

January 2017

Richie Rebel says, "Happy New Year!
Keep on trekking!"

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

Backpacking in the Washington Wilderness

a photo essay by **Bill Hutchison** (Indiana)



I have always been a lover of the outdoors and being a landscape photographer, that's exactly where I like to spend my time. With the advantage of being retired, I'm able to travel just about anytime I want.

I flew out to Washington to team up with my close friend of more than 50 years, Glenn van Zyl (TFS '68). We both love the outdoors, and we're in good health and physical condition, so we made a

good team for the challenging trek ahead of backpacking in Washington State's pristine and beautiful backcountry.



On June 13, 2016, we put our 60-pound backpacks in Glenn's car and headed Northwest to the Olympic National Forest to start out on the rugged Enchantments Trail that leads into the Enchanted Valley. This 30-mile trail in and out starts just above sea level, ascends to 6,000 ft., and then goes back down into the valley.



The first day was a light, misty rain from start to finish. We reached Pony Bridge and decided to set up camp. It was chilly and too wet to start a good fire, so we made dinner and hit the sack. In the morning, it was still raining and didn't look like it would break anytime soon. The rain was going to be a problem as we were going to have to cross the now raging river to

make it to the valley. So we headed back to regroup.

When we were able to get an internet connection, we saw that the coast was clear, so we headed to Rialto Beach, Washington, where we could start our trek down the Olympic National Park Coastal Trail along the Pacific Shoreline.



The sand was very soft and turned out to be a real challenge to walk on. It was a little easier by the water's edge, but rogue waves were a real danger. They would come out of nowhere, and there was no way you could out run them with a heavy pack on your back.



Then we started encountering massive piles of whole trees that have become driftwood. It was the equivalent of boulder climbing in some areas. The scenery was stunning though, and every mile we walked the better it got.



We set up camp on the beach above full tide level. There was a freshwater spring 100 yards away, so we had a good water source for cooking and filling our water bottles. Our nights camping on the beach and the days exploring tide pools were a lot of fun.

We watched eagles fish in front of our campsite in the morning and had a full moon in a clear, star-filled sky to light our night.



[See the Pacific Coast campsite through Bill's eyes.](#)
[Give this video link a click.](#)



Our next trek was at Mount Rainier. There was still a ton of snow on and around the mountain, even though it was mid-June, so we decided not to camp in the elevations. Instead, we spent our time hiking in and out of the snow exploring the trails.

The Mount Rainier National Park is an incredible place to visit and hike. The Wonderland Trail is a 93-mile long loop trail around the mountain. Glenn and I plan to return in the future to do a 5-day, 4-night trek on the most scenic section of that trail.



Bill's Travel Tip: I was trying to cut pack weight, so I only had my wide angle lens with me, but then I couldn't photograph the eagles at the beach. I swear I'll never leave the

telephoto in the car again.

To see more of Bill's Backpacking in Washington gallery, CLICK here—
<http://www.billhutchisonphotography.com/Galleries/Washington/>

To view Bill's entire portfolio of beautiful photos, visit his website—
www.billhutchisonphotography.com and choose “Galleries.”

AND, one more thing... Do another kind of *rockin'* with classmates **Bill Hutchison, Dean Groom** and their Lake Effect band at 8 pm, Friday, Jan. 6, 2017, at Lencioni's, 3325 Glenwood Dyer Rd., Lynwood, IL.

Social Security Approaching? Here's Info to Get You Started

by **John Link** (Illinois)



John Link began his engineering career 44 years ago on large tractors. During his career he has worked on designs for combines, mid-size tractors, cotton pickers, planters, air drills, and electrical component development. He has been assigned 9 patents with 2 pending and traveled the world for Case-IH. John is currently assigned to Case-IH large 2WD tractor platform supporting prototype builds and launch in Racine, Wisconsin.

Oh my, 2017 approaching. I'm still working and will turn age 66, full Social Security benefit eligible at age 66 and no income limit. YEAH! Really, TFS Class of '69 Baby Boomers, are we really getting that old?

Age 50—AARP card. No way!

Age 62—Discounts at some establishments. Not me, not admitting I'm getting old.

Age 65—Yes, Social Security suggests I get my Medicare card. It's hidden in my wallet under

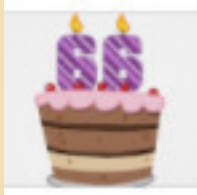
my driver's license so I don't see it every time I open it.

But now, Age 66—United States Government wants to give me money. Oh yeah, put my hands out, why not. My entitlement.

I've done some digging and found out things about SSI (Supplemental Security Income) benefits I wasn't aware of and thought perhaps some of my Classmate Friends might learn something new that will benefit them to maximize their entitlement. Here's what I learned—

In the year you turn full retirement age of 66

(2017 if you were born in 1951)



You can receive full benefits with an earnings limit of \$41,880 for months prior to turning full retirement age or age 66. \$1 is withheld from your benefit for every \$3 you earn over limit from Jan. 1, 2017 to the month you turn 66.

Delaying benefits



For each month past your full Social Security retirement age you put off receiving retirement benefits, your benefit will automatically increase by $\frac{2}{3}$ of 1% per month or 8% annually up until age 70, at which time the benefit amount is frozen.

Spousal benefits



To figure out the best strategy, you need to understand that the spousal benefit has two parts. The first part is the lower earner's own retirement benefit based on her/his earnings record. The second part is based on the higher earner's benefit. The two parts together could provide the lower earner with a payment of up to 50% of the higher earner's full retirement benefit. (Full retirement age is 66 for those born between 1943 and 1954.)

Let's say a 66-year-old wife's benefit based on her work record is \$800 a month, and half of her husband's benefit at his full retirement age is \$1,200. If she claims a spousal benefit, she gets her own \$800 benefit, plus \$400 based on her husband's earnings record -- for a total spousal benefit of \$1,200. A spousal benefit can be claimed as early as age 62, as long as the other spouse has claimed his benefit.



When to apply

Three months before the date you will retire or are eligible for benefits



Where to apply

Your local Social Security office, or the [Social Security Administration website](http://www.ssa.gov/) www.ssa.gov/



Keep this in mind

Only the SSA can provide an up-to-date calculation of your benefits.

A Mystery Arises and History Is Corrected

by Patricia Walsh (Arizona)



After you received your November 2016 issue of the *Life & Times*, a mystery arose about the TFS Gene White Memorial Award that is given annually in honor of U.S. Army Sgt. Gene White (TFS '65). Gene was killed in battle in Vietnam in 1969 and is the brother of our classmate **Dan White** (South Carolina).

The mystery came to light when **Larry Johnson** (Connecticut) contacted us saying

that the award appears to have been given in 1968. We were certain our classmate **Ed Kubic** (South Carolina) was the first recipient in 1969. But on close examination of the photo of the award (we *zoomed* way in), we discovered a name on the plaque above Ed's. It said "1968 Fred Lorenz."

Who is Fred Lorenz? We couldn't find a Fred Lorenz in the 1966, '67, or '68 TFS yearbooks, and Dan White had no clue who Fred was. Mr. Chris Roberts, TFS history teacher, was baffled too, and he suggested that we contact Richard Dust (TFS '65), President of District 215 Board of Education. So we did.

Rich Dust got right on the mystery for us, and here's what he found out:

"I am pretty sure that I have been able to figure out your mystery with the help of the principal and one of the secretaries. Fred Lorenz graduated in 1975. It seems as if the mistake was made when the plaque was redone. Fred Lorenz is listed for 1968, but should have been listed for 1975. There is nobody listed on the plaque for 1975, the year that he graduated."

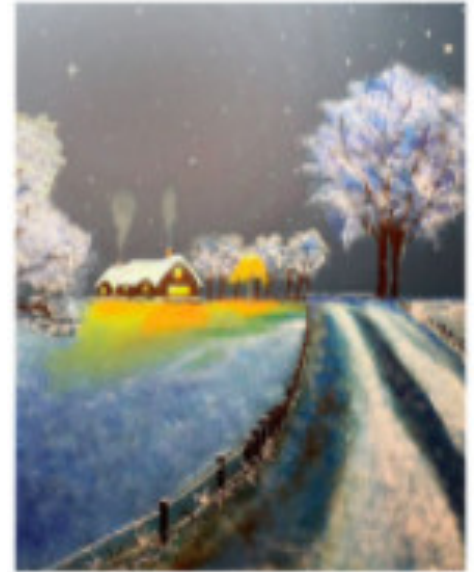
Rich Dust didn't stop there. He contacted the athletic director and asked that the Gene White

Memorial Award be corrected. The AD responded that he will get it done.

Thanks to the sharp eyes of **Larry Johnson** and the follow-through of Rich Dust, our **Ed Kubic**, the first recipient of the Gene White Memorial Award, will soon be back on top of the plaque that is displayed with honor in the TFS hallway.

TFS **TEAM69** Heard From...

TFS TEAM69 to **Ken Hanes** (Indiana)—**TEAM69** thanks you, Ken, for making our 2016 Christmas and Holiday e-card so very special. Your beautiful, soft image of a cozy, warm home at the end a long snowy road was perfect for our group of classmates and friends-of-the-class who are scattered around the world but have a common home in TFS. We took the liberty of titling your piece "The Road Home." Thank you for sharing your imagination, creativity, time, and love with us all.



Dan White (South Carolina)—Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you all! I think this was the best Christmas card I've ever received! [Dec. 2016] Hand-painted and from some of the best friends ever! Thank You again for all the hard work you all put in for the *Life & Times*.

Marilyn Rea Beyer (Massachusetts)—**Ken Hanes's** painting [Dec. 2016] reminds me of driving out on 186th Street or Thornton/Lansing Road on those cold winter nights when we weren't quite ready to go home after seeing a movie at The Lans. :-) It was a beautiful time to be young. You guys really do an amazing job of keeping us all connected and "on the same page." Thank you.

Donna Torgerson Clark (Illinois)—What a beautiful Holiday newsletter! [Dec. 2016] Thank you for starting the month in this wonderful way. Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays to all!

Kathy McGrath (Florida)—Merry Christmas to all! Thanks for all your hard work! Beautiful newsletter! My best to all!

Sandra Fritz Zaborski (Illinois)—Happy Holidays to everyone who works on the newsletter. I enjoy reading it.

Darlene Barzda Snell (Florida)—Merry Christmas and a healthy and happy New Year to the class of '69!!

Barbara Homans Schwarz (Florida)—Thank you all for the hard work and dedication to the class and the newsletter. We are all very fortunate to have you keep us posted on what is happening with classmates. I look forward to each and every newsletter, and I'm sure each

classmate feels the same. Merry Christmas to the volunteers who keep us all informed and to all the classmates.

Mary C. Maravilla Wright (TFS '73)—Thank you! Merry Christmas to all. Beautiful newsletter!!

Larry Valent (Illinois)—Merry Christmas to our class of '69 family.

Linda Jensen (California)—Thank you to the entire team for the *Life & Times* this past year. I have so enjoyed hearing what folks are up to!! Best wishes to you and a Happy, Healthy Holiday Season to all!

Dennis Knoerzer (Missouri)—We are a pretty close-knit group for being so spread out. Merry Christmas to the TFS Class of '69! Hope 2017 is awesome for all!

Ken Hanes (Indiana)—What a beautiful photo by **Mike Wright** and beautiful, touching stories by **Ed Kubic** and **Dan White**. And please let me add kudos to **Mike McNary** for the great poem, "Kathie's Song." [Nov. 2016] These are the kinds of stories we need to hear in this world gone astray. I, like many, wait with excitement for our new addition of the *Life & Times*. Hats off to all of you who dedicate your time each month to feed us with fond memories of our past friends and times. It just reassures me why the class of "69" was the best class ever. Luv you all. Merry Christmas and thanks again.

Grace Demanuele Talbot (California)—What an absolutely beautiful photograph of God's creation and what I consider His perfect painting. **Mike Wright**, you captured it beautifully! [Maroon Bells, Colorado, Nov. 2016] Thank you for sharing your talents and God's beauty! Great Newsletter. Thank you all!

Denny Walton (Utah)—Hi guys, just wanted to say how much I enjoyed the Nov. 2016 issue. **Danny White** was one of my best friends, and hearing about his brother Gene brought a tear to my eye. I knew his family well, including Gene's wife. I also met Gene on leave once, so the story was close to my heart. Very touching stories. Thank you!

Larry Johnsen (Connecticut)—Another great newsletter and thank you for the article on Gene White. [Nov. 2016]

Mike Manno (TFS '71)—Another excellent newsletter. [Nov. 2016] It brought back a lot of great memories reading this. It brought tears to my eyes, but made me even prouder that I knew and grew up with the White family and that my daughter Renee Manno (TFS '02) won the Gene White Award. My daughter was very thrilled, but for me, it was unbelievable. I was so proud. For all those years that I was the Booster Club president at South and every time I walked by the Gene White plaque on the hallway wall, I held my head up very high. Again, great job everyone. God Bless. Keep up the great work.

Vicki Tipton Phipps (TFS '67)—Gene White worked summers with my brother at Arco, and

both our fathers worked there. The best man at my wedding was in the same Army company as Gene and was with Gene the day he passed. Gene is a real hero. [Nov. 2016] My heart hurts for all lives lost to hate and war. Lord bless you all for caring.

Connie Kats (TFS '65, Dave Kats's good-looking older brother)—Thanks, that was really nice! [Nov. 2016]

Sue Mullen Kotur (TFS '70)—I'm from the 1970 graduating class, but I love the '69 newsletter. Thank you for doing such a great job!

Mrs. Joyce Freund (our 3rd-grade teacher, 1959–60, at Indiana Ave. School)—Please know how much I enjoy the monthly newsletter. I recognize a name once in awhile, but I enjoy all the stories of "kids" in your class.

Dean Groom (Indiana)—I really enjoy reading the newsletter and appreciate the efforts of the classmates making it happen.

Congratulations!

Carolyn "Inky" White Scofield (Illinois) was named as a Special Volunteer of 2016 by the Lansing Volunteer Recognition Committee and the Lansing Area Chamber of Commerce for her work as President of the Lansing Area Chamber of Commerce. Carolyn is the owner of Waters Edge Gift, Garden, & Pond Center in Lansing, IL.



George Vincent (Illinois), The Car Guy, is "movin' on up" the shoreline when he says good-bye to the gang at WJOB and moves his weekly radio car repair talk show to WIMS 1420 AM Michigan City, IN, and WHFB 1060 AM Benton Harbor/St. Joe, MI. Big George begins his new gig Saturday, Jan. 7, 2017.

Celebrating December Birthdays

Janet Claussen Venecz, Sherry Nondorf Bingham, Paul Warn, Charlie Vignone, Pam DeYoung Bertalan, John Giles, Darlene Barzda Snell, Rich Kuske, Grace Demanuele Talbot, Linda Westerhoff Norton, Jack Yauger, David Meilleur

and January Birthdays

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

Celebrating November Anniversaries

Maria & **Rich Krilich** (Illinois)—21 years
Ben & **Michelle Linn Robins** (Utah)—17 years
Herb & **Nancy Horvatich Tschischik** (Florida)—23 years

and December Anniversaries

Warren & **Becky Bonnar Eck** (Minnesota)—44 years

Ellen & **Dave Dickinson** (California)—37 years

Philip & **Janet Claussen Venez** (Indiana)—17 years

Ron & **Christine Markiewicz Paryl** (Illinois)—44 years

Dave & **Carolyn White Scofield** (Illinois)—18 years

Sandra & **George Vincent** (Illinois)—25 or 26 years (Big George doesn't remember)

Reconnecting 47 Years Later!



Robert J. Murray (Georgia) and his wife Toodie (both on the right) hosted **Alan Eckhardt** (Georgia) at a get-together holiday party. Says Bobby, "Forty-seven years of not seeing each other! Awesome time was had by all! Alan and I talked about doing a reunion with old classmates in SE United States. I hope to see Alan again soon."

Our Heartfelt Condolences...

to Jane and **Dave Kats** (Indiana) and their family on the loss of their son Luke in November at the age of 38. The Kats family thanks Dave and Jane's many classmates who showed love and concern for the family.

to **Bill George** (Florida) and his family as Bill tells us with a heavy heart that his kind and sweet sister Myrna Jean Rowe passed away in November at the age of 75.



to **Larry Valent** (Illinois) on the passing of his brother-in-law, Ralph Croy, 81, in December. Ralph was married to Larry's sister Pat. He owned two Lansing area businesses, Don and Ralph's Pro Shop and River Oaks Cabinets and was inducted into the Greater Calumet Area Bowling Association Hall of Fame in 1994. Larry says he can't imagine anyone having a better brother-in-law than Ralph.

Help Us Connect with Our Classmates

We appreciate your help in locating our classmates with whom we've lost contact. Please

invite classmates you know to subscribe to our *Life & Times* e-newsletter or to contact us through our website tfsclassof69.weebly.com or by email at TFSouth69@gmail.com Here are a few of the people we hope to hear from—

Dave Mason
Melody Martin Griffin
Sherry Madison
Dan Madison
Ann Marie Mach Kinsella
Marion Luszyk Bunge
Art Lundin
Belinda Love Pala

Steve Leadbetter
Georgia Leonard Anderson
Joe Leclair
Elizabeth Lindemann Jones
Pat Link Cox
Lori Lareau Skorupka
Gina Langbeen Russell
Roger LaFollette

 Click to forward the Life & Times to Classmates, Family & Friends

Keep in Touch

Our 207 subscribers are keeping in touch. Send us your comments, news, photos, questions, and reflections on the past, present, and future by emailing us at TFSouth69@gmail.com.

You can also message us on our Facebook page [Tfsouth Classofsixty-nine](#)

For the January 2017 *Life & Times*

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Remember to Update!

Click the update link at the bottom of our newsletter to update your email address with our MailChimp emailing service. And, keep your snailmail and email addresses and phone number current in our TFS Class of 1969 database. Send your changes to TFSouth69@gmail.com.

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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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