

April 2017

Images of broken light, which dance before me like a million eyes, they call me on and on across the universe. —Lennon-McCartney

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Life & Times of the Rebels of '69

Thornton Fractional Township High School South, Class of 1969, Lansing, Illinois

The Story of Photo 1198

by Michael Wright (Colorado)



In the summer of 2009 I had a near-death experience. No warning, no chance for goodbyes, just the overpowering feeling that this was it as the lights in my brain systematically began shutting down. I braced for the end. But after two minutes or so, the lights started turning back on, the throes of death lifted, and I later told the doctors (and anyone else who would listen) that—feelings of impending doom aside—it felt like my brain was being re-wired. Baffled, they concluded I must have suffered a seizure.

But the doctors were wrong. This was no seizure—this was *the* life-changing event par excellence. For, as I eventually discovered, my brain must have actually been re-wired, the result of which was the gift of mediumship—direct communication with the Other Side. And the first to pierce the veil and utilize my heretofore unknown ability was my high school sweetheart, Celeste, who I didn't know had died and with whom I hadn't spoken in forty years. It was a jaw-dropping, ninety-minute world-turned-upside-down initiation into the way things really are.

That's interesting, you may be thinking, but what does it all have to do with a photo?

In August 2011 I was headed back to my Denver-area home after a grueling photoshoot in the Colorado high country. Four days of four-wheeling and backpacking into far-flung wilderness areas bagging wildflower pictures had left me gassed (and a little disappointed), and I was looking forward to a good meal, a hot shower, and my bed. Yet, thirty minutes after passing the turnoff to my favorite wildflower haunt, the Maroon Bells-Snowmass Wilderness—which I was skipping since I'd figured its most-photogenic flora was already spent—Celeste suddenly urged me to turn around and go back.

I was conflicted. Eager to put the trip behind me yet reluctant to dismiss the very soul who entered my bedroom on that incredible night with so much loving energy that my heart raced and my body tingled—forever changing my life—I finally swung the 4Runner around and headed back to the road that would lead me to the doorstep of what is usually Colorado's lushest, most colorful wilderness area.

After a fitful night's sleep and a lackluster morning shoot, I decided to take an afternoon hike further up the mountainside than I normally wander in a last-ditch effort to salvage my side trip. After all, I must have been re-routed to "my place"—my solitary corner of the universe that I've returned to time and again—for a reason. Working my way above timberline and getting more frustrated by the minute, I was becoming conflicted again as my logical left brain fought the intuitive pull to go higher. But despite the evidence that wildflower season here, too, had peaked a week earlier, I pressed upward.

Finally, the desire to continue evaporated, and as I scanned the surroundings one last time I suddenly spotted the most exquisite grouping of columbines I'd ever seen.

In Austria you sing about edelweiss. In Colorado it's all about the columbine, and an exceptional photo of these delicate beauties can put you in exclusive company not to mention change in the pocket. But their long, thin stems make them an uncooperative subject as the slightest breeze will send them swaying, ruining your shot. Every. Time. And in all my years, I'd yet to shoot a columbine photo that satisfied me. But if the photo gods were in a good mood on this day, I could soon have my elusive picture.

If there's one thing a landscape shutterbug learns it's the art of patience; the lighting, the clouds, the infernal wind—everything has to come together, or all you'll have to show for your troubles is a pedestrian snapshot. So I plopped into my camp chair alongside my prize columbines and waited—and waited.

But as thoughts of heading home began to percolate, the coolest and most unexpected thing happened: I was visited. By spirits. Spirits who obviously decided to keep me company (and rooted) until conditions improved.

First came Celeste (whose ongoing visitations I've lost count of), followed by a woman named Marjorie, who has given me messages at the office for co-workers (we eventually learned that a Marjorie worked at our facility years ago). Then it was my spirit guides' turn and they didn't disappoint, cleverly utilizing one of the locale's prominent features—which dominated the landscape at these heights—to convey their surprising response to a front-burner concern in a way that still leaves me shaking my head in wonderment.

At the four-hour mark I suddenly realized conditions were perfect. Leaping from my chair, I frantically checked my light meter, blew through some last-second adjustments, and in one shining moment in which everything magically coalesced I tripped the shutter release. I then hiked back down to my tent, broke camp, and headed for home, satisfied I'd captured my signature columbine picture, if not my finest photo ever—with a bit of much-appreciated enlightened advice thrown in at no extra charge—all made possible by my re-wired brain and divine intervention.

***Mike Wright** is a network engineer, landscape photographer, and psychic medium. He is writing a book about post-NDE (near-death experience) life. His photos—including Photo 1198—can be viewed at www.mwrightphotography.com*

Ask Richie—



Hey Richie! Our high school is Thornton Fractional Township High School South. Even Mr. Jack Wonnell couldn't get all that into a school song. What the heck is a *fractional* township?

Richie: Good question! We got the answer from the Bureau of Land Management. A fractional township contains less than the 36 normal sections, usually because a large meanderable body of water, impassable objects, or a State, reservation, or grant boundary gets in the way. When an irregular boundary makes a township incomplete, it's a fractional township. But that doesn't make TFS any less great! *Go Rebels!*



**Click to watch Inside Lansing's
YouTube interview with TFS Principal,
Mr. Jake Gourley, as he tells us what
makes TFS GREAT today!**


TFS TEAM69 Heard from...

Bill George, Jr. (Florida)—It's really amazing after all the years we are all still connected by the past! Enjoy the issues every month! You guys do an amazing job! Keep up the good work!

Christine Rea (TFS '87)—Thanks so much for letting me be a part of your newsletter. I feel honored! ["Lansing Inspires Rock & Rollin' Musical," *Life & Times* March 2017]

Darlene Barzda Snell (Florida)—Great job as always on the newsletter!! Thank you for donating your time. I volunteer on a few boards, and it really does take more time than people realize. Very impressive issue. **Marilyn Rea Beyer** has a very impressive niece. ["Lansing Inspires Rock & Rollin' Musical," *Life & Times* March 2017] I always look forward to see what each month has in store for us. Thanks again.

George Gussman, Jr. (Indiana)—I would like to thank everyone involved in putting out this newsletter and a special thanks to **Bill Hutchison** and his band, Lake Effect. If it were not for the newsletter letting us know where Bill, **Dean Groom**, and the band would be playing, I would never have seen a good friend and the guy who persuaded me to join the Marine Corps, Glenn van Zyl (TFS '68). We have not seen or talked to each other in about 35 years, and it was good to see him again. Thanks to everyone who made this possible.

 **You can catch up with Lake Effect, too, Saturday, April 29, 2017, at Spanky's, 15213 W. 101st Ave., Dyer, Indiana, 8 pm–midnight.**

Larry Valent (Illinois)—Another great issue. Thanks for all you do.

Jack Yauger (Indiana)—Thanks for such a great job on the newsletter.

Michael Sailor (Illinois)—Dear Life & Times, I enjoy the newsletters.

Greg Trunec (Alabama)—They finally got it right! [*Thanks Greg!* —**TEAM69**]



Happy April Birthday!

Donna Woods Tadd, Bob Guadagno, Bob Ranfranz, Ken Jayne, Donna Nigohosian Magro, Dave Ervin, Tom Novak, Dave Mellendorf, Dennis Knoerzer

Celebrating March Anniversaries

Louie & **Sharon Gulley Escalante** (Indiana)—16 years

Conrad & **Cindy Graham Kats** (Indiana)—47 years

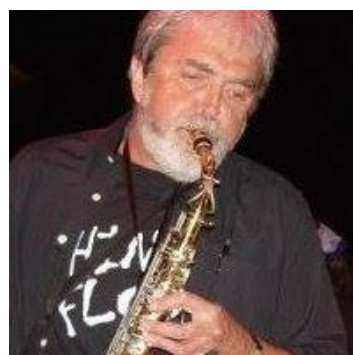
Frank & **Deb Ruth Mazzocco** (Minnesota)—43 years

Karen & **Lee Fetscher** (Wisconsin)—38 years




Welcome New Granddaughter!

Addison Hope, new granddaughter of John and **Grace Demanuele Talbot** (California), was born in February. Addison arrived four weeks early and complications caused a rough beginning, but Addison is doing well now. Grace says, “Addison is our miracle baby, and what a precious gift she is. We are truly blessed!”



Rocky Road Rocks The Quest April 8

 **Ron Hanchar** (Indiana) & the Rocky Road band will play Saturday, April 8, 2017 at The Quest Eatery and Spirits, 1204 US 30, Schererville, Indiana. Rocky Road's modern country and classic rock and blues will flow from 9 pm–1 am.

Our Heartfelt Condolences to ...



Art and Susan Banet (Alaska) and their family on their loss of Art's father, Arthur C. Banet, Sr., in March. Mr. Banet, 95, was a member of the Greatest Generation, honorably serving his country during WWII in the U.S. Army Air Corps. In the years following WWII, Mr. Banet worked for U.S. Steel and Hammond Machine Works. Mr. Banet was a proud participant in the 2008 Honor Flight of the Quad Cities.

Help Us Connect with Our Classmates

Help us locate our classmates with whom we've lost contact. Invite them to subscribe to our monthly TFS Class of 1969 *Life & Times* e-newsletter. Classmates can reach us through our website tfsclassof69.weebly.com or email at TFSouth69@gmail.com Here are classmates we are looking for this month—

Ellen Fogle
Nancy Flaws
Christine Feeley Moore
Lena Ekseioo
Art Edelstein
Jean Duzek Wood
Donna Draus Vick
Linda Dommer Peres
David Dodaro
Ken DeVries

Ron Devalk
Ralph Davy
Alan Danaher
Bruce Crawford
Ralph Corriere
Ken Conrad
Bill Conley
James Paul Christensen
Jim Chenoweth
Ron Chaffee

 Click to forward the Life & Times to classmates, family, and friends

Stay in Touch!

Our 205 subscribers stay in touch through our monthly e-newsletter, the *Life & Times of the Rebels of '69*. Send us your comments, news, photos, classmate re-connections, questions, stories, story ideas, and reflections on the past, present, or future to TFSouth69@gmail.com or message us through our Facebook page [Tfsouth Classofsixty-nine](https://www.facebook.com/TfsouthClassofsixty-nine).

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Help us keep your snailmail and email addresses and phone number current in

For the April *Life & Times*

Photos: Mike Wright, Greg Trunec, Grace Demanuele Talbot

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Technical & Design Consultant: Bill Hutchison

our class database. Send changes to
TFSouth69@gmail.com or message us on
our Facebook page.

Snailmail Correspondent: Dave
Dickinson
Time Zone Traveler: Bud Jenkins

 **Tfsouth Classofsixty-nine**

 **@TFSTeam69**

Our Mission: To promote and grow our network of TFS Class of 1969 friendships by sharing information and planning reunion events to keep the spirit of the 40th Reunion alive and vibrant.

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