



**We are all wondering what is next.**

## **Circumstances Have Overcome Our Alumni Activities**

For the first time in 18 years, we were unable to hold our reunion luncheon. We have had weather-threatened picnics that kept us hunkered down or moved indoors, but never had an invisible bug threaten us before.

Understandably, we octogenarians are more at risk than the rest of the population. Nationally, most of the virus deaths have been in senior care facilities. As a group, seniors often have underlying conditions that make us more susceptible to infections. Gratefully, Florida has taken measures to protect seniors in care facilities to reduce the mortality, even though we have thousands of such facilities.

As Florida continues to reopen, our population is still taking precautions to limit the virus exposure. The beaches and parks were the first to reopen, giving us some relief from lockdown. Now, virtually everything is open to some degree, except hospitals and senior care facilities allow zero visitors.

Consequently, our next planned luncheon in July is not going to happen. Too many of us, while not under institutional care, do not want to risk being exposed in a public place. Also, Florida still requires social distancing for seating in restaurants, so it would be hard to socialize even if we found a suitable restaurant. Hopefully, this pandemic will be behind us by the time of the October luncheon. 😊

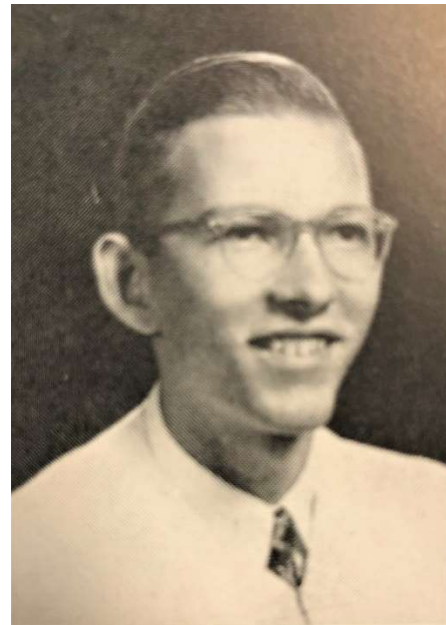
**“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths.”**

**Proverbs 3: 5-6**

## **The St. Pete Pier**

Another victim of the COVID-19 pandemic is the grand opening of the St. Pete Pier. We had expected to provide pictures and accounts of the ribbon cutting that had been scheduled for May 30. When we went down to the pier just before that date, there was still chain link fencing and large pieces of equipment parked there. The city has not announced a new grand opening date, but no one seems to be working on it!

## **Graduations**



**William “Bill” Moesker** passed away peacefully at his home in Blairsville Georgia on Sunday morning, May 24, 2020, after a short illness. He was born November 26<sup>th</sup>, 1935 in Muskegon, Michigan to Jacob and Grace Moesker.

He is survived by his wife of 57 years, Joyce; daughter, Lisa; son-in-law, Daniel Rudisill; nephew, Jeffery Mascoe; and numerous friends.

Bill had been a resident of Blairsville, Georgia, and a member of Providence United Church for 45 years. After attending St. Petersburg High School, he trained in mechanical engineering, graduating from the University of Florida. He worked in aerospace at Honeywell Space Systems in Clearwater for most of his career. Bill worked on development of guidance systems supporting the Apollo Program and nose wheel steering for Space Shuttle.

He personally built his home in Blairsville as a summer retreat and it became his permanent home later. His hobbies included hiking and gardening

Memorial services were held May 31 at his church in Blairsville, Georgia.



**Bill Classen**, husband of our own Lillian Olsen Classen, passed away peacefully on April 19, 2020. He is survived by his wife of 59 years, Lillian, daughter Karen, and sister Katherine and her family in Seattle, Washington with many nieces and nephews also in Washington as well as Florida and California. He had ongoing medical conditions and was under the continuous, gentle care of Hospice.

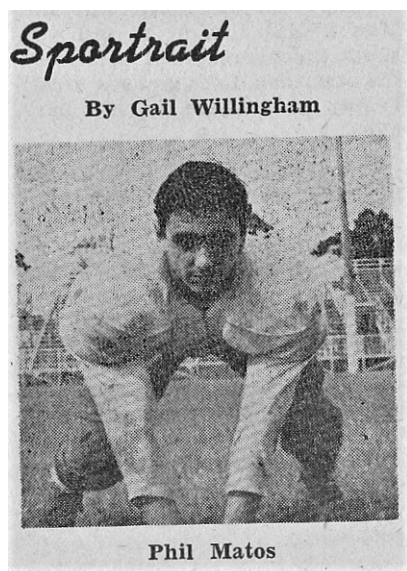
Bill was born in Rochester, New York on March 19, 1933. He began his career as a structural designer at Coastal Steel in 1962

Bill was also a professional violist with the Tampa Philharmonic and St. Petersburg Symphony which later became the Florida Orchestra. He met his future wife Lilian, a clarinetist, while playing in the symphony. Lilian retired to take care of their daughter Karen while Bill played extra gigs with the USF String Quartet and University of Tampa String Quartet. Sailing was a passion for Bill and his first boat was called 'No Name'. Lil and Bill took the boat for a honeymoon cruise to Sanibel Island, which was undeveloped at the time. They borrowed a jeep and toured the sand hills and went out to Sanibel Lighthouse and up to Captiva Island. But the racing bug bit. Bill was a founding member of the St. Petersburg Sailing Association (SPSA) and one of the first commodores. He also raced his Morgan 30/2 sailboat 'Fiddler' in the Florida Ocean Racing Association (FORA) and Midget Ocean Racing Association (MORC). His final sailboat was a J24 named 'Son of a Gun'. He was cremated, and a celebration of life will be postponed until the family can travel from Seattle.

Our class will sorely miss Bill, as he rarely missed any of our class luncheons or major reunions.

## Class of 1954 Memories

In the absence of any recent class activity photos, here are some from items from the archives,



39471 – That's a number to remember. It's not a formula, a criminal number, or a football play. It is the telephone number of our star of Sportrait this week. He stands 5 feet, 8 ½ inches tall and tips the scale at 160 pounds. He is sometimes known as "Mate" to his friends and his position on the Devil squad is well taken care of by his determined playing. This Green Devil was born in Washington DC, May 29, 1936, and came to St. Pete in the eighth grade. He attended Disston before coming to SPHS. Since coming to St. Pete High he's been might busy. He began by being chosen king of the Sophomore Ball. Being elected to Key Club in your sophomore year is a big honor and he was one of six. He has been co-chairman of the decoration committee of both the Sophomore Party and the Junior-Senior Prom. Sports have been a big part o his 17 years. He lettered in volleyball and track at Disston. His sophomore year had him busy with football and



track. Due to an injury during football season, he was unable to play in his junior year, but he was ready for track again. This year, he's on our first-string Devil squad and is also planning on track for a fourth year. A memorable moment to our subject is the first game he started with the varsity this season. He was plenty scared as well as thrilled. Phil is planning on a chemical engineering career after a Georgia Tech Graduation. This year, he's taking English IV, trigonometry, physics, mechanical drawing and Physical Education. If by now you haven't guessed our spotlight star, you fail on every count. The name is Phil Matos, the center on our Green Devil football squad.

Published in the P&P on October 16, 1953.

## They Made The Palmetto & Pine A Top Newspaper



Here are the staffers who contributed to make the Palmetto & Pine one of the top high school newspapers in the South. Miss Reva Best, adviser, is shown, top row, second from left. This

group includes editors, ad sellers and reporters. That's sports editor Jim Hays in the front row.

## Palmetto & Pine Winner Of National Awards; Now In Golden Anniversary

The Palmetto & Pine reached the pinnacle of High School newspapers in this announcement in *The Independent*, May 19, 1954. Jean Dickenson was Editor-in-Chief. Do you recognize any classmates?



**Class Contacts:**

Class of 1954 web site, where you can find e-mail, phone numbers and mail addresses about our classmates: <http://sphs1954.org/>.

Help us keep your data current!

**Permanent Reunions Chairman:** Boyd Acklin, 1110 42<sup>nd</sup> Ave. N., St. Petersburg, FL 33703, (727) 527-0361 or [eacklin1@gmail.com](mailto:eacklin1@gmail.com)

**Treasurer:** Lil Olsen Classen, at 8037 Elbow Lane N., St. Petersburg, FL 33710. **No donations are needed until further notice.**

**Classmate updates, news-to-share, etc.,** should be sent to: Ron Rasmussen, Editor, 10212 58<sup>th</sup> Street, Pinellas Park, FL 33782-2632, (727) 544-2374 or [r.rasmussen@ieee.org](mailto:r.rasmussen@ieee.org)

**Next reunion luncheon is**

**TBD**

SPHS Class of 1954  
10212 58<sup>th</sup> Street  
Pinellas Park, FL 33782-2632  
Address Service Requested