Bushy Tales

Dedicated to all who attended London Central High School at Bushy Park, London England from 1952 to 1962

Issue #12 **February 2010** **Volume #9**

Gary Schroeder (55), Editor gschroeder4@comcast.net
Visit the Bushy Park Web Site at http://www.bushypark.org/

Class Representatives

1953 - Jackie (Brown) Kenny
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1954 – Betsy (Neff) Cote
betsycote@verizon.net

1955 – Nancie (Anderson) Weber
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1956 - Edie (Williams) Wingate
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1957 –Shirley (Huff) Dulski
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1958 – Pat (Terpening) Owen
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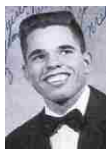


1959 – John "Mike" Hall
MGHall@Q.com

1960 - Ren Briggs
rpbjr@frontiernet.net

1961 - Betsy (Schley) Slepetz
bslepetz@comcast.net

1962 - Dona (Hale) Ritchie
DonaRitchi@aol.com

REMINDERS AND SPECIAL INFORMATION

1. Don't forget, if you're planning on changing your e-mail address (especially if you've been using a work e-mail to receive the newsletter and are planning on retiring soon) to let either Gary or Pat know so you can continue to receive news about your classmates.

2. Please try to remember to put BUSHY PARK or something similar in the SUBJECT line when you send us something. If we don't recognize your name or e-mail address we might delete it. (I've done that in the past - Pat). **We also need your class year.**

3. If you decide you no longer want to receive the newsletter, just send an e-mail to either Gary or Pat and let them know and you'll be taken off.

4. If you haven't received your newsletter by the 5th of any month (unless Gary or Pat let you know

if there will be a delay), please contact either of them and they'll get a copy out to you.

Roster Changes

New Email address:

Beverly (Greer) Sokolowski (59)
b.sokolowski@yahoo.com

Robyn (Rudat) Allen (58)
rallen6@bellsouth.net

Lynne (Fitzgerald) Drews (59)
Drewsla@frontier.com

Classmates Who Have Transferred To The Eternal Duty Station

Our love and prayers go out to the family and friends of our classmates who have gone on before us. We will miss them, yet we can find comfort in knowing that one-day we will all join them for the greatest of all reunions.

Harold Dreibelbis (56)

Paul Wilcott (61)

From Judy (Risler) Murphy ('60)
It is with such profound sadness I report the passing of Paul Wilcott, class of '61, in Long Beach, California, January 7, 2010.

He was my classmate, my compatriot, my confidante, and my friend.

Paul was the first person I met from Bushy Park. My dad was stationed at RAF Alconbury, and he'd brought me to the base to catch the funny-looking bus bound for my new school for the first time. I was deep into the "here we go again/stranger in our midst" syndrome. At the bright and promising age of 16, I'd left good friends and great times behind in Wichita Falls, Texas, all of which had been won by sheer grit and stubborn determination to hang in and hang on so I could hang out comfortably in a civilian world. I wasn't in any frame of mind to start jumping through the same hoops again, so I got out of the car with major trepidations.

But I didn't have time to feel too sorry for myself. A fine-looking specimen with blue eyes and a blonde crewcut, decked out in a white shirt, white jeans and an unforgettable powder blue sweater vest, immediately walked up to the car, helped me out, and introduced himself. "Hi, I'm Paul Wilcott", he said, smiling. "Welcome." I thought I'd died and gone to heaven.

Paul made sure my bags got on the bus that pulled in about the same time I got there, guided me to a seat, sat down beside me and began to explain the intricacies of dependent bus travel back and forth to Bushy Park, and what to expect when I got to the dormitory. When the bus made its regular stops at two other bases on its way down to London, he made sure I met everyone who came on board, who subsequently greeted me like they'd known me all their lives. By the time we arrived in front of the dorm late that afternoon, I was a certified member of the "brat pack".

Paul and I remained steadfast friends until I graduated in 1960, and he'd gone on to another school at Lakenheath, to graduate a year later. We lost touch for many years, as most did. It was an occupational hazard for kids like us. But then, out of the blue, in 1988, I got a phone call from a man in California, who said he worked for McDonnell-Douglas, asking me if I was the author of a specific article written for Military Lifestyle magazine, about an LCHS reunion in Houston, Texas. "Yes, I am."

"And were you at Wichita Falls, Texas before you went to England?"
"Yes," I replied, curious to know where this conversation was leading.
"And you live in Louisiana now?"
"That's right."
"Then you're the one," he said.
"The one, what?", I asked, now totally perplexed.
"We have a mutual friend," he explained. "Paul Wilcott. He's in Kuwait, but he read your article, and asked me to contact you, and make sure you were the same Judy he knew in England."
I was dumbfounded. I couldn't believe someone had gone to so much trouble to contact me. "Well, tell him, it's me."

He did so, and in a short while I got a long letter from Paul, the first of many. He sent me a Christmas card from Kuwait, depicting a chilled out, barefooted Santa Claus in Bermuda shorts and a Hawaiian shirt, dozing under a palm tree.

We picked up where we left off, and never got "disconnected" again. Oh, there were long periods of time when I didn't hear from him, but I knew he would write when he could. During this time, Iran invaded Kuwait, and Paul and his family had to flee the country. After some time, he called me from California, to tell me about his return to Kuwait, and finding nothing left of his house but a lot of shattered glass and an empty mattress on the floor. We talked for a long time, setting a comfortable precedent for years to come. Even though we weren't in touch constantly, our friendship never faltered.

After I got a computer, and learned how to use it, communication was easier. Mostly, we'd chat on the 'net, but every once in awhile he'd revert to Ma Bell and call me just to say hi, and find out what was going on in the swamps. Even after he fell ill, and was waiting for a lung transplant, he kept in touch. Sick as he was, he made it to a couple of our annual Bushy Park gatherings, although we didn't get as much time to visit as I'd have liked. I was just delighted he was there, and we could reconnect in person.

Our internet correspondence continued, albeit sporadically. I kept him abreast of who had been "found", and who didn't want to be "found", and what was happening in my corner of the planet. But when he'd telephone, his voice sounded strained and tired. Then the joyous day came when he called to say he'd made it through the transplant, and the recovery, and was, even as we spoke, on his way to the medical supply store to turn in the oxygen bottle he'd been carrying around with him for so long. We celebrated, long distance.

Then, two years ago, my husband, Mike Murphy ('58), and I met Paul at Terry Ennis' ('60) house in McAlester, Oklahoma. Terry was quite ill at the time, but the four of us laughed and talked and reminisced till very late. I had brought some old snapshots from school, as well as the annuals from 1958 and 1960, and we oohed and aahed over them, exchanging lots of "remember when...", and "I'll never forget the time..." It was lovely.

Paul was on his way back to California from a business trip. He said he had an appointment with his doctor when he got back to take care of a little skin cancer he'd developed up by his ear.

That was the last time I saw him.

Now, my friend is gone. And I will never again hear that soft, kind, pleasant voice, commiserating with me over his world, or mine, or things in general.
I will so miss him.

From the Long Beach Press-Telegram: **PAUL CLIFFORD WILCOTT** *passed away January 7, 2010 at USC University Hospital, from respiratory failure. He was born on November 20, 1942 in Long Beach, CA. He was a dedicated employee of The Boeing Company/McDonnell Douglas Aircraft for the past 44 years. Paul is survived by his wife, Paulette, brother David, children Joan Lively, Erica Wilcott, and Fred Wilcott; stepsons David Scott, Kevin and Matthew Komatz; grandchildren Henry and Grace Lively, Sam, Rex and Eva Komatz, and his niece, Kimberly Flores. He was predeceased by his parents, Clifford and Evangeline Wilcott, and sister, Mary Glude. Memorial service will be conducted at Luyben Family Dilday-Motell Mortuary, 5161 Arbor Road, Long Beach, on Friday, January 15th, at 11am. Donations can be made in Paul's name to the American Lung*

Association, Luyben Family Dilday-Mottell, (562)-425-6401.

Bushy Park friends Thyra Caldwell, Chuck Drude, Clifford and Pat Gunderson, and Bob Harrold were in attendance.

(Editors Note: If anyone knows of birthdays coming up in March please send the name(s) no later than the 20th of February so I can get them in the March issue.)

Memories of Bushy

Your editor really goofed last month. The article below was identified as coming from Michael Mitchell (61). This Michael Mitchell never attended Bushy Park, he is the husband of Carol (Armstrong) Mitchell (62) and she is the one who wrote the article. I am publishing it again this month to give credit where credit is due. Sorry for the goof.

Carol (Armstrong) Mitchell (62)
mmitch1@sbcglobal.net

I have enjoyed Bushy Tales for several years now. Thanks Gary for all your work. In spite of good intentions, I have never gotten around to contributing.

I only attended Bushy Park my sophomore year (1959/60), but I have many great memories of the Long Lounge, fog days, wing outings into London, seemingly endless 5 hour bus rides home every Friday night and back to school again on Sunday – etc. I transferred to Lakenheath H.S. when it opened in the fall of 1960 for my junior and senior years. (Those who attended Central H.S. in the 50s may not be familiar with Lakenheath H.S. It was a brand new school that the USAF built at RAF Lakenheath for the students who lived in northern England. It was quite a nice change from Bushy Park, but I missed being in London and all the cultural opportunities. At least the bus ride was a lot shorter – only about an hour and a half or two hours. Fortunately, we continued to qualify as dorm students. All the full time students from Prestwick, Iceland etc. remained at Bushy.) I remember only a very few of my classmates from those days at Bushy, unless they also transferred to Lakenheath. I do, however, enjoy reading other alums stories and remembering similar experiences. Overall, I loved my time in England. I thought it was an exciting adventure that forced me to become more independent. I also established wonderful friendships that have lasted a lifetime. We're like family and get together whenever possible.

What inspired me to write was the contribution from Dee (Davis) Roth in the August edition. She shared her memories of the tragic Christmas 1960 plane crash in Munich that took the lives of many former Bushy Park students. Having lost my good friend, Marjory Karr, in that crash, it warmed my heart to hear about the heroic effort Dee, (as editor-in-chief of the University of Maryland newspaper, The Continental,) made to put out a special edition in honor of the students who died. Coincidentally, at that time, my junior year at Lakenheath, I was taking a journalism class and was sports editor of our school paper. I was a cheerleader and attended all the games, so the class decided that was a good job for me! (I graduated from San Jose State here in California with a major in journalism and published a magazine for several years, so I can really appreciate what Dee accomplished with such a short deadline.)

Even though Marge was a senior at Bushy and I was a sophomore, she took me (the new girl) under her wing, and we were soon good friends. It helped that her family lived in the other half of our duplex on RAF Woodbridge. Our parents were also close friends and our dads actually worked together frequently. You see, her dad, Col. Bill Karr, was the base Staff Judge Advocate and my dad, Major

Jack Armstrong, was the Chief of Security and Law Enforcement at RAF Bentwaters and RAF Woodbridge, a joint command. They saw each other in court often!

The summer after Marge graduated we had a great time exploring the English countryside on our bikes. Our bedrooms in the duplex shared a common wall, so we devised a code to tap messages to each other. Marge was the oldest of four children and planned to become a lawyer like her dad. Quite an ambition for a girl in those days! As that wonderful summer drew to a close, we had some unexpected news. Marge's mother, Beulah, announced that she was expecting a fifth child. I can still hear Marge saying, "Can you imagine my mother pregnant again at her age?" Marge wasn't upset, just very surprised. Of course, we thought our parents were old! (My mom was close to turning 35 and Beulah wasn't much older!)

I missed Marge when she went off to Munich, but I had a new school to experience (Lakenheath) and lots to keep me busy. I can remember being very excited the day Marge's parents left for London to pick her up for the Christmas holidays. (I didn't know until my mother, Prue Armstrong, told me on Christmas Day, but she and Beulah had gone shopping at the BX together and gotten Marge and me the same gift for Christmas. It was, for those days, a very nice little portable stereo. I will never forget that Marge never received that gift.)

As I anxiously awaited Marge's arrival that day, I decided to make some Christmas cookies to pass the time. I was watching TV from the kitchen as I rolled out the cookies. I can remember having to crane my neck to peer into the "pass-through" to the dining room/living room in our little base house. Suddenly, a news bulletin came on BBC announcing that an American plane had crashed while taking off from Munich. The report gave few details, but somehow, I immediately knew it was Marge's plane. My mom was folding laundry in the bedroom, and I ran to her screaming that Marge's plane had crashed. She kept insisting that I was wrong. (After all, the Karrs were in London picking her up.) Unfortunately, that was not the case and soon the base chaplain arrived next-door to await the Karrs' return. (The plane hit a church steeple and crashed into a trolley car right in the heart of Munich. All the people in and nearby the trolley were also killed. I understand that there is a memorial of at that spot today.)

This was the first tragedy that I had ever experienced in my young life. I was shattered! In the years since, there have been other tragedies to endure; however, sharing the shock and grief of Marge's death, along with my family and the Karrs, had a huge affect on my life. To this day, I feel so sad that Marge and all those who died that day were never able to live their lives and fulfill their dreams. Marge would have been a fantastic lawyer! Needless to say, every year when the holiday season arrives, it brings with it the lingering memories of that horrible Christmas of 1960.

The Air Force immediately sent the Karrs back to the States to the base of their choosing, so they could be close to family. They went to Tinker AFB in Oklahoma – (their home state.) I remember that everything happened very fast. We all continued on with our lives and our families remained friends with many visits over the years. Coincidentally, I ended up at the University of Oklahoma for my freshman year of college. It was great having the Karrs nearby, since my dad was stationed at Griffiss AFB in Rome, New York!

After college, I lived in Vail, Colorado for twenty years. The Karrs had retired in Denver, so I saw them frequently. I also watched their youngest daughter, Sally, grow up. (She is that fifth child that Beulah was expecting when Marge died. - God works in mysterious ways.) I even attended Sally's wedding and have stayed in touch with her at Christmas. Unfortunately, my folks are gone now, and I haven't heard from the Karrs in a couple of years. I understand that they are in failing health. The last time I saw them was six years ago, when I was in Denver. As always, one of the first things I did was climb the stairs to their bedroom and say "hi" to Marge. The beautiful, large, color portrait of her was still hanging in the same place of honor, high on the wall across from their bed looking down at me.

Jerry Berry (55)
memnosine@hotmail.com

Do dorm students have all the fun, or were we just unsupervised?

Hitching a bicycle ride on a truck reminded me of hitching river rides in Germany whilst I was a dorm student at Frankfurt American High School. More than once we went kayaking on the Main, a busy industrial river. Rented kayaks from a German national on the bank, paid him in script (one of the many no-nos we and they habitually ignored; script was forbidden to German nationals, strictly reserved for the use of the occupying forces) and after giving him our ID cards (it was also strictly forbidden to let your ID out of your possession) to ensure the return of his boats we'd head upriver. That may have been the only thing we about which we thought clearly; we'd be able to drift back when we were worn out at the end of the day. But to the point -I'm getting there- not really wanting to paddle upriver against the current, we would hitch a ride on the freighters going up. We'd paddle to the shipping channel, ignore, if we even noticed, the warning blast of the steam whistle, and hitch onto the forward anchor chain. (We were smart enough, I guess, not to try and grab the stern chain, near the screws.) One did this by climbing the bow wave, grabbing the chain, and relaxing while going as far as you want. We never went far, which may be why the river patrols, neither ours nor theirs, ever got us. Departing was a little trickier, possible more dangerous, not that we knew then nor cared; push away from the suction of the hull, paddle down the bow wave and away from the stern as if the Devil himself were after us, and wait for your friends to arrive on the next ship. Possibly Satan wanted nothing to do with any of us, as we all survived with nothing more than the memories of how much fun it was and how clever we were.

Connie (Newlin) Drennon (60)
conniedre@att.net

Don't know if these will work for the newsletter, but I finally found them at a time they could be sent. The quality is not great.

The folks sitting on steps are at the old Rome airport, before our delayed flight back to the UK, just before our graduation in June of 1960. I cannot identify all, but John Connery, whose father was the pilot on the ill-fated Munich plane, is seated at the

lower left.

Anita, a class officer, now Johnson, is to the far right and standing in one picture. We communicate through E-mail.

At a different location are Gary Peters and Richard Novak in a third picture, with my mother and Gary

in the fourth picture. Mother was one of the trip chaperons. She is turning 90 in just over a week and I will be going out to California for her birthday. My daughter is about my mother's age in the picture. Does that tell you how times flies. It is sad that some in these pictures are no longer with us.

Carol (Armstrong) Mitchell (62)
mmitch1@sbcglobal.net

SECOND ARTICLE:

Update on other classmates:

You have already reported that Paul H. Wiater, class of 1962, passed away this year. He was a very dear friend of mine who attended Bushy Park

1959/60. He also went on to graduate from Lakenheath. I attended his funeral at Arlington in March, along with several high school friends from Bushy Park and Lakenheath. Paul retired from the USAF as a full colonel. He had been a tanker pilot. At one time, he was in charge of all the tankers for SAC. (They did a tanker flyover at his funeral.) His last job with the USAF was as liaison officer for the Air Force to the FAA. After retirement, he had a second career as the head of the flight program and chief pilot for the FAA for 20 years. He was still in that position with the FAA when he passed away suddenly. Of our group of friends attending Paul's funeral, four were former Bushy Park students who had transferred to Lakenheath, all class of '62: Jimmy Echols, Earle (Billy) McFadden, Tom Hanton and Pete McClean. The former Lakenheath students in attendance were Paula (Bronson) McClean, Jack Chapman and Danny James. I mention them because some former Bushy people who also transferred to Lakenheath may know them. There were many others who wanted to be there, but couldn't make it. (Most of the spouses also attended.) Anyone who would like more information about Paul can contact me.

I'm sorry to report that John C. Burris, class of 1961, also passed away this year. I don't have much information; however, he was living in the Phoenix area. He attended Bushy Park in 1959/60 for his junior year and transferred to Lakenheath where he graduated. He attended The University of Maryland, Munich in 1961/62. (There were two John Burrises at Bushy Park in 1959/60. John S. Burris was a sophomore. John C. Burris was a junior. The annual mistakenly switched their pictures. The one who passed away was a junior, but is pictured with the sophomores.)

On a happier note, former Bushy Park classmate (1959/60) and good friend, Jimmy Echols, was just here in Napa, CA for a visit with his wife and some friends from Arizona. Jimmy graduated from Lakenheath with me in 1962. I'm enclosing a photo

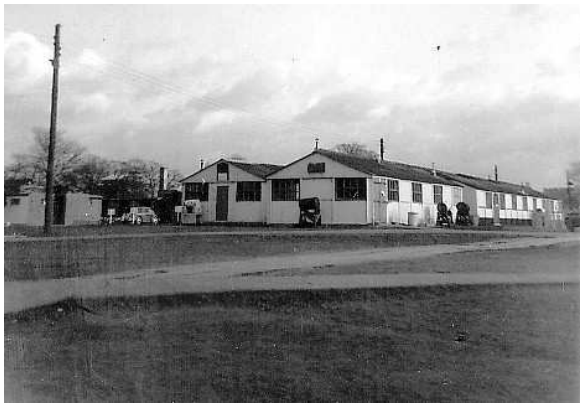
of us taken at my dining room table. Paul Wiater and Jimmy were roommates at Bushy Park. We had an open house at the girls' dorm one day, and when I went to bed that night, I discovered that those two had short-sheeted my bed! They both also played football and basketball. Since I was a cheerleader at

Lakenheath, I feel it's my duty to remind all of the Bushy Park people of that era that we beat you guys in basketball in 1961 and 1962 and went on to the tournaments in Germany! Sorry, I couldn't help myself!

Does anyone remember that close playoff basketball game between Bushy Park and Lakenheath for the 1961 championship? (Each year, the team that won in England went on to the tournaments in Germany – Nurnberg my junior year and Frankfurt my senior year.) It was a huge rivalry between Lakenheath and Bushy Park for that opportunity. It's the only time we cheerleaders were allowed to travel with the team, (except for that infamous playoff game!) For that game, we all traveled to a neutral court at RAF Weathersfield. The entire game was a nail-biter. Finally, it was a tie game with only one second left to play, when Lakenheath junior, Bob Douthit, threw a desperate attempt from about mid-court. The buzzer went off while the ball was in the air! Miraculously, it swished in! We won! It was the most exciting game I have ever attended! I was cheering for Lakenheath at that game. My folks were there with (then Col.) "Chappie" James and his wife. Their son Danny was a sophomore on the Lakenheath team. They had driven over from Bentwaters together. Chappie was very involved in the Lakenheath sports program. He was the one who handed out the letters at our sports banquets. (The reason I mention him is a point of interest.) Chappie went on to become the first black full general (4 star) in the military. There is a quote from him on the wall at the Air Force memorial in Washington D.C. (Danny also had a distinguished military career, retiring as a Lt. General a couple of years ago.)

I recall that some people are looking for pictures of Central High. I don't have many and they're not very good, but I'm forwarding what I could find. They are pretty self-explanatory. I think Paul Wiater took the photos of me on the swings across from the dorms, although I'm not sure. The out of focus photo at the bus stop was taken on a Sunday at RAF Woodbridge as we waited to go back to Bushy. I'm also including a couple of little memorabilia.

As I mentioned, the current photo is of Jimmy Echols and me taken in Oct. of this year at my home in Napa.



Reunion Information

Ruth (Lund) Bethea (55)
rbethea@verizon.net

LONDON CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL at BUSHY PARK REUNION

Classes 1953-56 & Friends

Save the dates: September 19 - 23, 2010

Wilmington, NC

We're planning fun activities for all of us to share in a very pleasant location.

More information to follow

Organizers: Ruth Lund Bethea
rbethea@verizon.net
Pat Miller Hodges
pathodges@earthlink.net
Dianne Pendergrass Hopkins
dhopkins400@peoplepc.com

Please see last two pages of this newsletter for a flyer about another reunion.

This and That

Celeste (Plitouke) Brodigan (57)
mbrodi1939@aol.com

Hello Everyone,

Wanted you to know that Jack (Jack Carmichael Class of 57) has been home for a week and happy to still be with us. He has had a really difficult time. His colon and one kidney is gone. While in ICU he was put in "coma" for a while. Terrible time.

I was in SD for my Mom's three day 90th Birthday Celebration this past weekend & also able to have a very special talk with him.

The San Diego VA is great. Every call or card was put on his "board" and read and reread to him again and again. Gave him much lift. He loves hearing from his Classmates.

Home address is:
6151 Adelaide Avenue, San Diego, CA 92115.
(619) 583-3623

Bushy Park, Central High Gathering 2010

Celebrating The Class of 1959 and 1960 50th Anniversary

The time has come for you to attend the 2010 Gathering. If you have never attended one of our past Gatherings, you should make every effort to make this one. We are planning our biggest and best one to date. For those of you that have attended one in the past we are looking forward to seeing you again. This year we are celebrating the classes of 59 and 60th 50th year anniversary. Because they were two of the largest classes to attend Bushy Park, we are changing our format and will have a dinner and dance instead of a luncheon.

The dates are—May 16th, 17th, 18th and 19th, 2010.
The Location—The Orleans Hotel, Las Vegas, Nevada
Reservations number is 1-800-675-3267

You are responsible to make your Hotel reservations. We have received a special room rate for the above dates at $50 a night. **In order for us to get that rate you must give the reservations people a GROUP CODE NAME AND NUMBER**.

Reservations ID NUMBER is – 0LCHC05 and the Group name is –LCHS GATHERING. Without this Group Name and number you will not receive the special rate. The cut off date for room reservations is **April 14th, 2010**. After that date it will be on space availability.

We have selected The Orleans Hotel for its location and facilities. There are 1872 rooms, nine (9) restaurants, outstanding pool and spa facilities, bowling center, 18 screen movie theatre, and much more. You can go on line and take a virtual tour under The Orleans Hotel and Casino.

We will have a hospitality room available for check in on Monday the 17th and on Tuesday the 18th all day from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. It will be a great place to get together and exchange stories. The dinner and dance will be May 18th, Tuesday night in the banquet room.

On page (2) two you will find the information about the dinner/operating costs for reservations. Please print this page and fill in the required information. We must have all the dinner/operating costs in hand by **April 14th**. The Hotel will work with us on late reservations.

See next page for signup sheet and prices.

2010 Gathering Dinner and operating costs

Mail to: Ren Briggs
1671 Monte Vista Dr.
Bullhead City, AZ 86442

CHS Student Name_____
(maiden name)

Spouse / Guest _____

Class of _____

Address _____
City/state _____
Zip and phone_____
E/mail _____

<u>Dinner cost per person $55.00</u> (includes tax and gratuity)

Dinner ($55.00) number of people _____ equals $_____
Operating cost per person $15.00 _____sub total $_____

Total submitted $_____

Please make checks payable to Ren Briggs
Must be received by April 14th 2010

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