

January 2016

Richie Rebel says, "Wagons forward! Yo!"

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Life & Times of the Rebels of '69

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

***We Wish You a
Happy New Year!***



*Red Rocks Amphitheatre, Denver, Colorado (elev. 6,400 feet)
—photo by **Mike Wright** (Colorado).*

***TFS TEAM69 wishes you journeys filled with friends
and smiles in 2016!***

Road Trip West—

Hey Rob, Why John Wayne?

by **Rob Garrison** (Illinois)



On our annual road trip, my wife Sandy and I head west to spend Memorial Day weekend celebrating John Wayne's birthday in Winterset, Iowa. John Wayne was not unlike that man we know on the movie screen. He had the same physical size of course, and he had the same emotion and charisma. But John Wayne, the man, was gentler than the actor on the screen and more thoughtful.

With a few notable exceptions, he did not make a habit of parading his calmer characteristics on the big screen, because in film after film, John Wayne took charge. "Take that hill!" "Get the herd across the river!" "Break out the Winchesters!" In a way, the specifics of the stories almost don't matter, because in film after film there is always a man in command. And something else—a sense of decency.

From generation to generation, from father to son, from father to daughter, John Wayne has been passed down as an American cultural heirloom. I grew up watching John Wayne movies, some on the big screen and most in my living room, with my father or uncle. The admiration they had for that driven, sometimes blustery man on the screen transferred itself to the young boy sitting on the couch with them.



Rob's collection of John Wayne memorabilia is comprised of over 1000 items including movies, books, photos, paintings, autographs, movie posters, movie props, and personal items of The Duke.

John Wayne showed us for over 50 years and in over 160 movies how a man behaves. He also showed us his virtues and his flaws. That honesty was a part of the pact he had with his audience. In the Harris Poll of America's favorite movie stars begun in 1994, The Duke has been the only star to appear on the list every year. In the January 2015 poll, John Wayne rode into the No. 2 spot, up from No. 7 the previous year.

In his birthplace town of Winterset, Iowa, more than a million visitors have traveled from all over the world to visit the modest home where Marion Robert Morrison was born in 1907. Hundreds gather here annually on Memorial Day weekend to celebrate the Duke's May 26 birthday. Last year's 2015 annual Celebration Dinner drew over 900 attendees. And on Memorial Day 2015, a new \$2.5 million, 6100 square-foot John Wayne Birthplace Museum was dedicated.

Now, show me another movie star who has that longevity and that great of a following this long after his last movie was shot. So, "Why John Wayne, Rob?" Well, Pilgrim, that's why!

Rob's Favorite Movie Locations

— Old Tucson, Tucson, Arizona. "Rio Bravo" is my all-time favorite movie!

oldtucson.com

— Monument Valley, Utah/Arizona border. An unbelievable location!

thefencepost.com/article/20110302/NEWS/110229897

Sandy and Rob donated a Film Granite Block at the John Wayne Birthplace Museum and are involved with the John Wayne Birthplace Society. Rob is a Life Member of the John Wayne Foundation.

johnwaynebirthplace.museum/. They invite you to join them next Memorial Day weekend in Winterset, Iowa.



Road Trip East— My Memorable Mini-Vacation

by Glenn E. Wierzbicki (Illinois)

I finally got a chance to get out of Dodge this summer and took a mini-vacation with my girlfriend, Gale. We went to Cleveland and visited the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. It is interesting to see how music has evolved during our lifetime. They even had

Ringo's drum kit on display. It's funny how the other Beatles made him put a towel over his snare drum to muffle the sound. They really didn't like him too much. Ya, ya, ya!



We then drove around the lake to the Canada side of Niagara Falls. Talk about a mini-Las Vegas. The light show on the falls at night was very pretty. The next day we took a ride on



Hornblower Niagara Cruises. It was a wet and wild experience to say the least. Good thing it was a hot sunny day so we dried off quickly. You never realize how powerful the falls are until you get up close and personal.

We visited the Skylon tower, which is the equivalent of the space needle in Seattle and saw the falls from a different

perspective. I don't think I have done that much uphill walking in my life. My calves were

screaming, "Catch a cab, dude!" I have to tell you Canada has some funny money. Dollar coins, two dollar coins, but the five dollar bills have a clear strip embedded in the bill. Hard to counterfeit that currency.

On Thursday, I decided to take a side trip to see classmate **Craig Gutowski** at his new warehouse in Orangeville, about an hour outside of Toronto. Craig is the president of The Foundry, a major distributor of woodburning stoves. He was excited to show me the solar panels and electrical system he had installed on his roof. Then we had a sushi lunch at his favorite restaurant. What a very gracious host. It's hard to imagine that Craig started his empire by selling stoves out of the back of a pick-up truck.

We got back in the car for the long drive back to Detroit and visited with Gale's college girlfriend, Jill, in Ann Arbor. Jill is the assistant to the president of the University of Michigan, a powerful position that entails selling football tickets to high profile alumni. The next day, we drove back home with a burger stop at Redamak's in New Buffalo, Michigan.

It's funny how the anticipation of taking a trip like this is so electrifying. The return to home is anti-climactic. But the memory of the experience is etched in our minds forever.



Road trip benefit: Two TFS Marching Band alumni, Glenn Wierzbicki and Craig Gutowski, catch up in Canada.

Sending Holiday Wishes...

Kathy Christian Bruesch (Indiana)—Great card! Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to everyone from the Class of '69. Good health and happiness in the upcoming year.

Dan White (South Carolina)—Thank you **Team69** and back at ya and to all fellow Rebels!

Sue Dombrowski (TFS '70) & **Paul Warn** (Indiana)—Merry Christmas & thank you to the

staff for all your efforts.

Ken Hanes (Indiana)—Thank you all very much. I hope this coming year finds all of you and your families healthy and content. Thank you for your dedication and hard work. I look forward to your updates. Merry Christmas to you all!

Frank Mazzocco (Minnesota)—Thank You **Team69**! You guys busted your butts this year and it shows. Each newsletter was touching and meaningful. Thanks! Enjoy ALL of the holidays.

Grace Demanuelle Talbot (California)—Merry Christmas and many blessings in 2016 to all of you! Thank you for all the hard work you do to keep us all informed of our classmates and their adventures!

Patricia Bain Mansker (Illinois)—Merry Christmas!

Happy January Birthday!

Pat Steele Gavin, Rich Krilich, Kristine Anderson Barrett, David Thomas, Pat Wozny, Marilyn Rea Beyer, Trudy Brouillette Szpyrka, Mike Sailor, Barbara Sroka Carlson, Ron Hanchar, John Hansen, Cheryl Baily Zima, Marion Luszyk Bunge, Ralph Corriere, Bruce Quenzler

Celebrating December Wedding Anniversaries

Ellen and Dave Dickinson (California)—36 years
Philip and Janet Claussen Venecz (Indiana)—16 years
Dave and Carolyn White Scofield (Illinois)—17 years
Ron and Christine Markiewicz Paryl (Illinois)—43 years

TEAM69 Heard From...

Christine Nelson Haro (Indiana)—Just read the latest issue. The story **Harry [Smith]** wrote is great! ["My Favorite Teacher" *Life & Times* Dec. 2015] Mrs. Freund was one of my favorite teachers also, along with Mrs. Goble from 6th grade. The picture brought back memories, some good.

Scott Tatje (Arizona)—Thanks for the great article in the December issue on **Harry Smith's** favorite teacher in 3rd grade, Mrs. Freund. ["My Favorite Teacher" *Life & Times* Dec. 2015] She was also my favorite teacher!

Donna Torgerson Clark (Illinois)—**Harry [Smith]**, thanks for the great article on Mrs. Freund! ["My Favorite Teacher" *Life & Times* Dec. 2015] She was one of the reasons I went into education—truly a gem! One of the best things about a career in education was the legacy you leave with so many. Kudos to Mrs. Freund!

Pat Walsh (Arizona)—Mrs. Freund was one of my memorable teachers, too. ["My Favorite Teacher" *Life & Times* Dec. 2015] So much so that most of my career in education, from teaching to educational publishing, focused on third-grade. Dear Mrs. Freund, you have no idea how far your influence reaches!

John Hansen (South Carolina)—Great newsletter article from **Harry Smith**. ["My Favorite Teacher" *Life & Times* Dec. 2015]

Denny Walton (Utah)—I really like hearing about my old friends, brings back memories I don't want to lose. I haven't heard of any other classmates that correspond like ours. Gotta love it.

Laurie Steinbach Webster (TFS '70)—What a great edition this was [*Life & Times* Dec. 2015]. You all do such a great job. Thanks for including me even though I was in the TFS Class of '70.

John Jones (California)—Happy New Year! I really enjoyed the [December 2015] issue as I do with all issues. It is such a neat way of keeping in touch with those in our past. It's been over 30 years since I left TFS/TFN and my great 10-year run teaching at District 215. It was fun teaching with such a great staff. Of course, all of them are now retired, but I still keep in touch with many of them. All of you do such a great job of getting such a professional looking newsletter out. Thanks for all you do for the Class of '69!

Kenneth Hanes (Indiana)—Thanks for posting my photo with April at the benefit for Diane Pranski. ["Love Won!" *Life & Times* Dec. 2015] What a fantastic turnout for a horrible, horrible circumstance. By the way, I was fortunate enough to see **Bill [Hutchison]** and **Dean [Groom]** perform with "Lake Effect" at Diane's benefit, they were absolutely awesome, showed all them younger guys how it's done! Sure was proud to brag to my family there with me that I go back with Bill and Dean all the way to 1st Grade at Calvin Coolidge. A fine couple of gentleman they are.

Bill Hutchison (Indiana)—**Ken Hanes** and **Dean Groom** are my two oldest friends. It's hard to believe I hooked up with the two of them over 58 years ago and we're still good friends. What a blessing to have old friends like that. I'm a lucky guy!!

Carol Mizanin Zenk (Illinois)—Enjoy reading all the wonderful stories that bring back many fond memories of Lansing and our fellow classmates, along with the paths they have taken and experienced. Thank you to the entire *Life & Times* staff for their hard work putting together a terrific newsletter and keeping the Class of 1969 connected.

John Giles (Georgia)—To The Class of '69...Thanks for all the Bday wishes!! I feel very blessed with my whole life from growing up in Lansing to Living This Long Life. Thanks again. Go Rebels!!



We Report with Great Sadness

Peggy Joanna Jessee Sterk, 60, beloved wife of Henry Sterk (Indiana), passed away Christmas Eve 2015. Joanna kept in contact with Henry's TFS Classmates, attended our events, and wrote a loving article about their family for the *Life & Times* September 2015 issue on the occasion of her and

Henry's 41st wedding anniversary. Joanna and Henry gave the world a beautiful family of seven grown children, who all have college degrees, and thirteen grandchildren, who, Joanna wrote, get along so well that they call each other "cousin-friends." Joanna, with her cheery smile and great faith, is heart-breakingly missed. Our condolences to Henry and his family.

Help Us Contact Our Classmates

If you are in contact with these classmates, please invite them to subscribe to our e-newsletter, the *Life & Times*, at our website tfsclassof69.weebly.com or ask them to email us at TFSouth69@gmail.com. You can use the **Forward** button below to share the newsletter with classmates, family, and friends.

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Catherine Matzko Deffley
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Melody Martin Griffin
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For the January *Life & Times*

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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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