



September 2021 AHS '63 Newsletter

The Last Rose of Summer Edition

Northern Outpost, Sunny, 63 degrees ... smuggy-smug-smug. There are sixty-five rose bushes around the castle here in Wiscasset. We didn't plant them—they conveyed with the moats, dragons, and parapets. A crazed rosarian lived here forty years ago, named Duffy. All of Duffy's roses are pink. It's a lot of pink. Seventy-umpty-ump yards of it stretching here to yonder. Some days a car slows down out on the road to take a pic of the silly heaving pinkness falling all over itself along an ancient white picket fence. We fell into crazy ourself one day and painted the front door pepto just to get a rise out of the proper New England neighbors in this historic district. But they decided we were funny so we got away with it. For now. We're pretty sure we'll be in trouble if they ever resurrect the town historical commission. Could get slapped into the stocks and fined several shillings for egregious public misbehavior.

Speaking of a old roses nodding on the fence (we'll catch hell for that crack), today is the day the baby of the class finally turns 75—[Marcy Howard](#), we hope you are still in the pink and living it up ... and, we hope you get a ridiculous amount of email birthday wishes ... all of y'all click on her name and send her a note. That oughta keep her busy.

Meanwhile, we've been up to our ears in emails our own self and had an idea for this newsletter that is more nostalgic. Every month someone writes in trying to find an email address for a

classmate, and this month was no different. Kent MacDougall wrote in looking for Brooks Peterson, and it happened that his wife, Kimiko, came to one of the reunions years back. Had her email address. So what we're doing here is relaying (with permissions) a series of letters that transpired over a few days last week. Memorable. Nostalgic. Lovely. Brooks was our class poet, and if you were lucky enough to have spent elementary through high school with him, you knew his quiet funny wit and sharp mind. It just seems the thing to do this moment—to celebrate a writer among us who is in decline but who is still with us. Brooks would like it that we have resurrected some of his writing—and, like most of us, he would feel a knot in the pit of his stomach at all of the unasked-for attention. But then he'd have whipped out a self-deprecating funny to take the tension out of the moment. He did that better than most anyone. Brooks could do rose AND thorn (ha—Brooks would think I did that well!). So, here are our letters of last week. ~Q

Re: Brooks

Mon, Aug 23, 2021 at 8:20 PM

Kimiko,

Distance, careers, time, et cetera have been stumbling blocks to staying in touch with people who were an important part of my life. I have tried at different times to reconnect with Brooks; but, alas I failed to persevere.

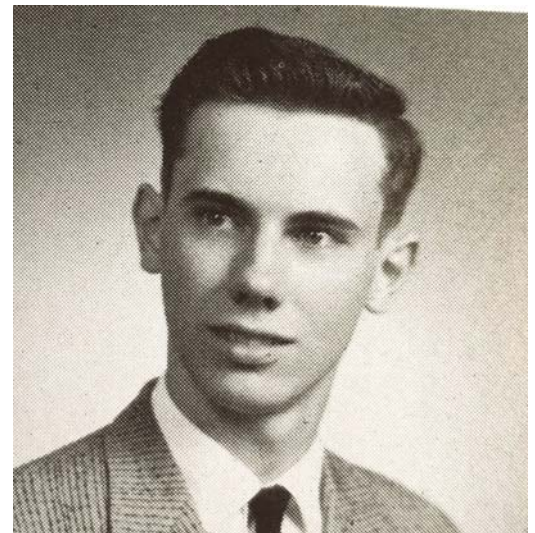
Trying one more time is becoming more and more like trying to piece together one's genealogy.

Hope you are well. If you can, please give my regards to Brooks.

Blessing,

Kent MacDougall

PS: I was not as good a poet/writer as Brooks; but, he accepted me as a friend.



From: Kimiko Fieg-Peterson kimikof123@gmail.com

To: Kent <macdougallkent@netscape.net>

Sent: Wed, Aug 25, 2021 8:27 am

Subject: Re: Brooks

Kent,

Thank you for finding my email and writing to me. Are you Brooks' high school friend whom we met at the high school reunion years ago?

Brooks suffered a stroke in 2017 when he was already suffering Alzheimer's disease while he was at a memory care facility. His left side of the body is paralyzed. I have been taking care of him at home since Oct. 2017 with some help from the home caretaker. He has been doing really well considering his condition. He gets minor ailments occasionally but overall he is doing quite well and shows his inner strength. He is a sweetheart as ever, and I am very happy he is hanging in there and gives me the comfort of his companionship.

He lost his verbal communication skills and fails to understand many words. But I know there is a lot of feeling underneath that cannot come out verbally.

I will tell him about your letter, hoping he might be able to catch some part of it.

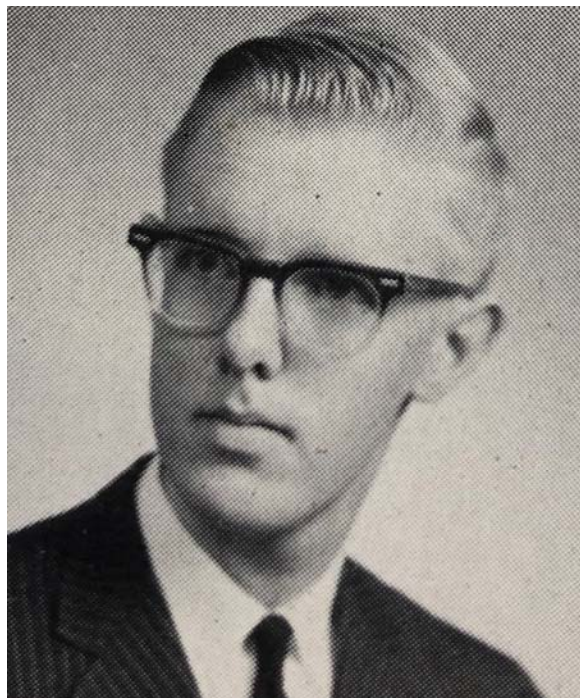
I will tell him that his friend, Kent, loves him and is thinking of him.

We live in Victoria, Texas. Kind of a cluttered, 1910's old house that needs some remodeling. If you ever come nearby, please do not hesitate to stop by.

We would love to see you.

Thanks for thinking of him and writing me again.

Kimiko Peterson



Kent Wed, Aug 25, 10:18 AM
Kimiko,

Yes, I am an old high school friend. I saw his friend Will Berezovytch at the last reunion I went to. I contacted Will recently and am sharing your note with him and Terry Heller who knew about the memory issue. My wife Marilyn asked me to ask you if you know anything about Anna? Perhaps you could share how you came into Brooks life.

Usually when someone says they understand what you are going through, they do not. My younger brother Alan was diagnosed with Cortical basal dementia in his 50's and developed Parkinson's symptoms in his 60's. I cared for him during the last 18 months of his life. He was on a feeding tube and gradually lost speech and recognition. Two things that perked him up were music from the 60's and digital voice recordings from our sister.

Bless you for the care you provide
Kent MacDougall

terry heller
to Kimiko, Kent, Will

Aug 25, 2021, 2:20 PM

Kimiko—I'm so glad Kent initiated this wonderful exchange of notes to get in touch with Brooks, and also to find you.

It's really something that all three of us on this page have close-up life experience with dementia in our families. I took care of my mother for her last 7 years—she lasted to 102—and the whole experience taught me how to laugh every day. Kent put it so well—unless you have gone through it at close range, you are not really in touch with the depth of it, and have no real understanding of the way in which it changes everything. Life can be both daunting and dear on a daily basis.

Many know that Claudia Middleton's little sister Doris passed away last month after many years with Alzheimer's. My own little sister Patsy was diagnosed with a suddenly developed dementia 5 years ago, and only 3 years later she was gone. She was only 67. I had done a lot of volunteering in Austin playing for and singing with memory care groups, so I knew that part of the brain somehow provides a bridge to memory through music. So Patsy and I played and sang all the Rogers and Hammerstein songs we could remember—but especially the saucy "I Cain't Say No!" ... our favorite.

Brooks was one of my earliest friends at Maplewood elementary and we talked often enough to keep up throughout our school years. He always chose his words carefully even back then, and I caught on somewhere in the fourth or fifth grade that he used phrases that were old fashioned because the books he read (devoured!) were mostly by 18th and 19th century authors. He was something else. And he was infinitely kind. I wish I could remember some specific incident, but it's all a blur for me—just exactly as he put it in the “remembrances” section in the 50th directory. The fifty years were just a blur. Did he publish his poetry? I would love to know.

Much love to you and Brooks. Tell him I said hello to my Maplewood chum, and I love him very much—
Terry

Kent Aug 25, 2021, 3:27 PM
to kimikof123@gmail.com, me

I volunteer at an Alzheimer's respite on Thursdays.

It is a vicious health issue.

Kent

Kimiko Fieg-Peterson Wed, Aug 25, 5:10 PM
Terry,

Thank you for your email. I was amazed how well you guys are connected and also how much we share the experiences of caring for the loved ones who suffer from this terrible disease. The story about your mother and your little sister breaks my heart. You are a wonderful daughter who took care of your mother till the end. Your sister was too young to depart. I am very sorry. I share your thought that there is such happiness in little things that we celebrate about the life keeping us alive.



When Brooks started showing the symptoms, I was in denial, sad and mad like many other people in the same situation, but I have come to realize how much Brooks was afraid and angry with happening himself. I also realized he was simply suffering from brain disease but still the same sweet person inside him. Because of the stroke, he is bedridden, and calm now. He talks to me in a language I don't know...but I know he is telling me something. I played a lot of different music for him, too. I love this lovely man very much and am cherishing the time I have with him.

Thank you so much for thinking of him so fondly. He is the tenderest, kindest soul I have ever encountered. He was also a superb writer, one of the best I know. I have found his high school literary book in which his poem was printed and also a compilation of his high school days writing (poems and short stories) which his mother saved. I don't think he ever published his poems, but I am not 100% sure. He is the beloved son of his parents that I never had a chance to meet. He talked a lot about his parents after his disease progressed. He believed they are still alive and he wanted to see them. I am so appreciative of them for raising such a wonderful man.

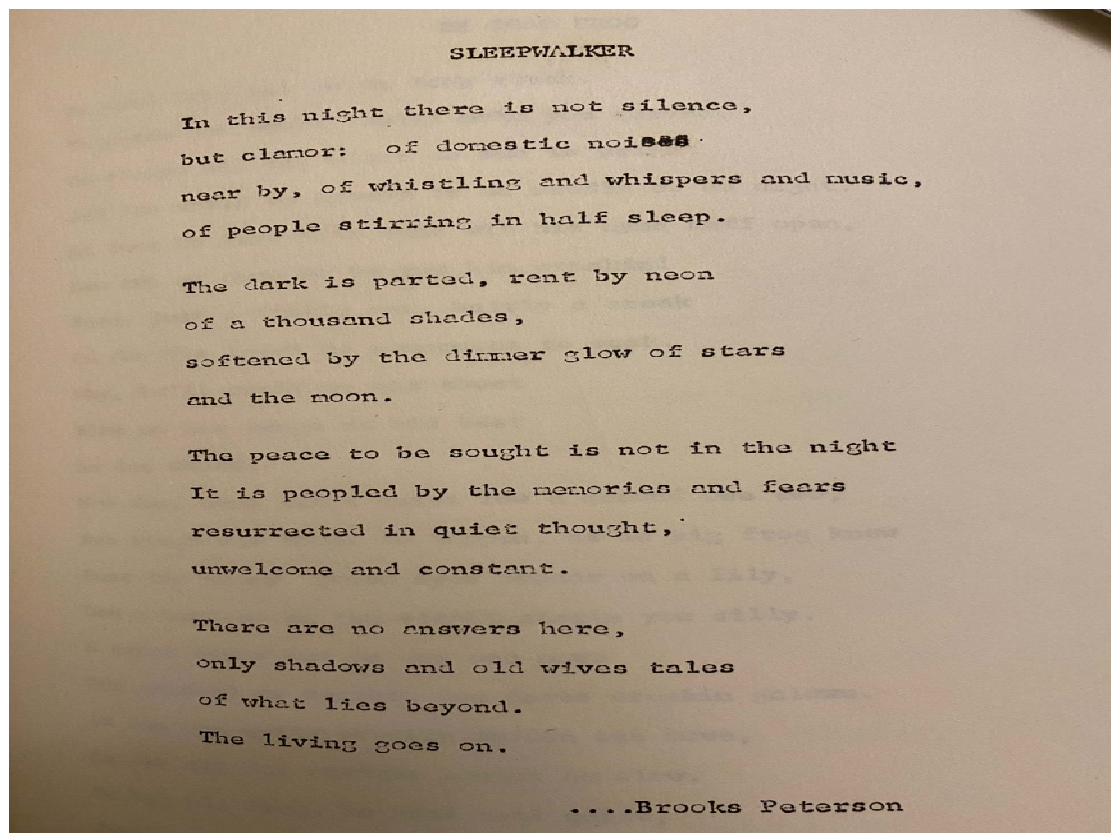
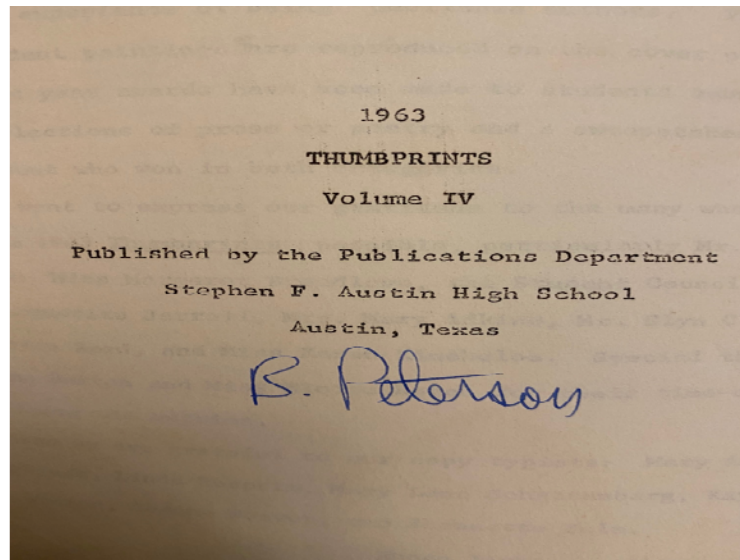
Thank you again for reaching out to me. I have already told Brooks about Kent, but I will tell him about you and how much you care for and love him. If you come near Victoria, please don't hesitate to stop by and see us.

Sincerely yours,
Kimiko Peterson

P.S. Here are 2 pages from 1963 Thumbprint. I am sure you have seen them. I found so many works by Kent in this publication. Now I know who he is. I would have scanned the pages but my good old printer's scanner is not working. Time to get a new one. Sorry.

I found pages and pages of his writing. Essays, book reviews (for English class assignments) even found a couple of short stories, all saved by his mother meticulously. I can spend hours reading through these.

Thanks again for writing me. It was wonderful to know he has such good friends who remember and care about him after all these years.



IN GRAY

59

In this gray time the cold comes
piercing and angry on the wind;
slamming against the unpainted walls,
it enters through the cracks
and gathers in the corners
away from the flames burning small and cheap
and hopeful against the spreading chill
that seeps into the smell and the thoughts.
In this gray time the warmth seeks release
through the sweating panes,
rushes out with the opening door
and lingers a moment, and dies,
only a memory of an invitation
to enter and live, grow strong,
if for but a moment, against the return
to the cold on the wind.

....Brooks Peterson



Kimiko & Brooks Peterson, 2016

MAROON NEWSROOM



New Principal Dr. Melvin Bedford has taken the reins during another difficult year ... all the kids are back, masks on, and there was an incident last week that we will not talk about ... but we note that Dr. Bedford took time to put out a note with pretty good football report—

SEPTEMBER



**01 Marcy Howard (46) -
Happiest & MOST AMAZING 75TH
BIRTHDAY MARCY!**

02 Charles Beadle (44)

03 John Vinson (44)

03 Jim Kruger (45)

06 Sharon Mullins Culp (45)

09 Linda Joiner Reeder (45)

10 Vickie Astran Lopez (44)

10 Judy Snyder-Abreu (45)

11 Elizabeth "Liz" Bernal (44)

12 Larry Magruder (45)

**19 Carol Ann Foyt Shepherd
(45)**

20 Susan Roberts (45)



CONGRATULATIONS
FOOTBALL!!! The Austin High
Football team won its home
opener 23-21 over Pflugerville
Connally on Friday at House Park
last Friday night. Wilder
Davenport threw two touchdown
passes to Jax Rush and Josh
Garcia. Anthony Rodriguez
scored a rushing touchdown and
Lorenzo Garcia added a field
goal. Junior Andrew Alexander
had an interception and Herd
Holland forced a fumble. Colten
Molak had 14 tackles and Andrew
Mosser had 11 tackles to lead the
Maroon defense.

[We have a quarterback named Wilder
Davenport???? He's gonna go far with
that...]

P.S. There's even an AHS Athletics
YouTube channel with video clips of
the pep rally! [CLICK HERE](#) and go to
the 40min mark.]

21 Ed LaTouf (45)

22 John Moss (44)

24 Joan Black Light (44)

24 John Jeffery (44)

25 Peggy Carter Scott (45)

26 Jimmy Raup (45)

**26 Ingrid Thurman Simmons
(45)**

29 James D. "Jim" Smith (44)

And just a word about this birthday list—we
don't make it up, but we could, and if you
don't remember your birthdate just drop us a
line and we'll fill in the blanks! It's a new
service for seniors who would rather be part
of the fun but aren't sure how to do it. You
like that? OTHERWISE, hit reply and send
us your birthday/year and you'll make the
big time right here. Guaranteed.Q.



LOYAL FOREVER Y'ALL

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You are on this list because you are brilliant & still drink from the fountain of youth known as Loyal Forever - the AHS Class of 63

Our mailing address is:

Loyal Forever
2 Morton Street
Wiscasset, ME 04578
