COM President Dr. David Wain Coon and Newsletter Editor Dr. Don Polhemus discuss some matters of mutual interest. Text of interview inside on Page 4.
AUGUST COUNCIL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Co-Presidents Dick Park and Marian Mermel met with COM President David Wain Coon on the subject of best use of Hopper Trust funds. ESCOM will meet with Community Education Director Dr. Jason Lau and develop a joint request that includes $4500 for financial grants.

Treasurer Art Ravicz summarized results for the fiscal year concluded June 30, 2013. Income from our own sources (dues, donations, interest on savings) exceeded total expenses by $2592. Purchase orders in July were approved.

ESCOM Advisor Dr. Arnulfo Cedillo announced that the Thanksgiving Luncheon will be held November 20. A catering service has been engaged to provide meals noon through afternoon at IVC.

Co-President Dick Park noted concerns of the Executive Committee: (1) identifying and developing new candidates for Council membership, (2) avoiding conflict in scheduling of ESCOM events. A liaison system between the Executive Committee and the Council and committees was presented. Dick Park will handle issues beyond ESCOM. Vice President Marlene Knox will be liaison to the Curriculum, Hospitality, Newsletter, and Membership Committees and the clubs. Co-President Eric Sitzenstatter will be liaison to the Art, Finance, Grants and Nominating/Elections Committees and to the Office Manager.

Office Manager Karen Hemmeter reported current membership of 585, newsletter e-version recipients 306, donations of $750 and 185 new members in calendar 2013 to date. Prompt response to phone messages and the sound level in the Kentfield Emeritus Center are concerns. On Karen's recommendation, planning began for an ESCOM 40th Anniversary Celebration next year; and a Computer Committee, chaired by Eric Sitzenstatter, was appointed to deal with office computing tasks.

At the request of Gloria Kopshever, Council approved $2000 to purchase a new computer for the IVC Emeritus Center.

[See separate article in this issue by Art Chairman Len Pullan.]

Next Council meeting: Thursday, September 19, 2013, 10:00 AM, Kentfield.

COM IN THE NEWS

New Academic Center - Construction Progress Continues — As COM students returned to fall classes the week of August 19th, 2013, the corner of College Avenue and Sir Francis Drake Blvd. is devoid of buildings. Since June, five buildings have been demolished, including the old Administrative Center, Olney Hall, the Business and Management Center, Harlan Center and the former, famous "Taqueria" Mexican Grill, also a COM landmark since its opening in 1977, the land being owned by COM and leased to the former restaurant. Formerly called the "Gateway Complex" but renamed the "New Academic Center", the new building will consist of 43,000 sq. ft. in a two-story structure which will include 16 classrooms, computer labs and other offices. The demolition phase of the Academic Center project has been completed in a timely manner so that the construction can begin as planned. Once envisioned at up to 70,000 sq. ft., the Academic Center project was drastically scaled down to its present 43,000 sq. ft. due to local residents' concerns as to its aesthetic impact on the adjacent neighborhoods as well as its architectural features which have been replaced with a simpler building design, fitting into the surrounding neighborhood. Several of the former offices which were demolished have been temporarily assigned to other locations.

Austin Science Center will house the offices of the Superintendent, Executive Director of Communications and Community Relations Department, Director of Modernization, Director of Planning, Research and Institutional Effectiveness. Human Resources Department will temporarily be assigned to the Portable Village location near the Irwin P. Diamond P. E. Center. A new Child Study Center at College of Marin's Larkspur annex site on Magnolia Avenue is presently in operation. The Center is a state-of-the-art learning facility comprised of two preschool classrooms and one Early Childhood Education classroom.

The construction of College of Marin's Academic Center is the last major component of the $249.5
million bond measure which was approved by Marin County voters in 2004 and ultimately moved forward after three years of controversy over architectural plan issues, etc., which resulted in the finalized setup for current construction plans.

Submitted by Alicia Warcholski

GIL DEANE GIVES DELIGHTFUL BIRTHDAY PRESENT TO VERDI

The Opera and Beyond Club of Emeritus’ leader Gil Deane entertained 80+ attendees at the August 7th First Wednesday Art Talk in San Rafael City Hall chambers, sponsored by the San Rafael Library. Does Gil have strong opinions? You bet. Nothing could be more interesting or amusing than hearing his take on who has a great voice and who doesn’t. And whose recordings would he take to that desert island? Maria Callas, Leopold Simoneau and Pavel Lisitsian. Not heard of the latter two? Ask him or better yet come to one of his Opera Club meetings on the last Wednesday of the month. Gil kept the audience engaged by asking opera questions and giving out prizes for those who piped up with the answer, such as: in which Verdi opera does the heroine marry the father of her fiancé? Opera and Beyond meets the last Wednesday of each month 1:00 to 3:00 PM at Kentfield Emeritus Center. Come October 30 for the answer!

Verdi’s 200th birthday is being celebrated this year. Do you have a favorite Verdi work? Mine is Rigoletto. Gil’s are La Traviata, Otello, Don Carlo -- depending on his mood the list can morph into other Verdi operas. He ended the presentation with a sound clip of Ezio Pinza singing Verdi’s Requiem, a gorgeous operatic piece, and finally the highly popular and beautiful Chorus of the Hebrew Slaves Va, Pensiero from Nabucco. Viva opera and bravo Gil.

Karen Hemmeter

HUMISTON TRUST DISTRIBUTION

A Convocation was held on August 16 for the purpose of distributing a portion of the $200,000 bequest from the trust of Thomas Frederic Humiston, who was a good friend of the College. A check for $90,000 was given by ESCOM President Dick Park to COM President David Wain Coon for the purpose of linking the College to MARINet, which is a coalition of all Marin County Libraries. This will provide easy access to all books in Marin by all COM students. The remaining sum will be used to furnish reading rooms at Kentfield and IVC. New computers will also be provided.

PREVIEW DAY

It was a BIG success. We had a good turn out and everyone, including instructors and students, had a great time. Twenty-five students signed up, and registration fees totaled over $2,500.00. Not bad for a 2-1/2-hour event. Thanks again for your support and participation. We could not have done it without ESCOM!!

Jason Lau, Community Education

ISLAMIC STUDIES CLUB

A new movement has started in the U.S. which fulfills the aim of those who sincerely seek to comprehend the original facts of God's religions and the misconceptions in the religion of Islam. By studying the Quran carefully, one will find amazing information which is in sharp contrast with the reality of extremists. Studying the Quran in a group allows individuals to peacefully share their understanding and debate in the best possible manner while benefitting from the counsel of others. In such studies, no one uses the verses out of context or adds interpretations to them. Participants can be Christians, Jews, followers of any other faith, researchers or non-believers.

“Surely, those who believe, those who are Jewish, the Christians, and the converts; anyone who (1) believes in GOD, and (2) believes in the Last Day, and (3) leads a righteous life, will receive their recompense from their Lord; they have nothing to fear, nor will they grieve.” Quran, 2:62

Every Wednesday of each month (except third Wednesdays), 10:00 AM to 12:00 noon. Contact: Mehri Dadgar, fdadgar@aol.com, 415-927-1388.

OOPS. GREMLINS AT IT AGAIN

The delightful French story in last month's Newsletter, Villefranche, mysteriously lost about half of its French accents. Worse, it lost the name of the author, who, we hasten to inform you, was Anne Stein, a student of Jackie Kudler. Please accept our sincere apologies.
INTERVIEW WITH COM PRESIDENT DR. DAVID WAIN COON ON AUGUST 14

The discussion is between Dr. Coon and Newsletter Editor Dr. Don Polhemus.

Dr. Polhemus: Thank you, Dr. Coon, for making time for me, on behalf of our Newsletter, to discuss some matters which have been brought to my attention many times. The first is rather mundane, and it relates to the difficulty of parking, a problem which has troubled everyone for a long time.

Dr. Coon: That's a great question. You go to any college and you find that parking is a problem -- right up there with the cost of textbooks and the food in the cafeteria.

Dr. P: At least we have paperbound texts now. But since parking is worse mornings and improves in the afternoon one would think that classes offered mornings might better be moved to later in the day.

Dr. C: There are two bad times -- prime time in the morning and prime time at night. And according to Code we have ample parking for our number of students. But I think demographics are different in Marin and that we should strive for more parking than called for. We just added some handicapped spaces up around the theater. Sometimes we can gain spaces just by rearranging and restriping. And now parking is disrupted by construction. The cost of land here also limits expansion.

Dr. P: Regarding the Code, I would think that we may have older students than at some schools, all of whom drive, and the location requires either this or public transportation.

Dr. C: In this regard we have obtained maps of Marin showing public transportation from various points in Marin to either campus. It is hoped that this knowledge will be put to use by students or by the transportation company to modify routes.

Dr. P: I don't suppose the funding source for your new buildings thought of a parking garage, perhaps the most needed of all.

Dr. C: The bond issue for these new structures didn't mention parking. Nor did the neighbors want such a structure. But other colleges have built them, so there's still hope.

Dr. P: Unfortunately, neither campus is close to a heavily populated center. Could we possibly have "satellite classes," that is, equivalent classes using empty space in San Rafael or Novato.

Dr. C: That's an interesting concept, which hasn't been discussed. Perhaps that's because in my three years here we've had to cut back on offerings rather than expand. Besides, we have underutilized space at Indian Valley, a problem which might be made worse. In my previous position we did offer classes in the community, particularly English as a Second Language. And core offerings; we could do more here.

Dr. P: Have movie theaters been considered for classes? Most of them don't open for showings until afternoon, and they're comfortable with projection equipment and good acoustics.

Dr. C: That's an excellent idea. This would be easier than trying to line up equivalent lecture halls. Yes, that's an interesting concept. I'll give that some thought.

Dr. P: Now here's a question I've heard from time to time since coming here. This isn't a criticism; I have no opinion on the matter. Should we expand or reduce the number of classes we offer? Some wonder if we are trying to do too much. Something for everyone. Maybe we should concentrate on one thing well, like preparation for a four-year college.

Dr. C: Yes, we do a lot. Our largest part is General Education, mainly preparation for another school. And we do a lot of language teaching. Perhaps 30% is career training (or retraining). I don't see us ever offering a wider selection -- based on our demographics. Of course we recently added Organic Farming at Indian Valley. The vocational classes, such as Auto Tech. and Body Repair have been there. So are Court Reporting, Dental Assisting -- but Nursing remains here in the New Science building.

Dr. P: In L.A. there's a highly regarded trade school, Trade Tech., which offers Aircraft Maintenance and has a Chefs' School, among others.

Dr. C: The interest in aircraft is probably due to the presence of their manufacture. And establishing a culinary program is amazingly costly.

Dr. P: It's partly offset by the restaurant they operate in L.A., and the food is surprisingly good. I worked in L.A. some eleven years for the State Health Department and we often ate there. But I'm running over my allotted time and I don't want to disrupt your schedule.

Dr. C: Don't be concerned at all. I've enjoyed it. If you have any further questions or want clarification of any point please call me.

Dr. P: Thank you.
ESCOM/IVC NEWS/EVENTS/CLUBS

Questions please call:
Larry Witter 883-6889  G. Kopshever 883-7805
Bill Raffanti 883-4079  Rudy Ramirez 491-0522
Following events will be held in Bldg 10, 140AS

Fall Weekend Plant Sale and Cultural Celebration, Indian Valley Organic Farm & Garden, Saturday & Sunday, September 28 & 29, 10 AM - 3 PM. Produce sales, live music, farm tours, bouquet-making, tastings, face painting. Native Feast Day Celebration Sunday September 29, 12 noon-3 PM.

Harvest Lunch Heads Up: Wednesday, November 20, the annual event open to staff and students at IVC which began in the 1970s.

Bridging the Communication Gap: You are invited to Meet MAC Saturday, October 12 at 10 AM or Monday, October 28, at 1 PM. Council approved the purchase of a new iMAC/printer/ scanner for members use in ESCOM/IVC. The new iMAC is waiting to meet YOU! Several computer courses are held at IVC, plus there are COM staff members for counsel and advice. Contact Gloria Kopshever at gloriakopshever@yahoo.com or phone 883-7805.

Do you Enjoy Foreign Films? An idea for a new ESCOM/IVC club is being floated. If interested in a monthly meeting, let Annie Lontin know: Her e-mail address: annie.dance@yahoo.com.

Atelier Club: Life Drawing. Fall 2013 Schedule began Aug. 28, continuing to Oct. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30. Wednesdays, 6 hour sessions, 9:30 AM to 12:30 PM and/or 1:00 to 4 PM.

Participants must be or become a member of ESCOM and pay annual dues of $15 and share model fees. Questions Glen Miller, 415-457-2459 or glenmiller12@comcast.net.

IVC Digital Camera Club: Members will display some of their wonderful photographs in the ESCOM club room starting in October. The October photo outing will be to Corte Madera Creek on October 7th, followed by a club meeting on Oct 21. Please call Laura Milholland, 578-2972, for details.

IVC Book Forum:
9/23 The Language of the Threads, Gail Tsukiyama.
10/28 Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet, Jamie Ford.

Global Issues Club:
10/18 MUMIA, Long Distance Revolutionary, a feature-length documentary which explores the life of Mumia Abu-Jamal before, during and after Death Row. Angela Davis calls him "the 21st century Frederick Douglass."

Great Books: Members are re-reading favorite classics and viewing related film versions.

Film Noir Theater Club:

Humanities Club: Beginning the course The World was Never the Same: Events that Changed the World, a series of 36 lectures by Professor J. Rufus Fears at the University of Oklahoma. The first three titles are: Hammurabi Issues a Code of Law (1750 B.C.); Hippocrates Takes an Oath (430 B.C.); and Dante Sees Beatrice (1283).

Philosophy Club: The Meaning of Life: Perspectives from the World's Great Intellectual Traditions continues to be the focus of Thursday afternoon discussions.

NOTES ON THE ARTS

October 1-10: Verdi's 200th birthday special exhibit in Emeritus Center Kentfield, Mon-Fri, 9:30 AM - 3:30 PM.

October 10: Presentation by opera host Gil Deane, 1:00 PM.

Oct. 12 -- Dec. 30: Fine Art Photography and Digital Graphic Art by Anna Kaminska and Tana Lehr, Mon-Fri, 9:30 AM - 3:30 PM at Emeritus Center, Kentfield.

Tues, October 22: Reception for artists Kaminska and Lehr, 6:00 - 8 PM.

Coming in 2014! Water color art of Judith Klausenstock in January and February.

Art Exhibits Committee: Welcome to new members Cynthia Simpson and Nancy Koors!

Art Exhibits at IVC for artists Kaminska and Lehr: How about the library in the new main building, no. 27?

Len Pullan
HELLO EMERITUS COMPUTER USERS

We are recruiting a new "start-up" Computer Committee of 3-5 interested members who are familiar with Windows and just plain love computers. We know you are out there!

How about some recent retirees who are looking for something interesting to do and be helpful at the same time? Most of our desk volunteers are not knowledgeable or experienced in Windows/Excel etc., and Emeritus needs your help. We need computer literate people who will manage that aspect of our office record keeping and monthly label printing.

The committee would analyze our current 2002 PC equipped with Excel 2007, discuss upgrades, possible purchase of a new computer, the principal tasks required each month, and the recruitment and training of a few savvy volunteers to complete those monthly printing tasks.

Our membership is growing rapidly, over 200 new members this year so far. The desk volunteers are doing a fine job, and now we are reaching out to our computer literate membership for support.

Please contact karen@hemmeter.com or Co-President Eric Sitzenstatter (eds@sitz.net) with your questions and answer: YES, I can help! Thank you.

Karen Hemmeter

MY INTRODUCTION TO CALIFORNIA

My son who was living in California called and told us he was going to be married and would like to bring his fiancée to St. Louis to meet us. She was a lovely, young woman and soon we were invited to California for a return visit.

It was August, the evening of the return visit, and it was raining, a heavy, steady, steamy downpour. I dressed for the evening carefully, an exquisite woven shawl, a silk dress, more expensive than anything I had ever bought, a wine and silk rose print cut almost to my navel and bare sleeves (Michelle Obama had nothing on me) plus a full skirt. I sloshed my way through puddles in my new stilettos to the door and rang the bell. We entered. We climbed the stairs. We climbed. We climbed. We climbed. Oxygen masks were issued halfway up. Dogs brought food and water. Sherpas appeared. We climbed some more. Our hosts greeted us at 30,000 feet. Doors were opened, and a glorious Jewel Box shone through the mist of rain and silver clouds. San Francisco appeared like a magical city laid out especially for our pleasure. It was well worth the climb. I caught my breath in awe when we reached the top. We looked over one of the most beautiful sights I have ever seen.

Conversation was interesting. When asked where I came from I responded, “St. Louis”. Eyebrows were raised. These folks had never met anyone who had lived below the Mason-Dixon Line. Did the New Yorker magazine deliver down there? How about cowboys and Indians? Any bows and arrows? They thought we were still Tom Sawyer’s friends, whitewashing the fence. They thought I was Annie in Annie Get Your Gun. I WAS Annie in Annie Get Your Gun. I was the biggest Hoosier of all the Hoosiers. President Truman was an enigma.

And then dinner was served, lots of vegetables, some of which I had never seen before. I kept poking my husband, “What is this?”

The conversation flowed but inadvertently our hostess dropped one very, very long artificial fingernail into her wine glass. Never missing a beat in her conversation she retrieved it delicately between thumb and forefinger and placed it daintily under her plate, obviously to prevent it being eaten.

Entrée: Salmon cooked in wine, delightful, no calories. Dessert: a beautiful plate of fruit and a few cookies. There was plenty of good wine. I will give that to these Californians. They sure do know their Pinot Grigio. I left slightly drunk, cold to the bone but an inwardly well-satisfied Hoosier from Missouri. If you had come to my home in the early days of my marriage for a dinner party, you would have been served about eight ounces of prime beef, stuffed baked potato with sour cream, a brownie with ice cream and chocolate sauce for dessert. Today my fridge is filled with six kinds of lettuce and tofu. If anyone would try to put a can of chocolate syrup into the fridge it would go into instant shock. If you come for dinner today, you are taken to Sam’s and handed a menu. A Cardinal World Series Baseball Pennant flies in my front hall. I still wear red when the Cardinals play. I am a mid-westerner through and through.

You can take the girl out of the country but you can’t take the country out of the girl. Yes, the New Yorker magazine does deliver below the Mason-Dixon Line.

The vegetable was bok choy.

Iris Tandler
AMBY'S RING

In 1912 a young man with an improbable but very Catholic name, after St. Vincent and St. Ambrose, was baptized Vincent Ambrose Sisler. His friends called him Amby. He was my father. Of college age during the depression, Amby worked hard to secure an appointment to the Naval Academy at Annapolis. Although he was physically fit -- six feet, well proportioned, slim and muscular, he had to practice eye exercises for a year before he could pass the eye exam, but pass it he did and he became a midshipman in 1931. He excelled at gymnastics which earned him two trips to the intercollegiate championships. An artist's rendering of a lithe young man upside down on the rings which appeared on the cover of Collier's Magazine is of my father. His great passion, however, was archery, not just target shooting but hunting. At age eighteen he had brought down a huge bear in the Dismal Swamp in Virginia with bow and arrow.

When Amby graduated from the Naval Academy in 1935 he purchased his class ring, a deep blue sapphire surrounded by gold with the words "United States Naval Academy" and hallmarked Tiffany & Co, 14K. The inside of the ring was hand engraved "Vincent Ambrose Sisler, Jr., United States Navy." He wore the ring when he married my mother, Jackie, and he wore the ring when they were stationed in Shanghai, while Amby served aboard the destroyer USS John D. Ford; he wore the ring when he and mother and some friends took a bicycle trip through the Chinese country side near Hungjiao. This was after what historians refer to as "The Rape of Nanking." Mother wrote the following in a letter to her parents:

"We whipped along at a great rate for miles and miles -- out past the sentry gate where they have Japanese, Scotch, Italian, French and English guards. The Chinese are required to have passes to get through and must take off their hats and bow to the Japanese sentries as they pass .... In every field there are at least three or four graves -- they build a sort of vault of old bricks from the ruined buildings with a fancy Chinese roof on top -- and there are huge mounds where they've just dumped the dead soldiers and covered them over with dirt."

Amby wore the ring when he and Mother lived in the walled city in Manila in 1939 and he wrote to my grandmother, Anne, Mother's mother, "Your daughter is in excellent health and spirits so I know you have no cause to worry about her -- as lovely and sweet as ever just like her mummy -- what man couldn't be happy with her? All my love, Amby." A man who knew how to treat mothers-in-law.

He wore the ring when he went hunting on Min-
danao, an island in the Philippines, with a native to shoot ducks with bow and arrow, and also wound up battling a crocodile. The story he wrote about this adventure was published and can be found in an anthology about hunting with bow and arrow called "Toxicated" by Fred Anderson.

And he wore the ring when he and Mother were stationed in Chefoo in 1939. Mother wrote, "Everything would be rosy if it weren't for the Japanese. To get to our house you have to go through a barrier which is guarded by soldiers with bayonets all primed for action. They're down on the British plenty and all over town there are signs hanging up over the streets printed in both English and Chinese, saying ... 'Get the British Vampire out of China'. The other morning a coolie going through the barrier was killed because he told the Japanese soldiers that he worked for British people."

Amby wore the ring when they were transferred to New London, Connecticut, in October, 1939, so he could serve aboard the submarine, USS Sailfish, formerly known as the Squalus. I was born on May 15, 1940, and Mother says he didn't know whether to go to the hospital or to his boat's commissioning. I imagine Amby was wearing the ring when the Sailfish was ordered to Pearl Harbor in January, 1941. In April of that year, Mother and I joined him.

Dad was often at sea for long periods. Mother wrote, "Amby got back ... Anne was funny when her daddy came home. She didn't know him at all and cried and cried which made Amby want to weep too. She soon got over it tho' and they have a wonderful time together now ... No more dope about evacuation .... I've been thinking lately that we might keep out of this mess entirely .... I never seem to know when I'll have a husband or for how long. He's off again tomorrow, durn it."

I am not sure Dad wore the ring when the Sailfish was ordered out to sea on September 15, 1941. Mother writes, "Today is a sad, sad day for us S-fish wives. The durned ship had to go and take off for parts unknown without even so much as a telephone call from the husbands. I was sort of expecting something like this but not quite so soon ... Worst of all Amby had the duty last night so I didn't get to see him at all. I'm lower 'n snake's hips right now on account of being left so sudden like." Mother and I did not see Dad again until February, 1943.

I don't know whether Amby had the ring with him during the time he was on war patrols in the South Pacific. The men weren't sure they would be returning so often left anything of value or identity at home. My father-in-law, Captain Frank Latta, who unfortunately went down with his ship, the Lagarto,
in the last days of the war, left everything with my mother-in-law including a hand written will such as most of the men wrote before shipping out.

The Sailfish was submerged in Manila Bay when the Japanese struck Manila on December 8, 1941. Amby did not know if Mother and I had made it back to the states before the Pearl Harbor attack. I assume that he was wearing the ring while making his way through mine fields, being depth charged, sliding under the seas toward places with names like Itbayat, Sabtang Channel, Taiwan, Tjilatjap, Java, Lombok Strait. His night vision was exceptional and he was written up in the Chicago News for spotting enemy shipping in the dark. Those eye exercises paid off.

He was wearing the ring in 1944 when, in Manitowoc, Wisconsin, he was assigned to the Mapiro. I have a picture of him and Mother, standing tall on the deck flanked by his parents and Mother's parents with me at age four standing in front of them. All of us were decked out in our Sunday best, and there's the ring on the third finger of his right hand. He wore it when he sailed the boat down the Mississippi, through the Panama Canal and on to Honolulu. I am not sure he wore it when the sub he commanded, the SS 28, sank 4,900 tons of enemy shipping in Alaskan waters.

He wore it on the night he fell asleep at the wheel on June 26, 1946, in Ignacio, California, while driving home from a sub's decommissioning party and was killed. It was among the possessions given to my mother by the Navy.

She used to take the ring out of her jewelry case to show it to me and tell me about my father whom she never stopped loving or mourning.

"Of course, Anzy, it doesn't have the original stone. Here, look closely. See, when your dad lost the stone somewhere, he bought a navy blue toothbrush and carved a piece of it out so it fit the spot where the old stone was." She put it on her finger. "Doesn't look half bad does it?"

When Mother died, among her effects was the ring which I treasured. I had planned to give it to my son when he graduated from high school. I put it in what I thought was a safe place -- a hidden drawer at the bottom of an old fashioned dresser. But it wasn't safe enough. Thieves found it along with some lovely jewelry of Mother's. I really didn't care about the jewelry, but the loss of the ring broke my heart. So much history, so much love, so much life, lost.

My son, Jeff, was furious that we'd been robbed and the ring was gone. He was able to track down and identify the thieves. There was, however, no "proof" so the police could not make an arrest. There was nothing to do but accept that the ring was lost forever.

On March 4 of this year (2013), my uncle Don, Amby's brother, passed away at age 97. He was the father my sisters and I never had, especially my sisters, who were born three months after Amby was killed. We loved Don dearly.

For years I had taken care of Don's affairs as his failing eyesight and age prevented him from doing it himself. After he died I sent notices to all the people in his address book -- they ranged from France to Japan to Finland to Chile. I almost did not send one to George P. Don didn't care for him much but I decided that George ought to know of Don's death. A few days later, when my grandson, Holden, and his lovely aunt, Tia, were visiting, a package arrived. It was from George. There was no note, just Navy records of my father's career headed "Vincent Ambrose Sisler, Jr." Tia is a whiz on the computer and when she went home, for some reason she decided to research my father's name on the internet. The next day I got a call from my son.

"Mom, Mom, you're not going to believe this. Tia found your dad's ring on the internet!" "That's not possible, Jeff. It's probably a hoax, you know, one of those things from Ethiopia or somewhere. They could have picked it up from Don's obituary."

"No, Mom, this is legit. Tia is sending you the website. Go on line. NOW! Call me back!" So, having been commanded to go to the website I did and was stunned. There was a photo of a ring from the Naval Academy, but it was the advertising copy that was amazing.

"The center of the ring is set with a smooth piece of black onyx, surrounded by the words 'United States Naval academy.' The inside of the ring has been hand engraved 'Vincent Ambrose Sisler, Jr., United States Navy' and is also hallmarked 'Tiffany & Co, 14K.' The seller, Fourtane's Jewelers in Carmel was asking $4500.00!

I had to catch my breath. This was not possible. Even with the new onyx stone, no question it was Dad's ring, but we needed to see it for ourselves.

"I'll handle this, Mom." And Jeff did. He called the Monterey Police Department and reported that the ring was stolen. They put a stop to any sale. Jeff called Fourtane's who said they would sell it back to us for $2,000.

"Take it! Take it! I just want the ring back."

"Don't be a "wuss" Mom, it's your ring, our ring. I'll point out to them the benefits of giving us the ring -- it makes them good guys and I'm sure the local pa-
pers would be very interested in a story like this with Fourtane's coming out like heroes."

Jeff went to Carmel on his motorcycle with my Birth Certificate, Dad's Death Certificate and his own Birth Certificate. He had a very cordial hour-long meeting with the owner and his son, and they gave him the ring. The son had purchased it in at a jewelry convention in New York City! Jeff arrived back home at my house close to midnight and put the ring on my finger.

It is said there are no coincidences. I've never been able to feel this was entirely true and I don't believe in angels. But there have been things that occurred in my life that make me wonder.

Don's death triggered my sending out notices to his friends and acquaintances; I debated whether or not to send one to George, but finally decided to do so; George chose to send me the information about my father; Tia noticed the name, Vincent Ambrose Sisler Jr., and decided to research it; Fourtane's purchased the ring in New York City but brought it to nearby Carmel, then decided to advertise it on the internet for Tia to find and let Jeff and me know. Even if Fourtane's had not been willing to give us the ring we still could have bought it, but they generously chose to give it back to us.

As I said, I don't really believe in angels but ... what if, just what if, when my uncle Don got to heaven or wherever ... I can see him, now young and vital again, arms outstretched as he sees Amby, his beloved brother coming through the mist with his arms outstretched. I see them embrace. I see such joy. I see my grandparents, my mother, my sister, Terri, surrounding them. After the mist settles I hear Uncle Don say, "You know, Amby, I did the best I could for your girls. You should do something to let them know you loved them -- give them a sign." I hear my maternal grandmother, the family's white witch and one of the founders of Findhorn Spiritual Community in Scotland, pipe up and say, "I can help with that." And so the ring appeared in our lives. Who knows?

That night I slept with the ring on my finger and I wore it all the next day. I felt absolutely elated -- everything was wonderful. I had a great French class, I watered my lovely garden, I walked my fabulous dog, and my terrific sister came down and spent the night. While we were sitting in my gorgeous garden, I gave the ring to her for her to wear for the rest of the night and the next day.

When she brought it back, we gave it to my son, Amby's grandson, its rightful owner.

Anne Sisler Latta, a student of Jackie Kudler
ESCOM President Dick Park presents a check for $90,000 to COM President Dr. David Wain Coon at a Convocation on Aug. 16. Story on Page 3.

Photo by Barbara Tarasoff