

Greetings, Illustrious Class of 1973! We had plenty of inputs, so let's get to it.

Heard from Tom **Butler**, CS-10, for the first time in forever. He just celebrated his 3rd anniversary flying a Hawker 900XP out of Dulles Airport for Jet Linx. His son, Brian, was just selected for Lt Col, adding another reason for Tom's wife, Leslie, to call him Tom's "Mini-Me." Brian is currently serving as a C-17 IP at Papa AB, Hungary. I had no idea we had people permanently stationed in Hungary, accompanied at that. Brian and his wife will be there through May 2022.

Prompted by the announcement that the Academy was looking for sponsors, John **Barry**, CS-26 and CEO of Wings Over the Rockies Air and Space Museum at old Lowry AFB, reported that in partnership with USAFA, Wings Over the Rockies started a "Falcon Wings" program three years ago. The museum adopts a cadet squadron each year, selected by the Superintendent, and gives them free membership for a year to the museum's two facilities, invites them to events and dedicates the squadron in their Lowry room. The first was CS-11, then CS-26. This year it is CS-08.

The award for most-distant pic goes to Gene **Ogilvie**, CS-16, for his shot of his wife Barbara and himself in front of their hops fence near RAF Molesworth, UK, as they prepare for their Virtual Marchback. Gene said that since his cadet T-shirt last fit him about 35 years and 80 pounds ago, they decided they would at least wear their best present-day Falcon livery. More on the Marchback below.



Thanks to Tom **Kennedy**, CS-31, for his quarterly update. Even in the face of the Covid pandemic, the Grim Reapers have managed to travel and visit families. Charlie and Pam **Meyer** headed to Wisconsin in September to visit family at their old homestead, and then returned home to the farm in Sequim, WA for some yard repairs and canning of pears – they have a large acreage of pear trees. Richard and Connie **Hayes** have enjoyed time with their children and grandchildren; in August, they visited Brookgreen Gardens north of Charleston SC where among other things Richard captured some great photos of birds – birdwatching is his hobby. Right, granddaughter Henley is the one without the ponytail. In August, Fil and Kim **Thorn**



traveled by RV to Angel Fire, NM to visit friends and family. All the while, Don **Sloan** continued to enjoy flight in one of his four airplanes. Tom **Kennedy** has

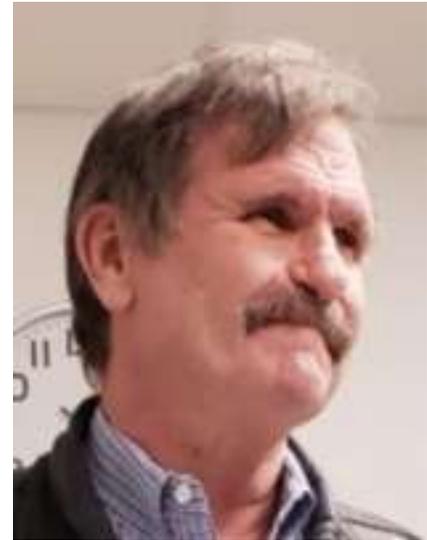


stayed nearer home as he's been successfully recovering from rotator cuff surgery. Finally, Phil and Chris **Yavorsky** have enjoyed their family all living close-by in the O'Fallon, IL area. Phil and their youngest grandson, Jacob, are below.

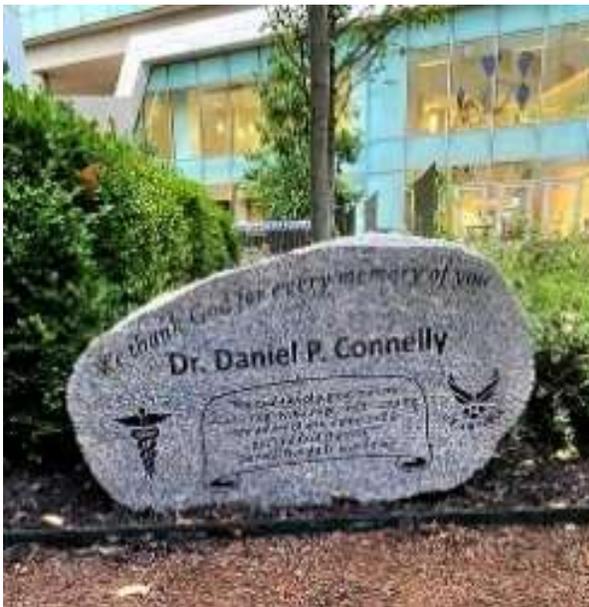




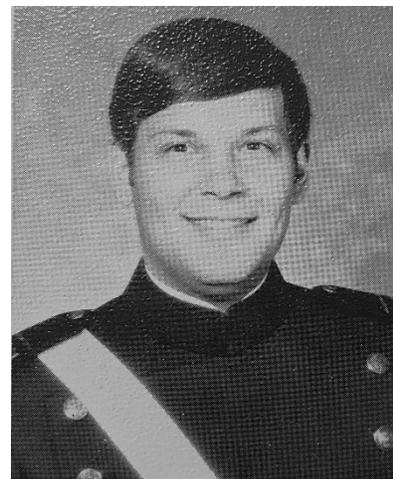
As noted in the last Checkpoints, we lost Dan **Connelly**, CS-31, in mid-July. The squadron rallied behind Robin and her work at CASA after his passing. His internment ceremony will be in Arlington National Cemetery at a date to be determined. Not only did he make significant contributions to the USAF during his military career, he was also a highly respected surgeon in Kansas



City. The Shawnee Mission Hospital has erected a permanent memorial in his memory.



We also lost Steve **Hansen**, CS-04, on 23 Sep 20, surrounded by family. Our condolences to Paula and the entire family. The family will hold a private celebration of life at a later date. His obituary may also be seen at www.dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/birmingham-al/steven-hansen-9376980.



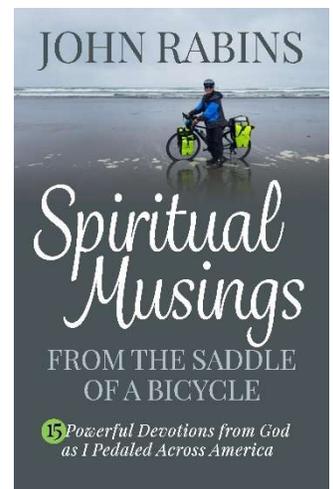
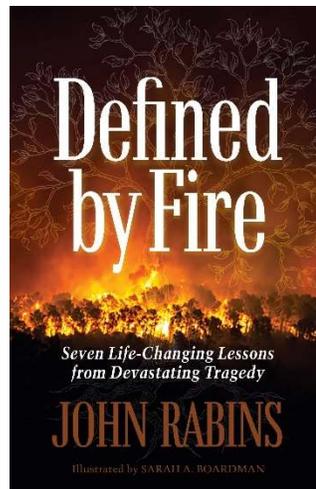


Dean **Haylett**, CS-14, was laid to rest at the USAFA Cemetery on 11 Sep 20. Six classmates were able to attend. They, along with Dean's wife Patty, are shown in the accompanying picture. I received a nice email from Patty afterwards, thanking the class for our support.



L-R: Dale Birch, CS-39; Gary Blokland, CS-33; Ron Scott, CS-34; Patty Haylett; Steve Lorenz, CS-15; Mike Arnett, CS-09; Bob Munson, CS-34.

John **Rabins**, CS-34, had two books published this year. John and wife Nancy lost their home during the 2013 Black Forest, Colorado fire. On the same day, his father died in California. John's book *Defined by Fire -- Seven Life-Changing Lessons from Devastating Tragedy* captures seven important life lessons God revealed to John during the healing process. In 2018 John rode a bicycle across the country, camping along the way. During the ride he wrote 15 devotions entitled *Spiritual Musings from the Saddle of a Bicycle*. Both are available through online booksellers.



"T" **Thompson**, CS-24/29, is putting out an email newsletter called *Wing Tips*, "designed to help you on your Flight to Excellence." Sign up at www.CaptainTSpeaks.com.

Membership in our Class Facebook page at www.facebook.com/usafa73 has gone over 200 classmates. Join us to get timely notice of class and USAFA news, GBNF notices, and more.

Don **Rightmyer**, CS-02, said all is well at his old Kentucky home. He's working on a genealogy/family history piece on "Finding Your World War II Ancestor" for Genealogical.com. He's also pulling together a genealogical research book on Finding Your U.S. Air Force Ancestor (and Its Predecessors -- Air Service, Air Corps, U.S. Army Air Forces). He would love to gather stories/remembrances from classmates who had fathers/uncles, etc. who served in World War II, Korea, Viet Nam or the Cold War. Let me know if you'd like to contribute and I'll put you in touch with Don.

Class VP Bill Diffley, CS-11, remains in contact with USAFA '23, our Legacy Class. They recently selected their Class Exemplar, Colonel Leo Thorsness (Thor). Check him out on Wikipedia at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leo_K._Thorsness.

Steve **Lorenz**, CS-15, continues to serve USAFA and the Air Force, recently recently of the Falcon Foundation at the Academy. The foundation provides scholarships to colleges or preparatory schools for motivated young people seeking admission to USAFA and a career in the Air Force.

NCLS 2021 will be virtual, 25 - 26 Feb. Registration will open in January.

John **Wigington**, CS-11/14, reported in for Ben **Catlin**, CS-24. Ben's son John was a two-time winner on the European Golf Tour during the month of September. That is a big deal for a professional golfer and Ben is a proud papa. This has been a real breakthrough year for John who has previously played and won on the Asian Tour. He played last year on the European Tour, without a win.

Steve **Dalrymple**, CS-02, with wife Kim with John and Suzy **Wigington** on the golf course at Lake of the Ozarks.



Mike **Cutter**, CS-30, spoke on behalf of squadronmate Rich **Comer** on the occasion of Rich's class ring's inclusion in this year's Forged in Blue (Ring Melt) Ceremony on 12 Aug 20. Rich's ring and five others are now part of the gold ingot which the Class of 1972 will present to the Class of 2022. Their class rings will be cast from that ingot, which also includes a portion of the previous melt, the "forever ingot," ensuring that all future class rings include gold from every class that has contributed rings.

Class President Ron **Scott**, CS-34, reports our USAFA 73 book project, *Living Honorably: The Story of the Class of 1973* is achieving progress. Part I is essentially complete. We have completed 12 interviews for Parts II and III and expect to complete about 24 more over the next 6-9. That gives us another 18 months to edit and work the actual publishing part.

Thanks to Dave Ellis, CS-32, for pointing out 18 Sep was an auspicious birthday for the USAF: its 73rd! Dave also sent the following group of “usual suspects,” all found at SOS in September 1973, the 50th birthday of the Air Force.

September 18, 2020 We Celebrate the 73rd Birthday of the United States Air Force. In 1977 Some of Us Celebrated the USAF's 30th Birthday at Maxwell AFB, Alabama in our Squadron Officer School Course -- Time Flies for Illustrious '73 !



Capt William M. Wilson, Jr.
"Bill"



Capt Craig K. MacPherson
"Craig"



Capt Kenneth C. Stanley
"Ken"



Capt Gary C. Niskala
"Gary"



Capt James G. Boehm
"Jim"



Capt Scott E. Mills
"Scott"



Capt David T. Ellis
"Dave"



In a related story, Don **Ramm**, CS-19, posted the US Dept of State's salute to the Air Force on its 73rd birthday in our class Facebook group, noting just one minor problem: the jets featured in the salute image were F-18s!

Iron Man Jack **Hudson**, CS-25, reported his granddaughter Etta has already outgrown the “tagalong” bicycle trailer featured in last quarter’s column, so they have been riding on a real tandem. They entered the Blue Streak 10-mile time trial on Wright-Patterson AFB and Etta powered them to an average of 20.1 mph, crushing their previous best on the tagalong. You can try to keep up with Jack on Facebook and sometimes on the class Facebook page. Jack set a goal of 7300 riding miles this year (’73 x 100) and exceeded it with two and a half months remaining in the year.



We wound up with 46 participants in the Virtual Marchback, far outstripping the nearest competition and once again demonstrating “The Illustrious Class of 1973” is no brag, just fact. I didn’t get a complete list of who completed the Marchback, but here’s the info and pix I received from a few of our participants after the deadline for the Summer column. The Ogilvies were mentioned above.

John **McDevitt**, CS-22, completed his 6.2 miles at home on his treadmill over a 6 day period.

Bill Diffley, CS-11, and AJ Ranft, CS-11/17, completed 6.2 miles spread between Monument Valley Park in downtown Colorado Springs and out at the Flying Horse subdivision on the South side of North Gate Rd.

Jim **Mateos**, CS-19, said he got ‘er done.

Rich **Eilers**, CS-22, did it elliptically. “Completed my 10k at 0804 on Saturday morning. Due to years of knee abuse, relegated to recumbent bike or elliptical. Did the 10k in my Ironman Achiever



AJ Ranft and Bill Diffley on their Virtual Marchback in Monument Valley Park in downtown Colorado Springs.

elliptical in a time of 30:14. Did a 6.5k on Sunday and another 10k on Monday evening. Took a sweaty head shot and post schuss display picture, not interesting so will not send.” We thank you for not sending the head shot, Rich.



Tom Kennedy on his last segment

Tom **Kennedy**, CS-31, did it in segments: “1.6 miles on 18 Jul, 1.5 miles on 19 Jul, 1.5 miles on 20 Jul and 1.6 miles today, 21 Jul. While I am fully capable of the entire 6.2 miles in one walk – I usually complete the Richmond Monument Avenue 10K (6.2 miles) in approximately 1:50, it’s too hot in Richmond to do that now. I did the walks as my morning walks around 0730 each day. I’ve also completed 2 miles of swimming in the time frame, but that’s not part of the challenge. Best of luck Class of 2024.”

Looking forward to 2021! (I think.)

73!

Mike Arnett

Class Scribe

“Here’s a toast...to the host...of the men we boast...the U.S. Air Force!” but in God we Trust.