

Illustrious Classmates,

Our 50th reunion is in the books, and a great one it was! Kudos to AJ **Ranft** and his team who pulled it off. With 451 classmates and 882 total registered, we acquitted ourselves well. 844 of us graduated and 107 had gone on before us as of the reunion, so we had 61% of our living classmates attend. That's pretty amazing. For some, it was the first time back to the Aluminum Womb or at least to a reunion since graduation. It was great to see all of you!

We had plenty of time to reconnect at two receptions, and most squadrons found time to meet individually, as well. From the feedback I received, the part of the reunion classmates valued most was the Memorial Service. Rev. Tom "Bud" **Blase** and his team worked with the AOG to develop a program that accurately listed all of our Gone But Not Forgotten classmates. It's available on the class website, usafa73.org.

Webmaster Craig **MacPherson** is posting pix to the class website. If your squadron doesn't have any there, contact your squadron rep (also listed on the website). Many pix have been added to the class Facebook group (see below for URL). We are currently at 311 members and continue to add new classmates to the group almost every week. Even if you don't "do" social media or are boycotting Facebook for taking sides during the 2020 election, I'd like to encourage you to sign up just to be able to be a part of our online community. It's free, and there are multiple posts a week.

One of the most important things we did at the reunion besides reconnect with classmates was to elect new class officers. Thanks to our outgoing officers Ron **Scott**, President; John **Stefonik**, Secretary; and Kelly **McCullar**, Treasurer. Bill **Diffley**, out-going VP, has assumed the mantle of President; Jim **Parker** has stepped up as VP; Kirk **Samelson** is taking on the Secretary responsibilities; Bob **Munson** will be Treasurer; and AJ Ranft and I will continue as Class Senator and Class Scribe, respectively. Bill forwarded this brief message: *"Allow me to introduce myself as the new president of our class. It is truly an honor to be representing the Illustrious Class of 1973. Along with me are the rest of the class officers, some new, some experienced. It is a fine and talented mix. Be sure that we will work diligently on our class business."*

Bill hit the ground running. The week after the reunion, he and Mike **Mosier** delivered copies of our class book, *Becoming Leaders of Character: Conversations with the Class of 1973*, to the Superintendent, the Dean, and the Director of the Center for Character for Leadership and Development. We had already presented the book to the Commandant. Bill reported, "In each case it was accepted gratefully and each had been looking forward to it. It is a book our class should be proud of and we can be thankful to Mike Mosier for his work on it."

At our reunion "hot wash," Joe **Kahoe** volunteered to head up a 55th reunion, so I guess that answers the question of when the next one will be. If you're interested in helping, let me know and I'll forward your name and interest to Joe. But let me encourage you not to wait until the next reunion to reconnect with old friends. As we age, we inevitably will go the way of all living things. We've lost my old roommate Gordy **Bendick**, Paul **Manley**, Dennis **Haugh** and Dickie **Ulmer** all since the 1st of September this year, and it's only 27 Oct as I write this.

In other news...

Reunion Chairman AJ Ranft was finally able to secure the number 73 for his 2018 Porsche Boxter in the 27th Annual Big Bend Open Road Race on 7 Oct. He secured fifth place, missing his goal average speed of 140 MPH over the 120-mile course by 0.030 MPH. First place averaged 140.001 MPH.



“T” **Thompson** has been voted Chairman-Elect of the National Speakers Association, to assume the position 1 Jan 24. Congrats, T!



Al **Dunlap** sent a pic of his daughter Allison at Everest Base Camp with a handmade sign that said “Happy 50th USAFA Class of '73,” and in small print, “Hi, 8th Squadron! Love you, Dad!!” Quite a tribute.

Don **McMillan** and Dennis **Boyce** completed the 162.5-mile Camino de Santiago in Spain on 16 Sep 23. Pix in the Facebook group.

Here's a pic of Jack **Hudson** and Bruce "Orville" **Wright** at the end of the Monument to Memorial bicycle race from the Wright Brothers Monument in Kitty Hawk, NC to the Air Force Memorial in Arlington, VA. Jack rode the entire 336 miles. Orville joined him in the last mile in his role as President and CEO of the Air and Space Forces Association.



Alan **Hoover** finished 5th in Jet Class - Silver, at the last Reno Air Race in his CM-170 Fouga. His check pilot for the races was Rick **Vandam**, who also races in the Sport Class. Pictures are on Al's website, TexasFougaJet.com.

"Here's a toast...to the host...of the men we boast"

usafa73.org

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