



## THE LETTERWINNER

EMAIL EDITION NOVEMBER, 2010



Don Knodel  
Executive Director

This is a special edition of our organization's newsletter, *The Letterwinner*. In the past, the newsletter has been delivered through the U.S. Mail Service. The expenses of printing and mailing the letter are beginning to strain our budget. We hope you will find this electronic copy to be an acceptable alternative to the traditional "hard copy".



Mike Ecklund  
President

### *Early 60's Footballers Appreciate Special Friendships...*

Every April for more than two decades, early 60's footballers have met at Billy Hale's beautiful south Texas ranch near Batesville to relive wonderful memories, eat a truck load of good groceries, and tell stories that seem improbable at best. And last April was no exception, only this time it felt that our usual jovial spirits were somewhat subdued. It didn't take long though to realize that the reason for that change in spirit was the recent passing of our beloved John Mims. Just a few days earlier in the same week John left us to forever change heaven. We know for sure that eternity is now even better (and funnier) because John is there. And although we had another wonderful time for those few days, we missed John terribly. If you didn't know John Mims, you truly missed a blessing in this life.

And as we paused to remember John, as many told incredible, funny stories about him, we began to realize on a bigger scale just how special our Rice teammates and lifelong friends truly are. Even Rice coaches Chuck Driesenbach and Larry Edmondson commented on our unique relationships. They said that our friendships and strong ties with each other are very special compared to other college athletic teams around the country. Both of them have served on several staffs of major universities including some elite programs, and neither has seen anything like our bonds. And I agree! Yes, these are the same guys we fought with every day and went to war with every weekend. We ate with them, went to class with them, and in some cases, even share our families with today.

It's easy to get very close to teammates of this caliber. Someone pointed out that many Rice teams have not remained as close as we have. Well, guys and gals, let us encourage you to



begin pulling back together. We all know how special Rice is in many ways, but for the men at Billy's ranch nothing is more special than our "R" buddies. We'd like you to experience the same strong friendships and support that we do. So get your teams back together and begin to learn more about each other again. If you need some help, let us know.

If you had been there with us you would have seen: Billy Hale, Johnny Burrell, Johnny Nichols, Jerry Kelly, Harlon Dearing, Jim Stroud, George Parry, Wayne McClelland, Larry Rice, Dan Brast, Dale Callihan, Gordon Speer, Spencer Brown, John Sylvester, Gene Walker, Archie Peterson, Billy Cox, George Alexander, Larry Stewart, Bill Christian, Bill Bucek, Don Jordan, Ken Simmons, Jack Coker, Frank Smith, Richard Bowe, Les Veltman, and Tom Daniels. *(Submitted by Wayne McClelland)*

## SUPPORT YOUR OWLS! JOIN THE R-ASSOCIATION.

We are in the process of making our final push for the annual R Association membership drive. As a former letter winner at Rice University, the R Association is your organization. The R Association provides a forum for former athletes to stay connected and also meet letter winners from other generations. In addition to serving alums, the R Association is active in its support for current athletes as well. We currently sponsor "The Night of the Owl" (All Sports Banquet), Scholar Athlete Banquet, Senior Breakfast, The Hall of Fame Banquet and two annual scholarships which provide funding for graduate school.

Having a strong letter winner association is important to maintain the history of Rice Athletics as well as provide the opportunity for it to succeed in the future. The cost of membership is only \$100 per year or a lifetime membership may be purchased for \$1000. In addition to supporting Rice Athletics and reconnecting with old friends, you will also receive the following benefits:

- \*Admission for two to the "R" Room for all home football games at Rice Stadium
- \*The *Letterwinner* newsletter
- \*"R" Association vehicle decal
- \*Membership card and certificate
- \*Special Events



The R Association will be stronger with you in it. I look forward to having you as a member.  
Mike Ecklund, President

To join:

1. Go to this link: <https://oss.ticketmaster.com/html/home.html?l=EN&team=rice>
2. If you already have an account set up login (Same account you purchase tickets online with). If not, you will need to create an account.
3. Once logged in, click on the "Donate Now" button on the bottom left of the page
4. Select 2011 R Association Membership
5. Select Membership type.
6. Enter payment and contact information
7. Hit Submit! Welcome to the R Association!

If you prefer, you can go to our web page <http://www.rassociation.net/> and navigate to the Membership Form. Print this form, complete it, and mail your check to the indicated address. You may also complete the form on the back page of this letter and mail it to Don Knodel.

Please call Don Knodel (713 348-6915) with questions. We need you!

**THE LETTERWINNER**

**"R" ASSOCIATION RESOURCES**

Phone: 713-348-6915 (24 hours) • Fax: 713-348-6925  
email: Don Knodel - [rassoc@rice.edu](mailto:rassoc@rice.edu) • [www.rassociation.net](http://www.rassociation.net) • [www.riceowls.com](http://www.riceowls.com)



RICE UNIVERSITY • THE "R" ASSOCIATION • DEPT. OF ATHLETICS, MS-546 • 6100 MAIN ST. • HOUSTON, TX 77005

### Board of Directors:

**President:**

Mike Ecklund  
*Football 91-93*

**Vice President:**

Jeff Vanover  
*Football 2000-04*

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**Secretary:**

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*Football 61-63*

**Steven Herce**

*Baseball 01-03*

**Gene Walker**

*Football 62-66*

**Gus Speary**

*Football 69*

**John Coles**

*Basketball 70*

**Ray Torp**

*Swim 79-83*

**David**

**Grenardo**

*Football 99*

**Don Rather**

*Football 58-59*

# Faces In The Crowd

2nd Annual Huddle Up Weekend

September 17-18, 2010



## Mr. and Mrs Gene Walker spearhead the restoration of R-Room artifacts

As a result of Hurricane Ike, approximately 250 Hall of Fame and other pictures were damaged. Former Owl Club employees, Brad Hovious and Kristen Limam, spent months getting the pictures restored, framed, and ready to hang. Gene Walker (a member of the Hall of Fame), and his wife Jeanne, volunteered their time to see that these artifacts were put back to their rightful place in the R-Room. They were determined to complete this task before our first home football game. They, with the help of former Athletic Director Bobby May, completed this task shortly before the season's first kickoff. Those of us who visited the R-Room during the game with Northwestern were treated to the fruits of their labor! The room looked as though it had been redecorated by an upscale interior design corporation!

Those visiting the room were also greatly impressed with the new display for what is commonly called, "The Coaches Table". This table, originally located at *Ye Old College Inn*, has been signed by hundreds of coaches and high profile athletes. Jess Neely and his staff frequently met with visiting coaches and athletes. They would sit at this table and talk football. It remains a mystery as to who first thought to carve their name on the wooden table top. The result is a historical artifact containing the names of some of the most famous coaches and players in America. The table was recently restored by the Hillcroft Furniture Company. Jeanne and Gene have placed the table in a room dedicated to this relic. Visit this room at your earliest convenience to peruse the names on the table...and to read a more complete history of the table. Thank you Jeannie and Gene Walker. A job well done!



# MORE THAN A PITCHER...A PEACE CORPS HUMANITARIAN!

By Jon Skaggs, Baseball 98-01



*Editor's Note: This is the second installment of Jon's description of his life activities since leaving Rice. He is currently serving as a volunteer in the Peace Corps. The first chapter of his memoirs appeared in the May, 2010 edition of The Letterwinner. The first chapter can be found at this link: [May, 2010 Letterwinner](#) You may also find the article by going to [www.rassociation.net](http://www.rassociation.net).*

When my wife, Brianna, and I applied to the Peace Corps we were told that we would love the mountains of Kazakhstan. I was excited. Brianna was cold. A few weeks later, Africa was thrown on the table. Then, about ten months before our anticipated departure date, we received a call saying that they would like to send us to Costa Rica – now. Right now. We packed our bags, said our goodbyes and boarded a plane a few weeks later.

It's said to be the toughest job you'll ever love – and I can say that, after a year and a half, I believe it. I know what you are thinking, "I've been to Costa Rica and it didn't look like they needed Peace Corps." Well, that is one of the reasons the program in this country is so uniquely challenging. During training my program manager sat us down and explained that although we would have electricity and running water, our job post would be one of the toughest in world; and that the quicker we could adjust and redefine success, the more we would enjoy our time in rural Costa Rica. He was right.

My program is called Children Youth and Families, which is the oldest and longest running program in Costa Rica. My responsibilities range from coaching sports, to teaching life-skills, to hygiene education. Brianna's program is Community Economic Development, and her responsibilities range from micro-finance, to small business development, to basic accounting. However, in the end we do pretty much anything the community needs, which is why we have often found ourselves wrangling cattle, building homes, and chopping wood.

Initially we stuck to our individual programs and went through the normal ups and downs of integration like any other volunteer, but we now work together on the majority of our projects. People in the community see us together all the time, a united front, a married couple supporting each other and treating each other as equals. In a community where domestic violence, infidelity, abuse, and broken homes are the norm and not the exception, the example I set with my marriage is the work that I am most proud of and take most seriously – even though one can hardly consider it a job.

Life is good. Most mornings I wake up to the rooster crowing and the deep howls of monkeys bustling in the trees above my house. I sit outside on my back porch and watch them fearlessly explore the branches before I make my way next door to the neighbor's house for a huge helping of *gallo pinto*. After breakfast, I usually head to the elementary school to check in. On the way, someone is always playing ranchero music loudly, and those ballads coupled with the faint mooing of cattle have become the soundtrack to my life. When I walk into the school, much to the chagrin of the teachers, kids run out of classrooms to get high-fives and to remind me to bring the American football to practice in the afternoon. After stopping by the school, my days are filled with meetings, classes, *cafecitos*, playing with kids, making bread and anything else that pops up.

When I get the chance, I hop on a bus and spend a few hours surfing at one of the nearby beaches. In the evenings, I walk down a long dirt road with no lights, but when I look up I can see a thousand stars. My nights are spent reading and hanging out with Brianna and the neighbors who are now like family.

My day-to-day life is slow, but absolutely jam packed with the kind of small joys that may go unnoticed if one isn't paying attention. I love it. Peace Corps is everything you think it is – and a million things more.

## A reunion in Ruidoso, New Mexico

A group of former Hanzen College suite-mates met for a mini reunion in Ruidoso, New Mexico last July. Frank Smith, Raymon Dyer, and Don Rather were hosted by Ruidoso residents William Schnieder and Don Jordan. All lived together in the Hanzen College tower between the years of 1957 and 1961. Another football teammate, Ray Alborn, joined us one evening as we reminisced about the "good ole days". Ray is currently serving as Mayor of Ruidoso. Raymon, Don ("Jose"-Rex") Jordan, and William ("Duke") were American General Insurance employees for many years. Frank is a Toyota dealer in McAllen and Don R. is a retired educator. William and his wife Margo were rightfully proud to show off their beautiful new hacienda in the mountains. Rex and his wife, Sharlene, also entertained us at their vacation home adjacent to a wilderness near the outskirts of Ruidoso. They are currently San Antonio residents. There is not enough space to share all of the stories told during our bull sessions. Suffice to say we heard many hilarious stories related to the insurance business, life with Joe



Rice graduates in New Mexico: William Schnieder, Raymon Dyer, Don Rather, Frank Smith, Don Jordan, Ray Alborn, Maxine Rather, Sue Shepherd Alborn

Davis and Jess Neely, dormitory shenanigans, and Ray's coaching experiences. A great time was had by all! Our hosts were assisted by the wives: Joyce Smith, Lynda Dyer, Sue Shepherd Alborn, and Maxine Rather. In addition to keeping our plates full, they were very tolerant of our bawdiness! *Submitted by Don Rather*

## BILLY HALE'S HUDDLE



Good eating at the Hale Ranch

## Ray Torp to train at Naval War College

Ray Torp, a current member of the R-Association Board of Directors, has been selected to attend the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island. He will be pursuing a Master of Arts in National Security and Strategic Studies. Ray will begin his studies in November with an expected graduation in September, 2011.

Ray attended Rice on a Navy ROTC scholarship, graduating in 1983 with a B.A. in Economics. He was a four year letterman on the Rice Men's Swimming and Diving team. After graduation, he served eleven years on active duty with the Navy. Ray was a Naval Flight Officer onboard the P-3C Orion Maritime Patrol Aircraft. Upon leaving Active Duty in 1994, he enrolled at the UH Law Center and later set up his practice in Houston. He also continued serving part time in the Navy Reserve at the Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base in New Orleans.

## Bob Winship awarded for latest novel

Bob Winship, who played on the 1949 Rice football team and graduated in 1952, has become an accomplished author. After retiring from his oil and gas career, Bob has retired to his ranch near Junction, Texas and has written three novels. His novel, *The Brushlanders*, has won the Texas Review South and Southwest Writers Breakthrough Award. The other two are, *Every Man Also* and *Flannery's Crossing*. Some of the books are available in the Houston Public Library and the Rice Fondren Library. All three are available on Amazon.com. Way to go Bob! *(Submitted by Bob Willard)*



Billy Hale and Dan Brast



A.D. Rick Greenspan speaks at 2nd Huddle Up

Share with us your contacts with former teammates! Send your rough notes, and we will take it from there. Send articles and pictures to Don Knodel.

# ANNOUNCEMENTS AND SCHEDULES

## NEW LIFETIME MEMBERS

James E. Doyle (FB and Baseball '67)  
 Robert M. Muraro (Baseball '99)  
 Jeffrey Vanover (FB '04)  
 Brad McKay (FB '89)  
 Shane Hollas (FB '93)  
 John D. Boswell (FB '53)  
 John Lawrence (Golf '97)  
 Gregg Cannady (FB '77)  
 Carla Smith (Swim '89)  
 David J. Beyer (Track '77)  
 Thomas Windham (Track '63)  
 Andrew Beard (FB '99)  
 Nicole G. Primeaux (Cheer '92-'96)  
 Eric Neuhaus (FB '02)  
 J.A. "Froggy" Williams (FB '50)  
 Debbie Moriarty (Cheer.'76)  
 Tim Moriarty (BB '75)  
 Scott Brown Baseball '97  
 Pat H. Moore Track '52

Please keep us informed of any changes in your contact information. We are dependent on current addresses, telephone numbers, and e-mail addresses.



## IN MEMORIAM

Bobby Ray Williams FB'57	Sept. 2010
Lew Harpold FB'55	Sept. 2010
Jimmy Jax FB'55	Oct. 2010
Jay Rievriere FB/Golf'56	Oct. 2010
Tom Roach BB'44	Oct. 2010

## 2010 FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

9/4/10	Texas	Reliant Stadium
9/11/10	North Texas	There
9/18/10	Northwestern	Home
9/25/10	Baylor	Home
10/2/10	SMU	Here
10/09/10	UTEP	There
10/16/10	Houston	Homecoming 2:30 p.m.
10/23/10	UCF	There 2:30 p.m.
11/6/10	Tulsa	There 1:00 p.m.
11/13/10	Tulane	There 2:30 p.m.
11/20/10	East Carolina	Home 12:00 p.m.
11/27/10	UAB	Home 2:30 p.m.

(Times= Central Standard)

## MEN'S BASKETBALL SCHEDULE

11/12/10	St. Thomas	<b>Tudor</b>	8:00 p.m.
11/14/10	Grambling	<b>Tudor</b>	3:00 p.m.
11/18/10	Santa Clara	Santa Clara	9:00 p.m.
11/21/10	St. Gregory	<b>Tudor</b>	3:00 p.m.
11/23/10	North Texas	Denton, Tx	7:00 p.m.
11/27/10	Texas	Austin	3:00 p.m.
12/01/10	Arizona	<b>Tudor</b>	7:00 p.m.
12/04/10	Lamar	<b>Tudor</b>	2:00 p.m.

### 2010 Las Vegas Holiday Hoops Classic

12/16/10	Arkansas-Little Rock	<b>Tudor</b>	7:00 p.m.
12/21/10	Stetson	Las Vegas, Nev.	2:00 p.m.
12/22/10	Miami	Las Vegas, Nev.	2:00 p.m.
12/23/10	Oral Roberts	Las Vegas, Nev.	4:30 p.m.
12/29/10	LSU	<b>Tudor</b>	7:00 p.m.
01/02/11	TCU	<b>Tudor</b>	3:00 p.m.
01/05/11	Tulane	<b>Tudor</b>	7:00 p.m.
01/08/11	Tulsa	Tulsa, Okla.	7:00 p.m.
01/12/11	Southern Miss.	<b>Tudor</b>	7:00 p.m.
01/15/11	UTEP	El Paso	8:00 p.m.
01/22/11	UCF	Orlando, Fla	6:00 p.m.
01/26/11	Houston	<b>Tudor</b>	8:00 p.m.
01/29/11	SMU	<b>Tudor</b>	2:00 p.m.
02/02/11	Tulane	New Orleans	7:00 p.m.
02/05/11	UTEP	<b>Tudor</b>	2:00 p.m.
02/12/11	UAB	Birmingham, Ala	7:00 p.m.
02/16/11	Marshall	Huntington, W.Va	8:00 p.m.
02/19/11	Memphis	<b>Tudor</b>	7:00 p.m.
02/23/11	SMU	Dallas	7:00 p.m.
02/26/11	East Carolina	<b>Tudor</b>	7:00 p.m.
03/02/11	Tulsa	<b>Tudor</b>	7:00 p.m.
03/05/11	Houston	Houston	5:00 p.m.

03/09/11 thru 03/11/11 Conference USA Tournament El Paso  
 03/12/11 Conference USA Championship El Paso

## WOMENS BASKETBALL SCHEDULE

11/12/10	Montana State	Waco	4:00 p.m.
11/13/10	FIU	Waco	TBA
11/14/10	Baylor	Waco	2:30 p.m.
11/17/10	Stephen F Austin	<b>Tudor</b>	7:00 p.m.
11/20/10	Texas A&M	<b>Tudor</b>	7:00 p.m.

### Georgia State Thanksgiving Tournament

11/27/10	Mercer	Atlanta	3:00 p.m.
11/28/10	Georgia State or Alabama A&M	Atlanta	TBA

### Gene Hackerman Invitational

12/03/10	Louisiana-Monroe	<b>Tudor</b>	7:30 p.m.
12/04/10	Long Beach St. or PrairieView A&M	<b>Tudor</b>	7:30 p.m.
12/18/10	Arkansas-Little Rock	Little Rock Ark.	2:00 p.m.
12/21/10	Houston Baptist	Sharp Gym	7:00 p.m.
12/28/10	Northwestern State	Natchitoches, La.	7:00 p.m.
01/02/11	Lamar	<b>Tudor</b>	TBA
01/06/11	UCF	<b>Tudor</b>	7:00 p.m.
01/09/11	Tulsa	Tulsa	2:00 p.m.
01/13/11	Marshall	<b>Tudor</b>	7:00 p.m.
01/16/11	East Carolina	Greenville, N.C.	12:00 p.m.
01/20/11	UTEP	El Paso	8:00 p.m.
01/23/11	UAB	<b>Tudor</b>	2:00 p.m.
01/27/11	Tulane	New Orleans	TBA
01/30/11	Tulsa	<b>Tudor</b>	2:00 p.m.
02/06/11	SMU	<b>Tudor</b>	2:00 p.m.
02/10/11	Houston	Hofheinz	7:00 p.m.
02/13/11	Memphis	Memphis	2:00 p.m.
02/17/11	UTEP	<b>Tudor</b>	7:00 p.m.
02/20/11	Southern Miss.	Hattiesburg	TBA
02/24/11	Tulane	<b>Tudor</b>	7:00 p.m.
02/27/11	Houston	<b>Tudor</b>	2:00 p.m.
03/03/11	SMU	Dallas	7:00 p.m.

\*\*\*Schedules show Central Time

# THE LETTERWINNER

RICE UNIVERSITY  
THE "R" ASSOCIATION - MS 546  
6100 MAIN STREET  
HOUSTON, TEXAS 77005-1892

NON PROFIT ORG.  
U.S POSTAGE  
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HOUSTON, TX

## WHAT THE "R" ASSOCIATION IS TO ME!

The "R" Association  
is my continued  
connection to my  
former teammates and  
Rice Athletics.

### Membership Form Mail to address below

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

CHECK REQUESTED MEMBERSHIP BELOW. Make checks payable to "Rice Athletic Fund" \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Annual Renewal (\$100 check or credit card)

**OR**

\_\_\_\_\_ Class of 10(Complimentary at \$00)

\_\_\_\_\_ Classes of 06 07 08 09 (Discounted to \$50)

\_\_\_\_\_ Lifetime Membership (payment schedule)

\_\_\_\_\_ \$500 per Payment for 2 Payments (July, Aug.)

\_\_\_\_\_ \$1000 per Payment for 1 Payment

\_\_\_\_\_ Additional Contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Sport: \_\_\_\_\_

Years: \_\_\_\_\_

Class of: \_\_\_\_\_

Trainer, Cheerleader, Mgr. \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks  
payable to  
The "R"  
Association

Credit Card: Visa, MasterCard, AMEX, Discover (circle one)

Card #: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail payments to: R-Association: MS-546, PO Box 1892, Houston, TX 77251**

**Contact the R-Assoc.: MS-546, PO Box 1892, Houston, TX 77251 Phone: (713) 348-6915 Fax: (713) 348-6916**

**Email: [rassoc@rice.edu](mailto:rassoc@rice.edu) Web page: [www.rassociation.net](http://www.rassociation.net)**