

Illustrious Classmates,

From Bob **Munson**, CS-34, Class Treasurer and NCLS Honcho:

NCLS 2025 was the twentieth anniversary of our support for the Academy's National Character and Leadership Symposium (NCLS). Since 2005 our Flagship Sponsor funds have impacted the leadership development of over 20,000 cadets, one third of all graduates. To date over one million '73 dollars have enabled NCLS to grow into the program it is today. And our support will continue; as of 1 January 2025 our endowment had over \$2.9M in it, which allows the program to use up to \$130,000 for the next NCLS. The Class of 1973 is by far the largest single funding support for the Academy's largest character and leadership training program.

About 20 of our classmates as well as many spouses attended, and many volunteered, for NCLS 2025. The Superintendent had a major role in structuring the program to his theme of "Warfighters to Win". Thus the speakers were by and large either active duty or recently retired. The hotwash feedback from our classmates/spouses that this NCLS definitely provided character and leadership experiences to cadets, and overall NCLS was very important to cadet development. Our classmates thought there should be more speaker choices, but the votes split on whether there should be civilian speakers...but quite a few added comments to the effect of missing ordinary folks with extraordinary stories. The slam-dunk best speaker by class vote was LtCol Nadeem, an Iraqi American who was separated from her mother and lived in Iraq as a child before being repatriated to the US...an ordinary USAF officer with an extraordinary story.

Rich and Teresa **Fazio** hosted the after-NCLS dinner at Casa Fiesta for over thirty of us and invited the Vice Superintendent and his wife, Maj Gen Tom and Laurie Sherman, who were great. Also joining were Sully and Lorrie **Sullenberger**, CS-18, who attended this NCLS to present the AOG's Sullenberger Award for Courage to F-15E crewmembers who defended Israel from drone attacks last year. All our '73 lunches and dinners are great, this was one of the best.



Post-NCLS dinner attendees Kirk **Samelson**, Ted **Kammire**, Maj Gen Sherman, Chris **Taravella**, Al **Maurer**, Bob **Munson**, AJ **Ranft**, Mike **Arnett**, John **Wigington**, Mike **Edwards**, Jim **Parker**, Steve **Lorenz**, Bill **Diffley**, Vic **Thuotte**, AJ **Briding**, Charlie **Felton**, Trapper **Carpenter**, host Rich **Fazio**, Sully **Sullenberger**

L-R: Laury Edwards, Pris Arnett (seated), Pam Diffley, Sandy Maurer, hostess Teresa Fazio (hidden behind Sandy), Pam Munson, Rose (guest of Chris Taravella), Lorrie Sullenberger (behind Rose), Barb Rorke, Andree Ranft behind Connie Thuotte, Laurie Sherman, Flo Parker, Iris Carpenter, Leslie Lorenz



Chris **Taravella's** (CS-34) toast was one of the best I've ever heard!

L-R: AJ **Briding**, CS-19; Ted **Kammire**, CS-18; Class Secretary Kirk **Samelson**, CS-35; Chris **Taravella**, CS-34; Barb **Rorke**, guest of Charlie **Felton**, CS-10; Rose, guest of Chris **Taravella**.



Barb Rorke and Charlie **Felton**, CS-10;
Leslie and Steve **Lorenz**, CS-15



Pam and Class Treasurer Bob
Munson; Sully and Lorrie
Sullenberger



Ted Kammire; Kirk Samelson; Bob and Pam Munson

Foreground: Mike and Laury Edwards, CS-13; Pris and Class Scribe Mike Arnett, CS-09; Rose, friend of Chris Taravella; Chris Taravella





Rich and Teresa **Fazio**, CS-16;
Iris and AOG Board Member
Trapper **Carpenter**, CS-09

Sandy and Al **Maurer**, CS-39; John
Wigington, CS-11/14; AJ **Briding**, CS-19



Rich **Fazio**; Laurie and Maj Gen Tom Sherman, Vice Superintendent, invited just to get to know us; Iris and Trapper **Carpenter**, CS-09 (in background); Al **Maurer**; Class Vice President Jim and Flo **Parker**, CS-20; Vic **Thuotte**, CS-09; Sandy **Maurer**; Steve **Lorenz**; Ted **Kammire**



Steve **Lorenz**, Laurie and Maj Gen Sherman; Class President Bill **Diffley**, CS-11



Class Senator AJ **Ranft**, CS-10; Bill **Diffley**; Trapper **Carpenter**; Charlie **Felton**; John **Wigington**



Laurie and Maj Gen Sherman; Vic and Connie **Thuotte**

From Tom **Kennedy**, CS-31:

Here's my Spring, April, update for the 31st Sq Grim Reapers. Short, but that's what it is. It's been a very quiet winter for our 31st Squadron Grim Reapers. Don **Sloan** has continued to support the Delaware Special Olympics and the annual Polar Plunge. This year, he was honored as his team was the highest fund raiser. Bob **Errickson** (Bob was with us for 3 years until medically discharged) and Tom **Kennedy** joined Don for the plunge. Ann **Garrard** (John's widow) has just completed a cruise encompassing Taiwan, South Korea and Japan, and Robin **Connelly** (Dan's widow) stays with their grandchildren busy hoping between Chicago and Rhode Island. A few photos capture our lives.



Bob **Errickson**, Tom **Kennedy** and Don **Sloan** enjoyed the Plunge weekend in Delaware



Burr – it was a chilly plunge

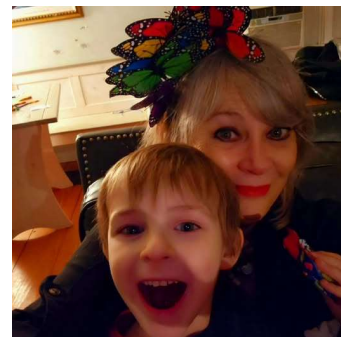
Richard and Connie **Hayes**



Charlie and Pam **Meyer**



Ann **Garrard**



Robin **Connelly** and De

From Dave **Harmon**, CS-22:

Hi from CS-22! Our squadron decided to gather in Vegas for a mini-reunion in March. 6 of us and some wives had dinner at the HofBrauHaus.



Poolside group (from left to right): Jim **Boyle**, Sue and Rich **Eilers**, Dave and Julie **Harmon**, Yvonne and Tony **Strawa**

HofBrauHaus (from left to right): Rich **Eilers**, Mike & Patti **Laney**, Sue Eilers, Kim Peterson, Julie Harmon, Yvonne & Tony **Strawa**, Dave **Harmon**, Jim **Boyle**, John **Peterson**.



Poolside group (from left to right): Jim **Boyle**, Sue and Rich **Eilers**, Dave and Julie **Harmon**, Yvonne and Tony **Strawa**

Three of us (Mike, Tony and myself) also made a trip to the USAFA cemetery after the gathering to honor two of our other squadron mates that are resting there (Randy **Kalkman** and Paul **Manley**).

From Jack **Hudson**, CS-25:

Squadron mate Denny **Boyce** is now hiking on the Appalachian Trail; he is planning to hike it all this year.

Am early for the next Checkpoints but thought I would send this to you now since Marsha and I are out of the country for most of March for a 50th anniversary trip to Australia and NZ.

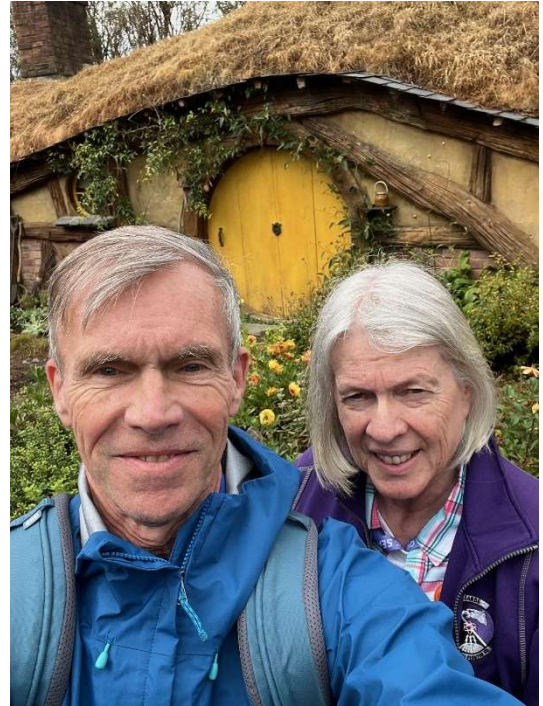
In late Jan, I competed in the annual indoor triathlon in the WPAFB gym (rowing, cycling treadmill); 15 minutes each even to go as far as possible then the distances are totaled. 29 competitors; I was 10th overall but 6th on the bike. While on the bike, I discovered that the guy on my left was Class of '23, our 50-year class. There were two other '23 grads too. The two males were #1 and #2 overall; the woman was the #1 female and 6th overall. Should have taken a selfie with them but was so tired at the end that I did not think about it. I've copied a photo from the WP Facebook page and attached it.



Far left is 2nd Corrine Yorkman, #1 female. Next to her: 2nd Lt Gabe Bartolomei, #1 male; next to him, 2nd Lt Shepherd Kruse, #2 male. I'm on the far right. The 2nd Lts are all AFIT students, graduating in a few weeks then off to their next assignments. I thought it was hilarious that I was competing with members of '23. They of course did super well. But I was there cranking away.

In March, my wife Marsha and I took a three-week trip to Australia and New Zealand; 15 days of that were on a cruise ship that sailed from Brisbane and made 6 port calls along the east side of NZ.

Marsha is a big Lord of the Rings fan, so we took two LOTR excursions; one was to the Hobbit Village where we got to see the movie set, and tour the fully furnished Hobbit Houses. These photos are in front of one of the Hobbit Houses. Was a wonderful 3-week trip. Royal Caribbean was the cruise line; great food, lots of attention to cleanliness, security, safety. Our 50th anniversary is coming up in June; this trip was to celebrate 50 in advance!



On Friday, I rode bikes with a USAF Cycling Team teammate to the AF Museum, to visit the Raider Memorial on the occasion of the 83rd anniversary of the mission. Never forget!

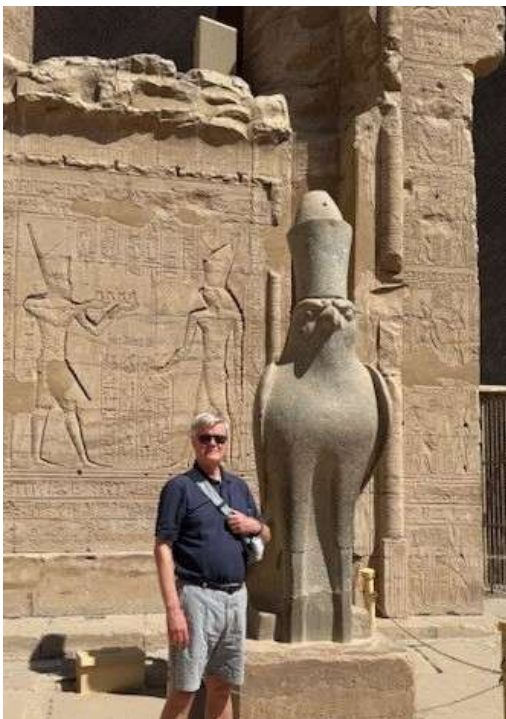


From Craig MacPherson:



Our Fourth Annual Campus Radical (CS-39) Whiskey Tour was on the Tennessee Trail in 2025 in the "backyard" of Dan and Denise **Pierre**. Nine Radicals: **Bob Decker**, **Kelly McCullar**, **Paul Motley**, **Dan Pierre**, **Craig MacPherson**, **Mark Romain**, **Skip Evans**, **Terry Lakin** and **Mark Prill** enjoyed the Volunteer state from Nashville to Lynchburg. All was not Whiskey as the Country Music Hall of Fame and the Beechcraft Historical Museum were on the tour; but more importantly was the camaraderie and laughs after almost 56 years together.

Front: **Mark Romain**, **Mark Prill**, **Paul Motley**
Back: **Kelly McCullar**, **Skip Evans**, **Dan Pierre**, **Terry Lakin**,
Bob Decker and **Craig MacPherson**



John Stefonik, CS-20, wrote from Egypt that our alma mater was not the first to use the falcon as a symbol. When I quipped I'd hate to see what he looked like after 2000 years, he sent the picture below, with his own quip: "Like this?"



Our local monthly gathering of classmates continues to attract 8-10 guys for stories and laughs. I'll have to get Dave **Ellis** to write up his 3rd Lt adventures, ostensibly at Clark AB, including learning to fly a Marine helicopter and getting stuck on a US Navy aircraft carrier during a typhoon. Amazing stuff!

Ed **Heisey**, CS-37, reported that squadronmate Greg **Cummins'** widow Ruth was finally able to get Greg's burial scheduled at Arlington Cemetery on 30 April of this year. As I'm writing this before that date, presumably all went according to schedule. Greg passed away in Aug 2023.

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

Mike Arnett

Class Scribe

usafa73.org

facebook.com/groups/usafa73