

Memorial Service – Halloween, 2014

**Memories of Margot by Her
City & Country Classmates**

The C&C Class of 1960

Memories of Margot Adler by her Classmates, **City & Country Class of 1960**

In Margot's own voice: Margot Adler, "Centennial Memories," in the most recent C&C Alumni Newsletter.

"We were a class of twenty. Two have died; one has disappeared. At least four of us are authors. We have artists, photographers, professors and educators, a nurse, a cable car conductor, and a corporate lawyer. And more than 50 years later, many of us still connect with each other – clearly a sign that the school has had a powerful impact. - Margot Adler '60"

Sarah Murphy

Even now I find it hard to believe that Margot is gone from us. I was last able to see her in May, at the C&C 100 years, and twice after, once with June when we talked of Latin America and of our lives and how we knew each other and she seemed still healthy, still doing well, vibrant, still working, I had even texted her of the Cecily MacMillan sentencing even though I'd been unable to enter the court room. Then later, when she was withdrawing from the steroids and went to bed while Alex and I watched a thunderstorm descend on Central Park, I still thought that was all it was: steroid withdrawal. Then, the night Dan Millstone called me to tell me she had just gotten out of the hospital and could barely speak, I still could not believe it, and called, only to get June... and in my worry not even recognize her voice or name. Then the next day, as I drove seven hours across Nova Scotia with my son, I was unable to receive email. But I did dream that night. And in my dream I re-introduced Margot to my partner Tom, dead these fourteen years. You remember Margot, I said. And he nodded. And when I awoke, I thought: Does this mean Margot is going to die? And I rejected the dream, thought it anxiety, refused it, because I would not believe that the long slide into terminal illness was beginning. Still unable to believe, to even acknowledge that possibility. Anxiety, I said. Anxiety. Forget it. Then, a morning later, when I finally opened my email, the message was there: it was the night before, when I made the introduction. That was all.

And I still barely believe it, and I find myself talking to her, as if the conversation we had across the years still continues, as perhaps it still does, as it does with my

partner. But my memories now are not of when I last saw Margot, or of the lightning over the park, but of when we first met, and I first had sleepovers in that apartment, and how we would get up to watch the sunrise over the buildings across the way before the Guggenheim, so prominent now, was even built. So it's the child Margot I see and me with her as we would play at Amazons in her building, slipping between the floors in the spaces between the windows and the stairs that then circled the elevator cage (if you can imagine that, the way windows were then arranged between floors and behind staircases), or the way we climbed the giant ginkgo tree in my back yard, delighting in the most absurd of fantasies, but ones that showed us in many ways the directions our lives would take.

So I will remember her that way now. Holding onto the edge of one stair about to land on another... or pushing off from a branch into space...

And I will let the conversation continue...

With love to you all and in her memory...

Sarah

William Rosoff

It is always the voice that one remembers best. Helped in Margot's case by the fact that until I moved to China two years ago I would hear her distinctive voice and always interesting reports on public radio so many mornings over... was it twenty years? I did see Margot earlier this year when a few of us met at Kerry's apartment one evening for drinks and supper. I am embarrassed to admit that when I walked in, still a little dizzy from my 14-hour flight from Beijing, I wondered who the woman was sitting silently on the couch, the only one in the room I didn't recognize. Until she started to speak, and then to engage and then to laugh. And of course I knew right away. And so how very fitting to have Kerry's wonderful picture of the bard—a storyteller even in the X's. And how poignant that sitting next to her is Peter Walker, a story teller himself of a very different kind.

What a strange few months this has been. Like many or all of you, having just gone through the emotional intensity of a 50th year high school reunion (in my case a reunion by email), we classmates of even longer ago have now been brought together, not by the calendar, but by the very sad and too-early death of one of our own. I will not be able to get to a memorial service (unless it's in November). But I do look forward to a time when we can meet—not because it's a year with a zero at the end or because of a death—but because being with each other will remind us, in ways we

can't do by ourselves, how meaningful and important those years together at City & Country (whether it was ten or two) really were. Why else would I feel so broken up about someone I have seen probably no more than six or seven times in the last fifty years.

Bill

Neelon ("Pepper") Crawford

Margot's crossing over to the other side is potent for me.

Perhaps one of the most unusual events for me with Margot was around 1979 when she was working for both WBAI and NPR. She interviewed me for both stations about a LP album (later a CD) titled SOUL VINE SHAMANI recorded of an Amazonian healer performing a genuine curing session in the eastern jungle of Ecuador. My concern that the subject was pretty strange material for the radio audience was eased when Margot handed me her book: DRAWING DOWN THE MOON..... So she, a witch, interviewed me, someone who had recorded a powerful spirit doctor from a very different world view.

Listening to Margot, on NPR, via Armed Forces Radio, while spending the winter at McMurdo Station, Antarctica in 1993, was always a surprising mix of distance and time.

More recently, in 2007, with help from the NY Police's Major Cases Squad, I assisted the NY County DA's office unravel what eventually became revealed as the largest art fraud case in NY history, I sent Margot some material thinking the story of rich people screwing richer people might interest her....but she did not grab a hold of the idea. Eventually, the art dealer, Larry Salander, when faced with 335 years in jail, pled guilty and went upstate for 6-18 years of free room and board in August, 2010.

I am very glad that I had a brief visit with Margot and several others of you, at Kerry's this past March. She revealed her cancer to me then, in a very bold, make the best of the situation, manner. I'll miss her energy echoing through our Wyoming home.

My best to you all,

Neelon

Kerry Allen

This is the image of Margot I have in my heart. The singing, the storyteller.

Thank you all for the very wonderful remembrances of our classmate. She will be missed.

(Sarah adds that the below photo was taken during the X's when the Middle Ages was being studied. The first line of the song she was singing was "My falcon fair, I loved so dear....")



Peace,

Kerry

Mary Kate Bluestein

Hi everyone, and thank you, Nina, for taking the time to tell us about Margot at the M&A 50th reunion. It prompted me to tell you of my last time with Margot, at the time of my 50th Brearley reunion this spring. Margot was too weak to go for a walk or get a coffee somewhere, so I visited her in the CPW apt one morning. She was weary, certainly, but she nonetheless showed me with enthusiasm and curiosity the reams of

genetic info that had been produced for her by a Cambridge genetics research outfit. The information led the outfit to direct her to certain trials being done which were particularly suited to her genetic profile. She had enrolled in one such trial but was already dropping out of it in order to restart the steroids (i think) that had helped her feel better in the past (and which the trial precluded). She had a reporter's attitude: curious, skeptical, but also that trademark Margot zest and relish for the breadth and depth of the biotechnology.

Then we wandered to politics and she jumped up and took me to her study, where her TV is, to show me a John Stewart piece she loved. She roared with laughter as we watched.

She planned to come to the Vineyard as always for two weeks at end of July. We always see one another down here. Our houses are close and Margot walked everywhere. She would show up on our porch at 7:00 AM with binocs around her neck, having tramped for several miles and ready for coffee and a chat. In late afternoon i would see her at the beach, having animated conversations with the smartest people there, and taking spirited plunges into the rollers. She was like a seal, she loved the water so much.

I am feeling particularly sad for Sarah right now, because i know how deeply Margot loved and respected her. She often talked about her memories of you at C&C, Sarah. We were all lucky to have her in our posse.

Addendum: Mary Kate and Kathleen Cameron (Margot's longtime friend who lives on Martha's Vineyard) joined Alex, Margot and John's 23 year-old son, in scattering her ashes on Martha's Vineyard on August 18th, 2014.

Scattering Margot's ashes:

On Monday August 18th Margot's son Alex scattered most of her ashes at Lucy Vincent Beach in Chilmark, Martha's Vineyard. Margot came to Chilmark every summer as a child, and resumed coming here each summer with her husband John and son Alex. She loved Chilmark and knew its paths, trails and beaches intimately. She especially loved swimming and body surfing off Lucy Vincent.

An old friend of Margot's, Kathleen Cameron, and I accompanied Alex. Like Margot, Kathleen was a New York kid who got to run free on the Vineyard in the 50s, and the two of them had a rich fantasy life based in the woods (and an unattended barn stocked with antiques) around their rental houses. Kathleen and Margot continued their friendship throughout their lives. (In fact, Margot performed

Kathleen's marriage to her husband Will on a Vineyard beach.) Margot would have liked that we broke the rules by sneaking onto the beach before it opened, very early in the morning. We had it to ourselves. It was a clear, tranquil day, with little breeze. The air was fresh. The rollers sounded steady and gentle. The sand gleamed near the shore, and behind us the sandy red cliffs were warm in the sun. You could see all the way up the South shore. We scattered some of Margot's ashes around the base of the cliffs (where an ancient Native American burial ground was excavated a few years back), and on the path toward the inland pond where Margot sometimes swam. We scattered most of them in the ocean waves themselves, and thought of it as Margot's swim that will go on and on.

Mary Kate

Nina Gelbart

I am so deeply sad about Margot leaving us. The world was a lovelier and better place with her in it.

I had the pleasure of seeing her at one of the High School of Music and Art 50th Reunion events, a musicale evening at the home of one of our M&A '64 classmates in mid June. (I saw you on the third day of events but don't think you were at the others, so forgive me if you know all this already. I thought our other C&C buddies might like to hear it.)

Margot was already pretty weak, and there was quite a big, noisily nostalgic crowd piling into that apartment. She sat down on a sofa, pulled me down beside her for a long visit, and then had me "fetch" various people--she'd ask "Is so-and-so here?" and I'd scout around and report back and she'd say she'd really love to talk with him or her, so I would go find and bring them to sit with her. Standing up and mingling would have been impossible as she simply didn't have the strength. But as I escorted different friends to the sofa to sit and chat with her, one by one, it was so wonderful to see her throw herself into reminiscing with each of them and laughing her wonderful laugh and showing her special *joi de vivre*. That is a precious memory for me to cherish, the last I'll have of her as it turns out, Margot at her best, talking, sharing, enjoying, even savoring, and finding so much to love in the world.

Do please let me know about any plans for a celebration of her life, on the chance that it will be taking place at a time I can get from LA to NYC.

Hugs, Nina

Lew Andrews

So, so sorry to hear of Margot's passing. Very sad news. But thanks for letting me know. I haven't been in touch with Margot for quite some time, but I feel like a piece of my life has disappeared. Be well. And all the best.

Bram

Debby Chen Alderman

I was saddened to hear about Margot's passing although I was glad to hear she received a lot of support and love during her last years of a very productive and successful life.

My years at C&C with Margot have always been memorable and will be a part of me forever. The thing I remembered most about Margot was her talent both musically and artistically especially during our years of writing and producing plays. The picture Kerry posted brought on a flood of memories I will never forget.

I am sorry I will not be able to attend her memorial service, but will be thinking of all of you and your love for a very special person.

Debby

Eric Van Lustbader

Margot's death hit me hard -- but I was filled not simply with sadness, but with a flood of memories from my C&C childhood I remember most fondly. In those days, Margot and I were very close. I remember going to her apartment many times. Her mother, Freyda, and my mother, Ruth, were very close friends, so it stood to reason that Margot and I would feel the same way. Odd, but one of the things I remember most clearly was a music box with a ballerina that twirled when the music played. Margot and I spoke of many things, during those times together, but they were never childish things. We both had clear ideas about what we wanted and didn't want when we grew up. Thinking back now, I'm sure that shared outlook is one of the reasons we were so close. I was devastated when Freyda died. My mom lied to me about it. She told me that Freyda had gone into the hospital for a routine operation and had passed there. I supposed she wanted to spare me the real story, which was a lot sadder, though, in the end, the outcome was the same.

I admired the person Margot became when she grew up -- her authenticity, her curiosity, her way of expressing herself, and, of course, her marvelous voice as it emanated from the radio in my various cars. But all these wonderful attributes she

possessed and I was aware of when we were together as children at C&C. It's sad that you sometimes lose touch with people you cared so much about when you were young -- who really knows the reasons why? But the happiness and closeness remain in memory, always and forever. This is the Margot I knew and loved.

Eric

Rose Edinger

I just don't know what to say, I can't seem to find the right words to express my feeling...

Thank you for letting me know.

Rose

Willa Zakin (Hallowell)

What I miss most about Margot are the long meandering conversations –nothing was taboo, no idea was stupid, everything was fodder, part of the creative mix that made up our conversations over 57 years of continuous friendship. Was there a goal to these conversations? Did we solve the world's problems? No. But that wasn't the point. The point (if there was one) was the joy of engaging our minds and our words, figuring stuff out, of casting about the universe for something interesting to add. We giggled, made noises and gestures to emphasize our thoughts and feelings, slid off color and laughed even harder. It all might have seemed aimless to others but we knew that all who wander are not lost.

I miss these conversations viscerally. Something has been torn out of me and there is void where these joyful moments once resided. When I think of them, I can hear Margot's raucous laughter. I hear her calling me "honey." Some of her many enthusiasms and passions were transitory and some were enduring (City & Country and Vampires among them), but she was never without something that drew her in and that fully engaged her laser sharp focus.

Her humor was ever-present. She wryly noted that if she hadn't been imprisoned during the Freedom of Speech Movement at Berkeley, she would never have learned how to iron clothes. On those rare occasions when she had something negative to say about someone, she accompanied her comment with a humorous aside and a guffaw.

The moments I enjoyed with Margot are woven through the fabric of my life; the time we lived together in Berkeley while taking summer session courses and trying to

lose weight by eating only grapefruit; the many Christmas evenings at my parents' house (first just Margot, and later with John) full of stories and political discussions; the Wiccan wedding on her beloved Martha's Vineyard, where all the guests, including Margot's father Kurt, the proper Viennese psychoanalyst, joined hands and encircled the couple as they jumped over a broom to seal their marriage oath. This was Margot at her best – living her beliefs (whether terrestrial or extra-), surrounded by those who loved her. She was always herself and didn't care much what others thought about her. Through the way she lived and the words she spoke, she encouraged me to do the same.

Willa