



Norman I. (Skip) Lee
63119 E. Cat Claw Lane
Tucson, AZ 85739-2058
Home: (520)825-7980
Cell: (520)241-3498
E-mail: 54wrs63@gmail.com

Class News: 1963

December 11, 2011

Please note I have a new e-mail address. The resemblance to the old address is more to help me remember than anything else. The old e-mail was 16 years old and I was suffering from burdensome junk mail and what finally forced me to move a serious intrusion by some scammers. Lately, I have noticed some e-mail providers, such as EarthLink, have added a level of security for who may or may not send the recipient an e-mail. Good idea. Maybe it will spread.

Tom **Clark** has come home. On February 8, 1969 Tom was flying an F-100D Super Sabre, of 416th Tactical Fighter Squadron, 37th Tactical Fight Wing when he was shot down. After several attempts since 1991, a joint search team were recovered human remains from the crash site in October of 2009. Extensive examination was required to identify the human as Toms and he returned to Emporium, PA after 42 years escorted by Patriot Guard Riders and Police, on Thursday, Oct. 20, 2011. A **Mass** of Christian Burial was celebrated at the St. Mark Catholic Church, in Emporium on Saturday, October 22, 2011.

Do you remember the various kafuffles that have occurred over graduate access to the Academy especially, those grads who do not have a Government ID Card? The Academy recently inaugurated a USAFA Grad Base Access Badge. For those grads who meet the aforementioned circumstances should immediately go to the AOG Web Site (www.usafa.org) for specifics & application. It's easy; Denny **King** did it and now has a badge in his possession.

Ok mark your Calendars! Our Class Officers agreed that the Class of 1963 50th Reunion will be held at Colorado Springs 23-27 October 2013. The Falcons football game scheduled for October 26th, 2013 will be against the Fighting Irish of Notre Dame. The Colorado Springs Marriott is expected to be reunion headquarters. The proposed list of activities will be similar to our previous 5 year. A reception at Arnold Hall on Thursday is in the works to formally unveil the Class Gift and to dedicate the JFK cup and the display of Pat **Wynne's** ring. The Reunion Committee Chair is Bill Ball.

To make sure no one misses the 50th Reunion an effort being led by Pres Davis and Gil Merkle is underway to firm up the Class Squadron Reps for better contact and communications with all our classmates. When you are contacted by your Squadron Rep he will be in need of as much contact information for your respective cadet squadron and who knows you might have the missing pieces.

Presentation of gold bars to the Class of 2013 by our class is also being planned. This event is becoming a tradition for Classes celebrating their 50th year presents gold bars to the graduating class during that year. More specifics should be available soon and I'll keep you posted.

This year's mini-reunion was a great success and the Falcons beat Tennessee State. The annual Tail Gate photo is impressive enough. Even more of our classmates came to the dinner and cup turning at Arnold Hall. Once again we have to thank Bob and Charlie **Hayes's** magnificent efforts to organize the event. Also many thanks go to Gordy **Bredvik**, Bill **Ball** and the Class Gift Committee for all their efforts, inputs and demonstrations.



Kneeling LtoR: Gaston, Martinez, Henderson, Hall, Lorenz, Borling, Hayes, Bredvik & Nuss. Standing LtoR: Fox, Mazet, DeBerry, Reynolds, Winzell, Diffendorfer, Hoffman, Roth, Coates, Ball, Kennedy, Matjasko, Lee, Davis, King, Shutack, Ebert, Butler, Merkle Steinbrink Ott.

Those tailgate picture were Jim and Kathleen **Hauser**, Jim and Eileen **Fain**, Phil and Jeannie **Tate**, Ken **Grizzle**, Mary **Wilson**(widow of Harry) along with daughter Sarah, John and Gay **Helinski**, Larry **McLaughlin**, and Leslie **Bowers** (Widow of Jerry). The Cup Turning was, as usual, very emotional. Speaking for our passed classmates were Pres Davis (Jerry Bowers), Gordon Bredvik (Harry Wilson), Jack Martines (Howie Kraye), and Dave Nuss and Dick Shutack (John Gavin). Dave and Dick brought out a very special award earned by John's football kicking prowess: the golden shoe.



the shoe that broke the NCAA kicking record

Bob Hayes is already planning for next year's (2012) mini-reunion and proposes the first weekend in October during the Falcons vs. Navy football game scheduled on October 6. We have already marked our calendar for that date.

Jim **Johnston** sent a photograph of a group of graduate friends getting together at Jim and Sandra's farm in Ohio, near Dayton. Sandra wrote: "This summer we invited numerous friends to the Dayton, Ohio area for six days of activities: canoeing; touring a Frank Lloyd Wright home, the Wright Brothers home, the Air Force Museum; lots of dinners; a white elephant bingo party; AAA baseball; and a car rally that culminated at the Johnston farm near Xenia, Ohio."



Left to right they are Jack **Zimmerman**, Bob **Hall** (on the tractor) Jim **Johnston**, Pres **Davis** (recovering from shoulder surgery), Jim **Bogaert**, and Steve **Dotson**.”

Jerry **Driscoll** announced his retirement from Net Jets. That’s a long time flying. Jerry says these days he is having a little trouble getting around due to a diagnosis of PLS which is a benign form of ALS, Lou Gehrig's disease. He also related a story about the Reno Air Races crash. Jerry and his son-in-law (Mike) were 40 or 50 feet from the impact. Jerry says he was literally blown over by the blast. “Mike and I consider ourselves very lucky because until the second before it hit, the Ghost was pointed right at us.”

Dave (Deacon) **Jackson** related some stories about how being a graduate of the Air Force Academy helped and once hindered his various job hunts. On one occasion, during a conversation with a High School principal on a totally different subject, he was offered a job. The Principal had just asked Dave where he went to college. The offer led to 20 years of teaching. Later, when applying to substitute in a public school he was turned down because the interviewer was convinced the Air Force Academy was not accredited.

Heard from Jay **Miller** on his birthday. Did you know he is the Mayor of Rifle, Colorado?

Butch **Verdier** reported their grandson, Ben Brown-Class of 2012, was notified that he has been chosen to become a pilot. Butch’s reaction: “Hallelujah, Amen!” Congrats to Ben

Denny forwarded an extraordinary e-mail from Bob (The Venk) **Venkus** which I would like to pass on word-for-word but space does not permit. As you may know Bob is living with Parkinson’s Disease but that has not slowed him down much. Denny said Bob has passed to me the wisdom of not wasting time with trivial matters and his intention of attacking life full on. In The Venk’s words “PD is making me live my life faster. . . . If I am just going to waste time I will do it on the handball court or the golf course. That way I can at least keep score!” My kind of guy!

That’s it this time. Great inputs. By the time you read this the holidays will have come and maybe gone. So please enjoy the celebrations, be safe out there and have a happy and prosperous New Year.