pete and son Doug in the 1975 annual Nemasket River Race, 20 miles, in Middleborough, Massachusetts.

These trips were the exceptions. Most of the time Pete paddled me solo up and down the Farmington, poking into little feeder streams, visiting little islands and even, one time, harvesting wild fox grapes. Once we took brother Steve, then age 7 or 8, to a tree "fort" (actually a platform) Pete had built on an island in the mouth of the Farmington. They left me on the bank. They soon returned with Steve clutching his arm and looking pale. He had cut himself while whittling using Pete's jackknife. I found myself launched in a rush and paddled back upstream in the shortest time ever. After a stitch or two, Steve healed with a scar on which to embroider many a tall tale.



Near the end of this time, Pete introduced me to Jane Loveless, and I was honored to take them on a tour of all the interesting and remote spots on the river. Jane has always been kind to me, and tolerant if not enthusiastic.

When the garage at Loomis was torn down while Ensign Pete was off training in California, I spent a year in the damp cellar of Bert and Louise. But when Pete and Jane got settled at the Naval Ammunition Depot near Goose Creek in South Carolina, they came and got me. Soon I came to know the Cooper River, which is as wide as the Connecticut and even muddier, but slower-moving. Now my passengers were a family: Lieutenant JG Pete, Navy wife Jane and son Douglas. I was glad to carry Doug because he was quiet and even sometimes fell asleep. Pete outfitted me with a trailer made from live oak and padded with high quality packing material from discarded Polaris (ballistic missile) shipping boxes.

This southern idyll lasted only two years. Soon I returned to New England but now on the top of a crib tied to the roof of Pete's '52 Buick. I went back into the cellar at Loomis while Pete got a master's degree at MIT. And, of future interest to me, Jane gave birth to twins, Mary and Ann. It took two school years, but eventually I was rescued and brought to Arlington, Massachusetts. Pete made me a dry and safe storage place over the car in his garage. That is where I am now.

We discovered that the greater Boston area has many fine canoeable rivers and lakes. The closest lake is Spy Pond. Many times I carried one or another of the Howard children around the pond. We visited uninhabited Elizabeth Island in the middle of the pond, and we poked into the dense growths of phragmites reeds. Sometimes we would spot a large snapping turtle. Often we saw ducks, geese and swans. All this within four miles of Boston!

By now I had become rather shabby. My canvas cover had been often patched but still leaked. I was not a good family boat. Pete decided to fix me up. He stripped off my canvas and installed small maple decks in the bow and stern to greatly strengthen the place where the gunnels meet the upward-curving keel. He covered me with fiberglass fabric and polyester resin. He also added seats in bow and stern that are covered with lawn chair tape. Finally I got a coat of dark green paint. No more leaks. But now I weigh well over 50 pounds.

I well remember the first time I put into the Concord River. John and his son Mark were visiting. We took them, along with Doug, down the quiet stretch above (Emerson's) "rude bridge" where the colonial Minutemen faced down the British in 1775. Of course, they beached me on the muddy bank so they could see the stones commemorating the British soldiers who died there. Below the bridge, the river is calm, and we were able to capture a sleeping turtle.

A few years later, Pete and Doug entered me in the 1975 annual Nemasket River Race in Middleborough. This 20-mile race was our first experience in flat water competition. We made it in 3¼ hrs. The winners finished in 2 hours. Pete and Doug could hardly climb out. I thought they would never get me back on the car.

Soon Doug was paddling me in other races with various partners. Pete simply delivered us and picked us up. I'm too beamy and heavy to be a good racer, but we had a good time. Doug has raced canoes ever since. As soon as he could, he bought a racing canoe and fancy lightweight paddles. He has raced all over the northeastern U.S. and even once in Europe. I am proud to have introduced him to this sport.

During this era, when Pete's children were still living at home, we made several trips to the Somerset Reservoir in southern Vermont. Pete would drive us to a parking area on the Deerfield River at the



northern end of the Reservoir. This is only a few miles from Bert and Louise's retirement home in Jamaica. On the first trip, Pete carried me a mile down the jeep track to the water. And then went back for the packs. Later he made a carrier with bike wheels which could be pulled over the rutted road. I rolled along right side up carrying the packs. This reservoir is the closest to wilderness that I have ever been. There are no houses and almost no boats or people. We camped on an island and they cooked and ate the trout that Doug or younger son Davey caught. I haven't been back to Vermont since Pete's parents died and Pete inherited the house. Doug lives in the next town and has lots of canoes so I am left to dream in Massachusetts.

As Pete's children grew older, I spent more and more time in the garage. Ann sometimes took Pete and me on a Father's Day trip on the Concord River. I introduced Pete's oldest grandchild, Louise, to canoeing when she was very young. She rode in me on my trailer down to Spy Pond. Then I showed her all the sights that I had showed her mother, Mary. It was fun for both of us.

Last year, for the first time since the 1970s, Pete entered me in a race and invited Doug to join us. The race is sponsored by the Mystic River Watershed Association and leaves from the Blessing of the Bay Boathouse in Somerville and goes upstream to the Mystic Lakes in Lexington, and then back. There are several distances. Pete chose the nine-mile race. He was doubtful if his 77-year-old body could do it, so he trained for a month by paddling me solo around Spy Pond every other day.



Herman, Pete and Jane after a nine-mile Mystic River [MA] Watershed Association race in 2013. Pete, paddling bow, and Doug in the stern finished second.

For the race, Doug paddled stern, and they used carbon fiber paddles. Both the paddles and Pete in the bow were firsts for me. They pushed me right along and we finished second in our race. This, too, was a first time for me. Doug is a powerful paddler and Pete was able to keep up—sort of. Doug says that's the last time he will race me.

So here I am, hanging in the garage, dreaming of times gone by. I wonder if one of those grandchildren will want me? The stories I could tell them!



My Gender Journey *By Lee Ann P. Etscovitz '58*

Most men lead lives of
quiet desperation
and go to the grave
with the song still in them.

—Henry David Thoreau

When I entered Brown as a freshman I had already been struggling since kindergarten with feelings of being different from others. I always felt marginal, like I didn't really belong anywhere. I didn't know why I felt that way. I just knew I wasn't happy no matter where I was, whether at school or at home. I didn't have a name for my strange feelings, and no one else knew I had them. I kept them a secret and kept to myself. Those feelings of being different followed me wherever I went and in everything I did, night and day, through elementary school, through my years at Phillips Exeter, and through my years at Brown. At the same time, I always had girl friends, but there was one problem. I not only liked them, I wanted to BE like them.

As I said before, I had no name for these feelings. I didn't know they were a sign of wanting to change my assigned gender from male to female. I just felt confused all the time about who I was. I thought of myself as being sexually weird, a freak, sick in the head, because I had sexual fantasies that seemed strange. Even the much publicized sex change of Christine Jorgensen in 1952 did not mean anything to me. I did not connect with it at all, though as time went on after I graduated from Brown, I must have sensed I needed to prove, at least to myself, that I was a man, because I grew a beard in various shapes and sizes and bought a motorcycle along with a real macho leather jacket and boots. But no matter how bushy the beard or how far and fast I rode my bike, I could not hide from, nor outrun, my inner turmoil.

What was eventually diagnosed as GID or Gender Identity Dysphoria, that is, unhappiness with my assigned gender, would be my big, dark secret until I was 55 years old. For 35 years after graduating from Brown I continued to live a charade, presenting myself on the outside one way but feeling different on the inside. Unfortunately, my inside-outside conflict was not something I was yet able to conceptualize and label. I was born and raised and attended college at a time not yet openly recognizing LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender), let alone when a college would officially endorse a policy of insuring gender-change medical charges. The first significant book on the transsexual phenomenon was written by Dr. Harry Benjamin, an endocrinologist in New York, in 1966. I had already graduated from Brown, had completed my doctoral residency, and was a college instructor working at the same time on my doctoral dissertation.

As I said, I was living a charade, living behind a wall of fear, deathly afraid of anyone finding out that I secretly cross-dressed. I was already married and had two sons and a daughter, so between career and marriage I felt I had a lot to lose if my secret were known. When I finally received my doctor's degree and had moved with wife and children to Philadelphia as an assistant professor at



Lionel Etscovitz at 22



Drexel University, I was not only deeper than ever into my charade but also troubled more than ever by my sexual fantasies. This situation continued for another five years, until after 15 years of marriage and secret cross-dressing I was so overwhelmed by it all that I obtained a divorce.

I not only divorced my wife but a few years later I also stepped away permanently from the world of academia. I had been moving from one college position to another, unable to focus properly on my work, unable to obtain tenure anywhere. So I did what seemed to family and friends like an illogical thing to do: I became a car salesman. Actually, in my own eyes my decision was logical, and for three reasons. First, I needed to get away from living in the somewhat abstract world of teaching and into something more concrete where hopefully I could more easily be the man I was supposed to be. Second, I needed to make money. And third, my father had been an automobile dealer, so I was familiar with the world of cars. For the next 10 years I sold new and used cars, primarily up-line European ones, like BMW and Saab, and did quite well.

Three years after I had begun life as a salesman I remarried after having lived single for seven years. I had met a woman with whom I had at once fallen in love. It was an inner thing, as they say, soul deep for both of us, maybe because we both knew the meaning of suffering. She was a child survivor of the Nazi holocaust, and I was trying to survive my own inner holocaust. We had dated for three years, but I was reluctant to make a move towards marriage. One day she unexpectedly asked me to marry her. I could not bear to lose her, in spite of my secret inner turmoil. So with a mixture of joy and trepidation I remarried.

Unfortunately, even working in the down-to-earth world of car sales did not help me to erase, or even lessen, my inner struggle. It was only getting worse. After 10 years of a second marriage and 10 years as a salesman, I had to do something about my inner suffering. I was desperate.

Two years before I finally stopped selling cars my wife had suffered a stroke from which she eventually made an amazing recovery but which at the time was a clarifying moment for me. Her three-day coma woke me up from my own living death. That was when, upon consulting a therapist, I finally faced and disclosed to my wife the source of my inner torment. That was a challenging moment in our marriage, but miracle of miracles, we are still married, going on 33 years, and still very much in love.

The 10 years following my awakening were a combination of heavy involvement in a transgender support organization, ongoing therapy, and earning a living at a variety of tasks. I did tutoring for the improvement of writing skills, became a housing inspector for HUD, and a social caseworker for the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare. I also began my transition with hormone therapy, electrolysis, and then living full time as a woman, all of it with therapeutic guidance leading up to sexual reassignment surgery in 2001.

At about the same time that I had my surgery at age 65, I entered an intern program on a part-time basis in marriage and family therapy. At age 72 I received my certification as a marriage and family therapist and began to specialize in issues pertaining to lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and transgenders.



Lee Ann Etscovitz at 75



Since then I have also run staff development workshops on the transgender experience and have published two books on the transgender phenomenon, both of which are on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) and Kindle. The first book is a collection of my poetry called, *Let the Dandelions Grow: A Poetic Portrait of a Transsexual Journey and the Human Condition*. The second book, *An Inner Roadmap of Gender Transformation*, presents an original conceptual framework of how gender change unfolds and is illustrated by my own experiences, such as in this article.

As I look back on my gender journey, I regret I had to wait so long to make my gender change, but as I said, the times were not in my favor while growing up. Brown's new policy of insuring gender change medical charges would most likely have made a major difference in my journey if the times during my college years had been like the times now, that is, more open to diversity in terms of human sexuality, but such was simply not the case.

The first 55 years of my life were filled with shame and guilt. I felt defective as a human being and guilty for deceiving not only my family but also myself. I am proud of the fact that, even with all my inner struggle, I was able to graduate from Exeter, Brown, and Boston University. And then, as I have mentioned, after my transition I completed an internship in marriage and family therapy and published two books involving my transgender experience, all of which attests to my persistence.

I have found love and happiness with a wife who is able to love the real me. My daughter and I are close, but my two sons, unfortunately, have disowned me, so all is not perfect. But most importantly, I have faced my personal truth and have come to own myself. That is one form of ownership no one can take away from me. As I said in my class poem, *Ode to Freedom*, which I read for the Under the Elms exercises at the Class of 1958 graduation: "We all must stand before the looking glass / And face the naked image of our lives." I sensed then that my truth would be my freedom. It took a lifetime to discover what I knew all along.

Class News

Closer and closer
to the front of the News,
further and further
from the youngest views,

the gap widens
with every year
and every breath,
with every medical miracle
delaying the date with Death.

Then Obituaries,
that section of Class News
announcing Time,
like a coastal fog horn
singing Rock of Ages,

warning us all
that to live
is to be vulnerable,
that the true journey
is full of risk,

and that the journey's end
is not known
till nothing more
can be said,

even in the

Class News.

—Lee Ann P. Etscovitz
Class of 1958

See classmates at the Mini-Reunion! (Details on the next page)

For current views of Providence, go to https://www.youtube.com/embed/HbVD_yb9mWE

**Class of 1958 Mini-Reunion
250th Anniversary Celebration—26-28 September 2014**

Friday – September 26, 2014

- 5:00 PM** Reception at the home of Art and Martha Joukowsky, 79 Prospect St.
7:00 PM Talk by Martha Sharpe Joukowsky—My Life at Petra: A Story of the Brown Excavation at Petra in Jordan
8:15 PM Dinner at the Hope Club
Choice of Grilled Fillet of Beef, Grilled Fish, or a Vegetarian Entrée

Saturday – September 27, 2014

10:00 AM – 4:00 pm

The University has not firmed up all its plans yet. However, we know the following events are planned for this time frame.

Keynote Address: President Paxson and an honored invitee.

Colloquiums:

- The Human Brain: Impact on Everyday Lives
- Earth and Beyond: The State of the World and the Universe
- Making It: Delving into the Creative Process

Tours:

- Public Art Tour
- Architectural Tour
- History of Religion Tour

Open Houses:

- Solar Decathlon
- Graduate School Student Research
- Engineering Open House
- Nelson Open House for Alumni

Please note that lunch is on your own. The Ivy Room will be open, but Toy Sun's and the Brown Jug are long gone. There are numerous good restaurants and fast-food places on Thayer Street.

4:00 – 5:30 PM

Class of '58 tailgating on the deck at the Wyndham Gardens Hotel, 220 India St., Providence. There will be hearty hors d'oeuvres. Cash bar.

6:00 – 9:15 PM

Brown vs. Harvard Football Game followed by celebratory fireworks. A bus will be provided for transportation from the Wyndham Gardens to the game at Brown Stadium. **Go Brown!**

Sunday – September 28, 2014

11:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Clambake at the Parkers (in line with a class tradition)
1200 Drift Rd., Westport, MA

Further information to come!