
ON THE STARTING LINE
FROM CHICAGO, SKOKIE, AND DES PLAINES, ILLINOIS ...

THE VANGUARD!

THE VOICE OF *THE VANGUARD*

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***Farewell to Two Friends:
Bogie Reeves and Kathy Schweigert Schlenker***

According to the *Daily Herald*...

Burgess (Bogie) Reeves (62) of Mt. Prospect was born June 24, 1943, in Washington, D.C., and passed away Sunday, Dec. 4, 2005. "Mr. Reeves was a Navy veteran and had a lifetime involvement with the Drum Corps. He was an established and talented musician. Surviving is his loving partner, Rose Pitcher; children, Cindy (Dave) Gaskill and Tony (Sherry) Reeves; grandchildren, Daniel Gaskill and Joseph Gaskill; and former wife, Diane Reeves."



(Photo courtesy of www.desplainesvanguard.com)

Bogie is 6th from the left (right next to the bass drummer)



(Both of these photos courtesy of www.desplainesvanguard.com)



Bogie is 2nd from the right.



Bogie, (second from left) with his true love, Rose Pitcher, enjoys his time with Bob and Sue Stoll at the October 2005 mini-reunion. (Photo courtesy of Mike Deane.)

Memories of Bogie

Several months ago, Bogie sent in a story that was published in *The Voice of the Vanguard* about his first love, Rose Pitcher, whom he met in drum corps when he traveled with **Frank Pamper** to Milwaukee to instruct Rose's drumline. After a 40+ year absence, Bogie and Rose rekindled their relationship, which Bogie related in the previous newsletter. Rose, who marched as a tenor drummer with the Milwaukee Starlites from 1959 through 1962, broke ground as one of only two female drummers in the Starlites. This, of course, was at a time when girls all over the drum corps world were discouraged and sometimes prohibited from breaking the traditional testosterone heavy ranks of drum corps drumlines. As recalled in Bogie's story, Rose and Bogie broke up under parental duress, and eventually went their separate ways.

Rose recently shared:

We loved each other a lifetime and that love will go on for eternity. I miss him something awful, but I take great comfort in the fact that he lives on in my heart – he always did. Like he once said to me, "Rose, there was a part of my heart that always missed you." I felt the same way all those 40 plus years.

Rose will be moving back to Oregon soon, but can be reached at rosamunda44@yahoo.com.

Rose: Bogie's legacy with the Vanguard will stay with us always. Know that his Vanguard friends are always here for you. Because of you, we know he passed away a very happy man.

From Bill Agnello:

*There were a few 'Older' Vanguard who set the standards for hard work and commitment when I joined at 11 years old. **The Barretts, Chip LaCasse, Tom Naples, Dave Burkett, and Bogie** were among them. Bogie, like many in our corps, came from a tough inner-city/broken family environment with much to overcome. I knew this at an early age and admired him all the more for who he had become and the person he was. How lucky we were to have had the reunion effort connect us. Bogie was a great guy and will always be missed."*

Two Sides of Bogie by Gordy Hoke

When Bogie played piano, he could make you cheer or cry. I don't know if he read music, but I never saw him use it. Regardless, he could extract any feeling, any effect he wanted from the keyboard. A march could sound triumphant. A popular song could become the essence of sweet romance. And ideas for drum corps songs bounced off the sounding board as if they were ready for the starting line.

When I first heard Bogie play piano, it had been five years since I had last touched the ivories. I had struggled to learn the instrument for four years, with intermittent lessons and even less frequent motivation. Finally I gave up in favor of the trumpet. Five years later, I heard Bogie play "Wonderful Anne", and I knew I had to try to reproduce that song, no matter what the cost.

I spent hours teaching myself the major and minor triads in both hands. Then I sounded out the melody and the chords. I never got "Wonderful Anne" sounding as good as the master, but playing it has brought a smile to my lips ever since. Over forty years later, I am still playing it – mostly for my own considerable pleasure, though I know any happenstance listeners sense a touch of the magic I heard in my teens. It was a beautiful gift.

There was another side of Bogie too, though I never quite knew how the two went together. In August, 1961, the Vanguard chartered Greyhound buses to take us to Miami for VFW Nationals. We left one afternoon after work, and our first stop, for dinner, was in Indianapolis. Eight or 10 of us found a restaurant not far from the downtown bus station. On our way back to the station, some local hoods hanging out in a parking ramp shouted taunts as we walked by. Some of the guys, including Bogie, would never give an inch, and they shouted back as good as they got.

Soon it was a serious confrontation in the ramp, with the locals feeling they had to defend their turf against the "invaders from the big city." Within a few seconds, it seemed, one of them unveiled a switch blade. Almost instantly, and I don't know from where, Bogie had a knife in his hand as well. The two of them circled around, *a la* **West Side Story**, looking for an opening, while we all circled, shouting encouragement. The intensity was riveting. There were a few feints, a few jabs, and fortunately, no blood or injuries. Within seconds, the police sirens wailed, and Bogie's knife disappeared into a trash barrel.

The cops asked enough questions to figure out we could be out of their town within

minutes. I think they knew the locals were of no great repute. So the cops sent us off to the bus station.

Maybe the connection between the consummate musician and the apparently accomplished street fighter was the intensity and passion Bogie brought to everything he touched. He was a perfectionist on the snare drum as well.

I never saw Bogie after the mid-1960s, so I don't know whether that passion and intensity served him well in adulthood or whether it cursed him. About six months ago, when his email address came across the Vanguard wire, I wrote to him, telling how his gift for the piano has inspired me these last forty-plus years. I didn't receive a reply so, as usual, I did not know what he thought.

Now Bogie is gone, but his gifts live on, in my memories and every time I sit down to play "Wonderful Anne". It still makes me smile.

Bogie was a true friend by Dave Burkett

Bogie and I go way back. We first met under somewhat painful circumstances. He was playing quarterback for the Des Plaines Park District football team. I was a tackle for the Park Ridge equivalent. We played at Maine Township HS (east). I tackled him a couple of times that day. This was in 1956.

In 1957, I joined the Vanguard. In 1958 Bogie joined and was initially in the color guard. We became best friends right away. In 1959, Bogie moved to the drum line as a tenor drummer. He was also, to his great shame, playing drums in the HS marching band. We were in the same graduating class, but never attended the same classes. We only shared a study hall assignment, where we cut up and drew "detention days".

He moved from tenor drum to snare, to drum sergeant. He was a member of the winning Vanguard drum quartet. By 1961, Bogie, being a natural leader, was the top guy in the drum line. But there was a lot more to him than his exceptional talent in drumming. He had about ten years of classical piano training, and showed a real flair for improvisation on the keyboard, entertaining us every time someone in the corps located a piano for him to play. His incredible dexterity enabled him to play really busy left-hand stuff, such as boogie-woogie. He and I used to fantasize about someday arranging something for the corps. He was one of those rare, fortunate individuals who could pick up just about any musical instrument, and in short order, play something on it.

In 1961, our brass arranger/instructor **Ed Morrissey** generously offered us the opportunity to collaborate on a new arrangement of "Exodus". It was a wonderful learning experience. Bogie provided a lot of great ideas, and showed a flair for brass arrangement that was incredible. After "Exodus", we worked together (Bogie doing all of the heavy lifting) on several other arrangements used by the corps in 1962 and 1963. In those days, we were working with mostly novice-level musicians, and crude (by modern standards) instruments, but the Vanguard was fairly competitive. We collaborated on "Full Moon and Empty Arms"; an original fanfare based on something that Scout House played in 1959; a "Theme from One-Eyed Jacks" and "Mountain High-Valley Low". We were always messing around with stuff that we would like to further develop. Things like

a fanfare based on “Zippety Doo Dah”, the theme from the television show “Robin Hood” and dozens of popular (at that time) tunes ranging from stuff by Leslie Gore to the Four Seasons. Working with Bogie was a blast! He really knew his stuff, music-wise.

While we were absolutely loyal Vanguarders, he and I shared an awe, and heartfelt respect for the Belleville Black Knights. He had several friends in their excellent corps, including Jim Middleton, Dan Kammler and their Drum Major Dick Ishmael. It wasn't that they were the most musical group, but their military bearing, dignity, drive, discipline and independence really resonated with us. We felt that they exuded class. He absolutely loved their drum line. When they introduced their “Sherwood's Forest” concert number, I had to pull him off of the ceiling. It was pretty awesome.

We were drum corps buddies until he left to join the Navy in 1963. I stayed with the Vanguard, marching until 1964. I continued to work with the corps for a few more years, and joined the Army.

We reconnected around 1975. He was married and had two kids. I had just gone through a divorce, and he was a needed friend. We stayed in loose contact for years, and had a few beers together on more than one occasion. We were both at the Vanguard picnic in 1984, and he had an emcee role at the 1985 reunion in Chicago. He joined the Manhem-Vanguard Association and later recruited me. He was also interested in the Vanguard Sr. corps, and attended many rehearsals, but only marched a few parades.

As most of us know, Bogie was very active with the Vanguard Alumni Association, and many Vanguarders of more recent vintage had the opportunity to meet him. I regret that everyone didn't get to know him “up close and personal” as he was an extremely bright, loyal guy, with a great sense of humor. He was also a Vanguard to the end.

Also from the *Daily Herald*:

Kathleen J. Schlenker (nee Schweigert) (58) of Schaumburg was born on June 13, 1947, in Kankakee, and passed away Thursday, Dec. 8, 2005, at Alexian Brothers Medical Center. “She worked for United Airlines in Baggage Services Management. She was the loving mother of William Fredrick, Brett David and Robert Lawrence Schlenker; fond grandmother of Emily Ann, Madison Lynn, Cassidy Noel and Kylie Reigh Schlenker; loving daughter of the late Francis Bossert and Eula Elouise Schweigert; dear sister of Francis David and Robert James Schweigert; dear granddaughter of the late David and Gertrude Schweigert, and the late Robert and Frances Burns; dear aunt to many nieces and nephews; and dear friend to many.”

(All photos courtesy of www.desplainesvanguard.com)



Kathy Schweigert Schlenker proudly displaying the World Open Championship flag in 1968.



Hank Jakob joins Kathy during a lighter moment in 1966.

Kathy with Jane Gruber in New Orleans, 1967 (VFW Nationals).



Memories of Kathy

From Dorothy LeBeau Holmgren:

Kathy and I go way back. We hung out together in high school. There were four of us always together: Kathy, Linda, Carmen, and me. We were always staying all night at each others' homes, and all the fun parties were at Linda's house -- she had the best basement. There was an all male senior corps in Kankakee (The Blackhawks) that was going to become a junior corps (The Challengers). So in January of 1963, the four of us went up and joined -- the first four females ever. We all learned basics on flag and rifle (9 lbs!) all winter. The Challengers did a field show, but mostly did parades. I was guard sergeant and then drum

major (I was DM to **Bill Buck**), and Kathy stayed in the flag line. Then in May of '66, Kathy went to a corps show and ended up joining The Vanguard that night! She came back home, grabbed me to go to a show the next week, and I joined then. She was AFS sergeant, and I was sabre/floater. We car-pooled together the whole summer. Most of the time I would get off work in Momence, go home and pack (all in 15 minutes!), pick her up from her job, drive to Manteno to pick up **Terry LaMore, Fred and Kenny Klip**, and then haul butt up to the old Vanguard hall. On Thursdays when it was just practice, we drove to rehearsal and then home that night. We always stopped at White Castle on the way home. I can always remember that we spent most of the way laughing; God it was so much fun. Sometimes the guys went by themselves, but we all shared my car, a '64 Corvair. At the end of summer Kathy moved to the city; she got an apartment with some girls right in Old Town.

From Arlene Krueger Lubarsky:

Admittedly since almost 40 years have passed, some of the memories are a bit sketchy. Kathy joined the Vanguard in 1966, a year before me. She hailed from Kankakee. She and a girlfriend settled into the big city and had their first apartment in Old Town.

I met Kathy when I joined in 1967. She was in the flag line and immediately made me feel welcome. For two years, we spent many hours together talking and singing on the bus. How she loved to sing. Between her and **Toni O'Kelley** they crafted some very clever corps songs, and most of them with the theme of putting down those Boys in green. She always had a wonderful sense of humor, and a very unique chuckle which was always accompanied with a wink of the eye. Kathy was also the creator of the GAF (the God Almighty Floaters), coined after one of **Frank Pamper's** frustrated references to his elite flag squad!

Eventually Kathy found her way to the suburbs when the corps moved to Vanguard Hall in Des Plaines. She actually landed a job at the Machinist Union working for the infamous **Bill Austin**. She is probably best remembered for her place of residence in Des Plaines, when she moved into a townhouse which was also occupied by four recently graduated United Airline Stewardesses. Her place became THE PLACE. Kathy's Dover Drive address was well known for parties, most of them impromptu following practice, and they became almost a weekly standard. Kathy always had her welcome mat out and for many of the guys she became a 'big sister', offering them advice on a variety of topics.

Kathy's proudest moment with the Vanguard was one of her last shows, the World Open (1968). Shortly after winning the title both Kathy and I aged out.

After we aged out of the Vanguard, **Kathy, Lee Romes**, MaryAnn Courtney and I shared an apartment for a few years. Some of the '69 Cubs were our neighbors when we lived at Old Ivy, the year after we left the corps. That was a fun summer for us living next to the likes of Gene Oliver, Jim Hickman, Randy Hundly, Hank Aguirre, Dick Selma and a few others. It helped us fill the void of drum corps with a new and fun passion, baseball!

Kathy eventually married Bill Schlenker from the Norwood Park Imperials and together they raised three boys. Billy, the oldest had the drum corps bug, and marched in Guardsmen, Cavaliers and the Blue Devils; Brett, was in the Marine Corps (not the drum corps!) and Rob is who she lived with these last two years of her illness. Although Kathy and Bill divorced several years ago, in recent years she was able to keep in touch with drum corps through her brother-in-law Larry Schlenker who is now in the Royal Airs.

Unfortunately Kathy's illness kept her away from the main reunion in 2004, although she was able to make it to the brunch on Sunday. She was so glad that she had that opportunity. This year she had hoped to make it to the corps show in July, and the October reunion, but her health did not allow those to happen. After two and a half years of battling kidney disease and cancer she met her peace on Dec. 8, 2005. Kathy was a special person and one who I was proud to call my friend.

From Jay McGuffin:

I remember being in Kathy and her roommate's apartment in Chicago. It wasn't in Old Town, though – it was on the "hoity toity" Gold Coast and I believe it was on North State Parkway and it was TINY! I remember going there with some other Vanguarders after we had been "liquid celebrating" one Saturday night that winter (1966?) – It might have been right after one of those Saturday Night Drill Rehearsals at the Chicago Avenue Armory on Chicago Ave & Michigan. I was laying on the floor in her living room pretty well toasted and someone kept trying to force her front door open – right against my head (no wonder I ended up so goofy in later life). Anyway, Kathy was okay with us doing stuff like that but as I recall, her roommate (a non-drum corps, non-Vanguard person) was not at all sure as to what to think of our inebriated selves.

Kathy's townhouse on Dover (along with the United Airline Stewardesses) was indeed the place to be. Not only is that the place where I first heard "Sgt Peppers Lonely Hearts Club Band", I also remember that some of her neighbors in that Dover complex were the 1969 Chicago Cubs – I remember meeting Ron Santo, Hank Aguirre, Dick Selma and Glenn Beckert there, among others.

It was great to see Kathy at the Sunday brunch at the 2004 Reunion. I, like many others, I am sure, wish we had been able to spend more time with Kathy there.

From Bill Agnello:

I remember Kathy really well! We were really good friends and enjoyed each others' company a lot. To me, it was her smile, friendly ways, always upbeat mood, and her occasional rebel streak. At times, I thought she liked hanging out with the guys as much as her best girlfriends. She could handle us really well and would not hesitate to tell us where to "get off!" I will remember her fondly as a 'classic' positive, energizing person who typified all the members who came from other corps to help define and build a champion. She will be truly missed.

Bill also shares that Kathy's family gave him her original black Vanguard winter jacket with which to do something in her honor. Any suggestions, Vanguard?

Whenever we mourn the loss of another Vanguard brother or sister, it becomes apparent (to me, anyway), through stories and memories like the ones here about Bogie and Kathy, that this very special organization was instrumental in developing success and character in all of us. I urge you to continue maintaining contact with all of your Vanguard brethren. The wonderful website created and maintained by Jay McGuffin, in addition to this newsletter, can help us all keep in touch. *In the spirit of fraternity, please continue to send me your memories of the past and information about your current lives.*

Below are some upcoming events:

Bill O'Connell and his Skyliners will be getting their groove on at these two venues:

January 15th at Fitzgerald's, 6615 W. Roosevelt Rd. in Berwyn. 6:00 to 9:30 PM. \$8 cover charge. Visit the Fitzgerald's website at <http://www.fitzgeraldsnightclub.com/>. Be sure to check out Bill's radio show *New Vintage* every Sunday on WDCB-FM (90.9) from 5:00 to 6:00 PM.

January 20th at Legends in South Bend, Indiana. 10:00 PM to midnight.

Keep big band jazz alive!

More information about the band can be found at:

<http://www.chicagoskylinersbigband.com.>

Anyone interested in receiving a copy of the CD:

Vanguard: The Sensational '70's

Should send a check for \$5 (made out to Bill O'Connell) to

***915 Christa Ct.
Elk Grove Village, IL 60007***

***Bill can be reached at:
billbigband@aol.com***

A note from the keeper of Vanguard memorabilia:

Ray Steffens

Ray Noble has donated the very first Mel Tierney winter jacket. (See picture below.) The jacket is from the time frame of 1953 through 1956 when Ray marched with Mel Tierney. Thanks, Ray! The jacket will be well taken care of.



(Photo courtesy of Ray Steffens)

We are still looking for the following to add to our memorabilia:

- Skokie Indian uniform and pictures
- Gladstone uniform and pictures
- Austin Grenadiers uniform and pictures
- Mel Tierney Vanguard uniform
- Vanguard Drum Major uniform
- Black and red shako

If you have a uniform from another corps, you can donate it to Ray Steffens. He can be reached at vend50@aol.com or 847-697-3235.

*Thanks, **Ray Steffens**, for keeping the Vanguard memory alive.*

Please enjoy the following photos provided to us by Ray Steffens. The first set is from the Vanguard exhibit at the Des Plaines Historical Society. Following those pix are more shots from the October reunion.









Have a happy, healthy, and safe New Year!

***Cathy O'Connell Letourneau
('69 - '76)***

Many thanks to my husband, Glen Letourneau, who helps me every month to put out this newsletter. Even while recovering from injuries sustained in a car accident, he still manages to come to my rescue when I'm having "formatting issues"....

