

**August 2017**

Richie Rebel says, "Oohrah!"

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# Life & Times of the Rebels of '69

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

## To My TFS Friends

by **George Gussman, Jr.** (Indiana)

**It's taken me a long time** to gather enough nerve to explain what I have done for the last 50 years and open my life up to people I haven't seen for so long. I hope this will not be boring.

I left TFS in 1968 in my last year of high school for a number of personal reasons. When I left school, I joined the U.S. Marine Corps. I later received my GED (general educational development) diploma and completed 1½ years of college. When I took my GED papers to TFS, they gave me a TFS diploma.

After Marine Corps boot camp, I was sent to Camp Del Mar and went to school to become a tank mechanic. After a while that became boring, so I signed up for Recon (reconnaissance)—by no means was that boring. I learned many different things: map reading, demolitions, and survival to name a few. Then I got orders for Hawaii, where I was stationed for about 3 months until I got orders for Vietnam. But first I had to go back to California for more training.



After training I was ready to go, but they blue-tagged my group. In other words, we

had to sit and wait. I wasn't much of a person to wait, so I signed up for Embassy School in Washington, D.C. to become a Marine guard at embassies throughout the world. I myself could not believe it! I had left high school early and since then, all I had been doing was going from school to school to school.

I got my orders for my first assignment as an American Embassy Marine security guard. What luck! It was at the Embassy in Vietnam.



My next assignment after Vietnam was Oslo, Norway, where I spent 2½ years of my life. My E-5 promotion was presented to me by the U.S. Ambassador to Norway, Philip K. Crowe, in 1972.

Norway was fantastic. I loved it. I learned how to snow ski, met wonderful people, and dined at the July 4, 1972 Marine Corps Ball Banquet.



I also met a great girl, and when I left the marines, she followed me home with a promise of marriage. And we did.

I was working at Inland Steel and didn't care for it much, so I rejoined the Marine Corps and off to California we went.

I became an instructor, teaching men what I had learned in Recon, from how to board and unboard a helicopter to map reading, and was promoted to E-6 at Camp Pendleton, California, in front of the Division in 1975.

After two years, I was getting ready to go to warrant officer school because I planned on becoming a career marine. But in 1975, I wound up with a medical discharge under honorable conditions with the rank of Staff Sergeant...and a divorce. My wife and I knew we were just too young.



I went back home and got back my old job at Inland Steel. In 1978, I married a lovely woman named Linda. We have two daughters, Stacy and Stephanie, and six grandsons. Stacy and Stephanie are as happily married as I am. Linda and I live in Merrillville, Indiana. We are retired and enjoy being grandparents.

I've been to a couple of TF South's events and I'm looking forward to more.

I heard **Bill Hutchison** (Indiana), **Dean Groom** (Indiana), and their Lake Effect band one evening, where I also saw the guy who persuaded me to join the Marine Corps, Glenn van Zyl (TFS '68). Glenn and I had not seen or talked to each other in about 35 years, and it was good to see him again.

Also, someday, I'd like to talk to **Harry Smith** (New York) about how he liked Norway when he was there covering the 1994 Winter Olympics for CBS.

All of you have surely warmed my heart and made an old man's thoughts and memories go back in time. Thanks.



## **George & Linda Gussman's Family**



Daughter Stacy, son-in-law Andy, and grandsons Michael, William, Nolan, and Collin



Daughter Stephanie, son-in-law Vinny, and grandsons Nathan and Nicholas



## Ask Richie Rebel

**Hey, Richie!**—I don't think I'm seeing the entire *Life & Times* newsletter in my email. How do I know if I got it all?

**Richie says**—Thanks for this question! You've discovered a glitch that happens sometimes in Gmail and other email accounts. If an email message is big, like our *Life & Times* newsletter is, Gmail sometimes clips the content.



Look for the winking Mailchimp at the bottom of the newsletter. If you see him, you got the whole thing. No Chimp? Then you've been clipped.

Find the clickable link at the bottom of your email that says, "View entire message." See it? Click it! We don't want you to miss a single word!

## What's in Your Vista, Dave?



The view from **Dave Kats's** backyard deck in Northwest Indiana includes his suburban garden of green peppers, cucumbers, and fantastic tomatoes.



Dave's vegetables are well fenced and protected from the wildlife he enjoys watching, like these white-tail deer. Dave says, "They're here every night."

*Send a photo or two of your vista to [TFSouth69@gmail.com](mailto:TFSouth69@gmail.com) and tell us what you like about the place where you live.*

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## **TFS TEAM69** Heard from...

**Rich Wold** (Indiana)—Appreciate the work you do with the newsletter.

**Glenn Wierzbicki** (Illinois)—I'm so glad that I didn't go to Interlocken [Center for the Arts] when I was a sophomore. I would have hooked up with Peter Erskine [Weather Report drummer] and made it big. But the trade off is, you get to live out of a suitcase. With that being said, the friendship of the TFS Class of '69 is priceless! Thanks for the newsletter. It means so much!

**Ken Hanes** (Indiana)—Keep up the good work. I always look forward to each month's new newsletter.

**Linda Jewell** (Blue Star Mother of a career Army officer and contributing author to *Chicken Soup for the Soul: Military Families*)—What a well-told story about the TFS Veterans Wall of Honor. [*Life & Times* July 2017] The appeal for **Greg Bossick's**

rank and dates of service touched my heart, and I certainly hope someone provides it. What a service you provide to your classmates.

[*Good news! Mr. Chris Roberts (TFS '02) now has Greg's info for the Wall of Honor. See the article "Rebels Remembered ..." in this newsletter.—TEAM69*]

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## Happy August Birthday!

Phyllis Vander Noord Evert, Sharon Aurich Comer, Mary Ebbens Knighton, Harry Smith, Floyd Ballard, Dave Dickinson, Peggy Peacock Kubic, Nancy DeBoer DeAngelo

## July Anniversaries Celebrated

Tim & **Bonnie Van Kley O'Connor** (Indiana)—45 years

Linda & **George Gussman** (Indiana)—39 years

Barbara & **Denny Walton** (Utah)—34 years

Darlene & **Paul Carter** (Indiana)—46 years

Larry & **Cheryl Baily Zima** (Indiana)—40 years

Debbie & **Dick Schoon** (Florida)—3 years

Barb & **Owen Watterson** (Wisconsin)—32 years

Nancy & **Eston Ellis** (Illinois)—39 years

## Welcome New Grandbaby!

Patty and **Len Rompca** (Indiana) got a Fourth of July sparkler with the arrival of their new granddaughter, Sophia Grace, born to son Matthew and daughter-in-law Nikki.

## Our Heartfelt Condolences ...



to Richard and Donna Fazio MRSKOS (Indiana) and their family on the July passing of Donna's sister, Carol Fazio Banjura (TFS '68), at the age of 67. Carol had a lifelong love for all things equestrian and is missed by her extended family of aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces, nephews, and friends.

to Donna Hielema Slager (Indiana) and her family on the loss of Donna's husband of 34 years, Douglas Slager, 71, in July. Doug was the former owner of Slager Trucking.

to Greg and Kathy Neumann Smith (Texas) and their families on the passing of Kathy's mother, Patricia Neumann, in July. Mrs. Neumann had celebrated her 87th birthday just days before with Kathy at her side.

# Rebels Remembered Wall of Honor Is Growing

**The names of 11 more veterans** from the Class of 1969 will soon be joining the names of TFS alumni already installed on the Rebels Remembered Wall of Honor. ["An Exceptional Display," July 2017 *Life & Times*] The *Life & Times* will have those names for you when the plaques are engraved.

And thanks to several TFS alumni, **Greg Bossick** will be one of those names. Last month we asked you to help us find Greg's military service information. We followed the clues you gave us to the edge of the internet where we finally found the person with the information we needed to put Air Force SSgt. Greg Bossick on the Wall of Honor. Greg, our TFS '69 classmate, passed away in 2011.

If you are a TFS alum who served in our Nation's Military and would like to be included on the Wall of Honor located in the TFS Grand Lobby, please email your name, rank, military branch, years of service, and graduation year to TFS teacher Mr. Chris Roberts [CRoberts@tfd215.org](mailto:CRoberts@tfd215.org)

Your donations make this project possible. Checks payable to T.F. South History Club can be mailed to T.F. South High School History Club, c/o Chris Roberts, 18500 Burnham Ave., Lansing, IL 60438

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## TFS Class of 1967 — 50th Reunion, Sept. 16

TFS Class of 1967's 50th Reunion is Saturday, Sept. 16, 2017. Linda Eckstein Todd (TFS '67) encourages members of her class to register at the reunion website [tfsouth67.reunionmanager.com](http://tfsouth67.reunionmanager.com) or contact the committee through their Facebook page, [TF SOUTH - Class of 1967](#)

## We're Looking for Classmates

Help us connect with our classmates who aren't in touch with us. If you know the classmates below, please 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](http://tfsclassof69.weebly.com), email address [TFSouth69@gmail.com](mailto:TFSouth69@gmail.com), or Facebook page [Tfsouth Classofsixty-nine](#).

Here's who we would like to hear from this month—

Judy Wrzesinski Cuffney  
Dan Wooley  
Donna Woods Tadd  
Barbara Witke Fendrick  
Rene Winterhoff Knight  
Myron Winchester

Wayne Wilson  
David White  
Owen Watterson  
Carol Washburn Racek  
Margie Ward  
Larysa Wanshula



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

## Stay in Touch!

Our 209 subscribers stay in touch through our free 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](mailto:TFSouth69@gmail.com) or message us through our Facebook page [Tfsouth Classofsixty-nine](#).

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## For the August *Life & Times*

Photos: George & Linda Gussman, Dave Kats, [Bill Hutchison Photography](#)

Editorial: Patricia Walsh, Cheryl Ridder Woldhuis

Editorial Assistance: Kathy Neumann Smith

Technical & Design Consultant: Bill Hutchison

Snailmail Correspondence & Facebook Birthday Wishes: Dave Dickinson

Would Love to Visit Norway: Bud Jenkins

## Need to Update?

Have you changed your email address, snailmail address, phone number, or name? Keep current in our class database by sending changes to [TFSouth69@gmail.com](mailto:TFSouth69@gmail.com) or by messaging us on our Facebook page.



And remember to let our MailChimp service know about a change in your email address by clicking the "update your preferences" link at the bottom of this newsletter.



**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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