## ROBERT E. ARRAS, JR.

291 Adams Street, Milton, MA 02186
(617) 696-9813

We are invited to tell all about wife, children, and job (if applicable) and to tell also about who we are and what we think. The franker the better. This in lieu of the forbidding traditional questionnaire. No doubt this invitation will cause more of us to “blank out” than did the ’69 Banner. But in my case the challenge arrives at an opportune moment, which I will try to describe by walking the fine line between the truth and selEpromotion.

I’ll start with the easy part: 1 am married to Karen Koehler Arras, whom I met in 1966, smuggled into Yale three or four times in 1968 and 1969, cohabi- tated with in California in 1970, and then wed in 1971. Still married, and happily so.

Together we have three children: Anne (eighteen), a Yale freshperson, Class of’97; Ruth (sixteen), a junior at Milton Academy; and Sam (two). To those who notice the fourteen-year hiatus and ask, “Was he planned?,” I answer, “Yes, probably, but not by us.” 1 don’t mean to imply by this that God (or someone else) is responsible. But, in fact, the family to me has a spiritual quality which I value above all else; and I feel blessed by this new dimension to this shared adventure.

As evidence, I offer my circumstances circa mid-1993. After a highly charged decade in the Far East, I disconnected. For me, this meant quitting my job and joining the American Upper Middle Class. The goal here was to gather my family together as a functioning unit. This involved buying a proper house in Milton (where my daughters could be day students instead of boarders whose parents were twelve times zones away), acquiring the paraphernalia needed to survive in the U.S. these days, and finding a job to support this life style. The first two were easy enough. As to the latter, I devised a strategy premised on precipitating a midlife crisis, which would be followed by self-examination, heightened awareness, transformation leading to a new career, etc. However, the crisis did not materialize. Instead, I entered a phase I call pretirement.

Like retirement, this is a stage of life where one cashes in a few chips (in the casino of life) in order to pursue the things one enjoys. In my case, these include family, tree pruning, and projects which are interesting rather than monetarily rewarding. Unlike retirement, pretirement ends with reentry into the “real” (as opposed to the “other”) world. Reading, as I do these days, cautionary tales such as The Ants and the Grasshopper, I am well aware of the rules. So much for the job; c.v. available on request.

As to the being and thinking part—-Je pense, doncje suis.

A little chronology may help my classmates decipher the above. Left Yale June 9, 1969; flunked U.S. Army physical (to my enduring surprise) on June 10, 1969. Worked as roughneck in Western Santa Barbara Channel, then as writer/editor in Ventura, California. Took first pretirement after Nixon’s second victory and built and sailed forty-foot boat from Ventura to Auckland. Continued building boats (steel fishing kind) in Panama, then in Seattle and San Diego, with time spent selling them in Mexico. In 1982 left for Manila, Philippines, where, ultimately, I ran a group of companies, there and in Hong Kong and Japan, until 1992.

In all that time I had very little contact with Yale or the East Coast for that matter. (I did appear once in the YAM, but in the Class of i960, as “Esteban.”) This was only partly intentional; and, in any case, twenty-five years is time enough for the cycle to have turned.

I look forward to reawakening my experiences of Yale, vicariously, now that my daughter is there. I hope that they are as much fun the second time around.