

Greetings, Illustrious Class of 1973! Hope all have avoided the 'Rona or have come through it with no permanent ill effects.

Just got late word that Dan **Connelly**, CS-31, departed this life this evening, 21 Jul 20 after a six-month battle with lymphoma. Our prayers go out to his wife, Robin, and the family.

So much for retirement (from NASA) for Dan **Handlin**, CS-28. He is now enjoying a challenging new adventure in the space business as the Director of Safety and Compliance for Fenix Space (Fenixspace.com). Fenix is developing new technology to get to Low Earth Orbit: a Towed Rocket Glider Launch Platform. The Launch Platform does a gamma maneuver (Google it if you're so inclined) and releases the satellite launch vehicle which takes its payload to orbit.

From Charlie Kuyk, CS-18: "I thought I might alert you to a book that my father and I just completed and published (McFarland Publishing). My father is a retired USAF Maj. Gen., former test pilot and wing commander and West Point grad. He had often observed how West Point grads had played an important role in helping develop the air arm of the US military, starting as early as some of the first flights with the Wright Brothers. Since I had just retired from a career in public accounting and had written a fair amount during the course of my work, I agreed to help him write a book about it. It's part history, part memoir and spans the period of 1903 to 1992 when the last of West Point grads described in the book had retired. It includes chapters on the early days of flight, the predecessor organizations of the USAF, the test pilot school at Edwards AFB, the role of technology in shaping the Air Force, reconnaissance, space, and, of course, a chapter on the Air Force Academy. It might be of interest to our classmates interested in the history of the Air Force. It's available in paperback or Kindle at <https://tinyurl.com/y5925k6y>."

Jack **Hudson**, CS-25, says his granddaughter, 7-year old Etta June Hudson, rode with him on the Blue Streak 10-mile time trial on 9 June, on base, at Wright-Patterson AFB. Young Etta June did a great job and powered them to a 17.3 mph average for the 10 miles. It was great fun for both. They won the tandem category (truthfully, they were the only ones in this category).



*And the winner of the Cutest Picture in Checkpoints award goes to Etta June Hudson and Grandpa Jack Hudson, CS-25!*

If you'll remember, Orville **Wright**, CS-39, is now president of the Air Force Association. He said they were planning this year's Air, Space and Cyber Conference for 14-16 Sep 2020 at National Harbor in DC. The theme this year is "Aerospace Nation." They chose the theme was partly because our Navy friends constantly describe America as a "maritime nation." "Really?" quipped Orville.

Geoff **Michael**, CS-37, was recognized as a leading key player in the Global Negotiation Training Service Market Report published in June 2020. He does training seminars that focus on negotiation techniques and strategies that benefit both personal and professional lives.

If you didn't get the word about this year's 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Jacks Valley March Back (Virtual), you need to get on my mailing list or check out the Facebook page at [facebook.com/groups/usafa73](https://facebook.com/groups/usafa73). The 6.2 miles needed to be done (all at once, in stages, or as a relay) between 18 and 31 July. As I write, several folks have reported in. More may have logged their march back on the official USAFA Virtual March Back page online. We'll give you the rundown in the next Class News column, but hopefully you've been keeping track of the updates on The Illustrious Class of 1973 Facebook page.

First to report in at 2:32 PM on the 18<sup>th</sup> was Dave **Ricker**, CS-04 (DNG), having completed his 6.2 miles in Freedom Lark Park in Pinellas Park, Florida. Dave left the Academy in the summer of 1971 and immediately enlisted. He proudly returns to the reunions and when it comes to events like surviving Jacks Valley and SERE, he thinks of himself as a graduate. There were two David Rickers in the class. The other graduated from 20<sup>th</sup> Squadron Trolls.

Dave continued: "When I enlisted they counted my time at USAFA as active duty. Started out as an E-2 with two years. Helped my pay. I served 4 years enlisted. I spent 3½ years at Offutt AFB at the Global Weather Center. Started with the European weather then my last 2½ years in Special Projects where my department did the forecasts for the spy planes and spy satellites. I loved weather but hated the idea of working 20-plus years doing shift work. I stayed in Nebraska and earned my Bachelor's and MBA at University of Nebraska at Omaha. I retired with over 30 years at electric and gas utilities. Primarily as a Financial Analyst with some Accounting, Auditing, Long Term Planning, and three years working with Sarbanes Oxley (SOX) compliance. My time at the Academy set me up for a wonderful and great career. I'm thankful for the opportunities my time at the Academy opened up for me. I have plenty of time to walk as my part time job working at Amalie Arena - Tampa Bay Lightning and concerts is still impacted by the coronavirus. Spend my earnings at the golf course as I don't need the money. I hate being bored otherwise."



*Fightin' Fourth's Dave Ricker (DNG) after completing his 6.2 miles for the Virtual March Back on 19 Jul 20.*

Next to report his Marchback results was Mike **Mosier**, CS-34, at 5:01 PM on the 18<sup>th</sup>, having completed 8.2 miles (striver!) in 1:58. That's a high bar there, Mike!



Denny **Clark**, CS-09 (left), did the 6.2 miles on the Huckleberry Island Trail on the 19th near his home in central Florida. And that's while still rehabbing his left knee after his second total knee replacement six weeks ago. Your humble scribe, also CS-09, completed the 6.2 miles the evening of the 19th in 1:44.

We eventually had 46 registered participants, once more leading the way! Congratulations, Illustrious Class of 1973!

Robert **Marsh**, CS-05, reported he's still working full time from home and it's going well. He and wife Deb live in Windsor Gardens, a 55+ condo complex with 3300 residents in Denver, so COVID is an issue. There are nine cases and one death as of this writing. Five of the nine cases are in a nearby building, adding to the stress. The residents in their building are all cooperating, and their son is delivering groceries to them.

Heard from Dale **Williams**, CS-12, for the first time in a while. He left active duty in August 1979 and went to work at Delta, retiring there just before the bankruptcy in Dec 2004. His wife, Edie, put him back to work Apr 2005 at Netjets, flying the Citation X and Gulfstream 4sp, 450, 500 and 550. Medical problems with Edie finished his career in Jan 2015. Since then he has had to fly vicariously through his youngest son who also wound up at Netjets. Oldest son is a doc in Norfolk, VA, dealing primarily with oncology. The daughter in the middle is working with Head Start in West Texas. Dale and Edie have 6 grandkids; the oldest is a sophomore in college and the youngest is in the 4th grade.

Even with a COVID pandemic, several CS-31 Grim Reapers have stayed busy.

Bob **Smith's** wife, Lin, had a successful hiatal hernia surgery and she now feels great. All the while, Bob has continued volunteer work with the Cleveland County Court (NC) as a Guardian ad Litem for children in foster care. With COVID-19 restrictions, his contacts with the children and their caregivers have been limited to phone calls, and the children are often unable to get the treatments they need. Like many of us, he and Lin have stayed in touch with their church family through Zoom. Bob reminds us to stay safe and remember our true legacy is the impact we have on others rather than the job title we achieved.

Reaper Howard "Mitch" **Mitchell**, his young son, Howie, and a friend decided that instead of hiding out during COVID they'd take a little trip. 7,600 miles, 20 states, 18 National Parks and 18 other historical sites/points of interest before returning to Arizona 23 days later - a "vacation from the vacation"! Mitch also recently traveled to Orlando FL to help squadronmate Bud **Gammon** move from his Alabama home to the Orlando area to be closer to his daughter and grandson.

Our recently re-energized Facebook page ([facebook.com/groups/usafa73](https://facebook.com/groups/usafa73)) has been getting a lot of traffic. To date we have 169 members. If you haven't checked it out, you're missing out. Membership is restricted to classmates, their family and friends. Anyone can post, but subject matter must be related to the Academy, the Air Force or the class. Non-related material will be removed. If you're already an active member, some of the news in this column won't be news.

Stay active and healthy!

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.