

Greetings, Illustrious Class of 1973!

Just a reminder up front that our new website is up and running at USAFA73.org. Check it out! It looks very good and we are continuing to work to make it interesting and useful. More on that later. Now for the news!

We have two nominees for the "Outstanding Contribution to Society" award this time around:



Jim **Western** (CS-34) and Don **Ottinger** (CS-30). This dynamic duo put their Jacks Valley 2nd Beast training to good use building a tent city for the One Community Now Stand Down for homeless and at risk veterans in the Tampa Bay area last summer. Shown in the picture with their "best friend," Jim and Don guided a cadre of volunteers in creating a compound to provide sleeping quarters, meals, haircuts, showers, and services such as medical, dental, mental health, housing referral, education, and VA benefit assistance for the veterans. The 3-day Stand Down (OCNstanddown.org) was a huge success, helping more than 300 veterans get the help they desperately needed. Jim and Don want to know if any other 73ers are involved in Stand Downs and would like to see our class embrace the nationwide Stand Down movement to help our less fortunate brothers and sisters in arms. Jim and Don, we salute you!

I received an update on CS-31 Grim Reapers from Tom **Kennedy**. It was mostly pix, which I will post to USAFA73.org. But I couldn't pass up publishing the picture of Dan & Robin Connelly. It just so perfectly captures the spirit of the times of our years right after graduation. Two Grim Reapers recently celebrated the weddings of their sons. Don and Kyong **Gross'** oldest son, Nathan married Catelyn on 13 Nov 15. According to Don, "Catelyn is such a jewel." Then on 19 Dec 15, Charlie and Pam **Meyer's** son, Chris (Kit), an Air Force 1Lt, married Nikole (Koli)" We wish them all the very best.

Bob **Smith** sent a couple of pix in that I've posted to the website. He reports that he and Lin remain in good health and are very active in their church, Parkwood Baptist Church in Gastonia, NC. Bob is now going through training to be a "Guardian Ad Litem" for North Carolina. He will be an officer of the Juvenile Court to advocate for the child's best interest while they are under the care of the court. On a personal note, it was great to link up with Bob at our 40th reunion back in 2013. He was in our wedding, but we had lost touch with each other for virtually the entire 40 years.



Rich and Teresa **Fazio** retired to far north Colorado Springs last year and hosted a CS-16 Beat Army get-together the evening before the Army game last November at their home across I-25 from Jacks Valley. **Bob Munson** and I were there, as well, though we weren't in 16. I'll post a picture of all the guys and wives on the website, where it will be easier to see everyone.



(L to R) Rich **Fazio**, Wayne **Maricle**, Doug **Richardson**, Don **Sutula**, Tom **Mayberry**, Mike **Arnett**, Bruce **Meyer**, and Bob **Munson**

In a meeting of the class officers last fall, the idea of capturing our class history on the website surfaced. We contacted Don **Rightmeyer**, our Class Historian, and had a telecon with him in early January. There are lots of ideas floating around, including: our years at the Zoo (somebody has to document Guts Galore!); significant accomplishments as a class since graduation (flagship sponsorship of NCLS, for example); significant individual achievements during our time at the Academy and after; and capturing personal vignettes or even multi-page mini-biographies from grads about their lives after graduation, both in (aka war stories) and out of the Service (that would really highlight the diversity of our lives since graduation). The effort would have a number of purposes: it would be of interest to members of the class, our families and descendants; to document for posterity the collective experience of a military academy class that came of age during the Cold War; and to capture or at least enable the study of the class experience to derive lessons learned for the Academy in the future. (The moniker, "Illustrious Class of 1973" is only partly tongue-in-cheek; we have made significant contributions in a wide array of endeavors.) Undoubtedly, the class history would serve other purposes, as well. If you have any suggestions for how to proceed, Don would love to hear them. He is a professional historian, but his editorial/writing experience to date has been with hard copy publications, and he is grappling with how to best implement an online history. If you'll send any comments or suggestions to me, I will forward them to Don and the other class officers.

By the time you will have read this in Checkpoints, NCLS 2016 will be in the books. I expect that those of you for whom I have email addresses will have already received a recap of this year's symposium. If you

are not receiving class updates via email, please forward your email address to me at class.scribe@r-netservices.com or jmikearnett@gmail.com.

Until next time, "Here's a toast...to the host...of the men we boast...the U.S. Air Force!"

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