

July 2016

Richie Rebel says, "The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step."

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Life & Times of the Rebels of '69

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



Happiness

by **Bonnie Van Kley O'Connor** (Indiana)

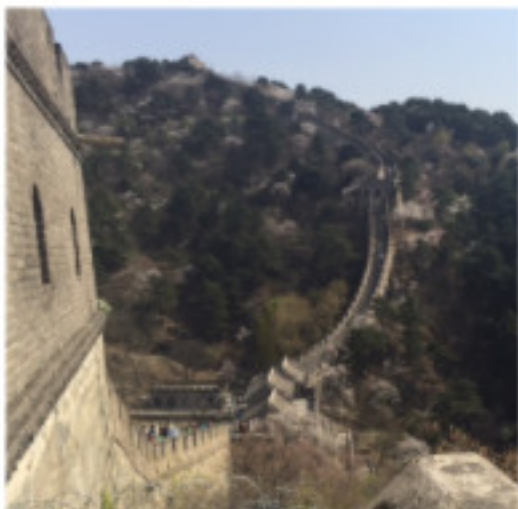


You could say our 65th birthdays prompted our trip to China—now or never! And from the time my husband Tim and I met Tim's brother Dan O'Connor (TFS '59) and his wife Ella Chan at the airport, we were entertained, well fed, and educated!

Dan has an export business with an office in Hong Kong. That's where he met and married Ella. Ella was raised in Hong Kong and speaks Mandarin, Cantonese, several dialects of Chinese, as well as English. She planned and organized all our trips and excursions and was a great guide and driver.

We spent several days in Hong Kong, seeing beautiful scenery, sampling real Chinese food, and walking through the open-air shops, temples, a HUGE fish market, and a jade market. The population of Hong Kong is over 7 million, and the people live in small apartments in high-rises. We did not see one single-family residence.

After a few days in Hong Kong, we flew to Beijing where we saw the Forbidden City, Tiananmen Square, and The Great Wall. Beijing has a population of 21 million and is a beautiful city thanks to the Olympics and the spring that was in full bloom during our visit. Our ride to The Great



Wall took us through old-China countryside, which was a totally different way of life than in the city.

From Beijing, we flew to Xi'an, an ancient capital city. Today Xi'an is an important cultural, industrial, and educational region with 4 million people. We



The actual excavation of the TerraCotta Army that Bonnie saw east of Xi'an is not complete. The site was first discovered in 1974 by farmers digging a well. Here in the U.S., you

spent a full day at the amazing TerraCotta Warriors site. In 246—206 BC, Emperor Qin, the same Emperor who built The Great Wall, had thousands of life-size clay soldiers, horses, and chariots constructed from clay and buried with him to protect him in the afterlife.

can visit the exhibit of TerraCotta Warriors at the Chicago Field Museum through Jan. 8, 2017
www.fieldmuseum.org

Near Xi'an we went to an area called the Muslin strip. It was several blocks of thousands of people walking the closed-off streets, eating, shopping, playing music—a street festival atmosphere—but it occurs every day!

The traffic in Beijing and Xi'an is unbelievable—horns honking constantly, no such thing as courtesy. Honk your horn and go. In China, they drive on the right side of the street, crossing over three lanes of traffic to make a left turn. Honk. Honk. Go. Pedestrians beware! Lots of small motor cycles, motor scooters and bicycles with no head-lights at night are mixed in with the traffic. We had drivers that were used to the traffic, but it was still a bit tense at times.

Our next flight was to the beautiful tropical island of Hainan, where Dan and Ella will be next winter. It is called China's Hawaii. We had two days relaxing on China Sea beaches with lots of good food.

The weather during our trip was in the 60's and 70's with very little humidity. The only rain we had was during the night, so it was perfect for sightseeing. We had an amazing experience with only one downside —the 16-hour flight!



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Journey

by **Donna Torgerson Clark** (Illinois)

In 2013, my husband Greg and I were fortunate enough to experience a 16-day cruise in Asia. Our ship embarked in Tianjin, a port city in China, but we flew into Beijing early to see the sights. I followed Bonnie Van Kley O'Connor's recent travels to China with envy. She certainly had the better of our two experiences!

Our stay coincided with one of the worst pollution days the city had experienced. We have had our share of air pollution in this country, but when you actually can taste it, it is at a different level altogether.

Our touring day took us out of the city of Beijing to the Great Wall, and you can get a glimpse of what I mean about the pollution. On a clear day, this part of the wall snakes up the side of the hill like you see in Bonnie's picture. But at least we were there, I kept telling myself.

Next we ventured into Beijing to see the Forbidden City. The air started to clear a bit, but you could still taste the pollution. This was one of the most beautiful and interesting tours I have ever enjoyed.

We enlisted a young woman for a private tour. The tour was amazing and so was she! I love to talk with local people to hear about their life and culture. Our guide was originally from Mongolia and had moved to the city to work in the tourist industry. She worked for a company for a while but had advanced only as far as she could, because, as she told us, "I wasn't pretty enough." WHAT?!

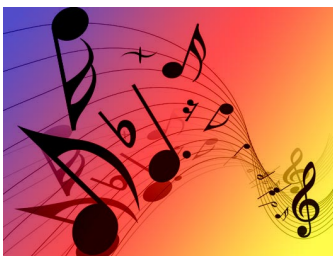


She said that looks were highly regarded in her industry, so she started her own company. I found her online as the #1 tour director in Beijing! I told her how proud she should be of her success.



Our Asian cruise began the next day and our first stop in China was Hong Kong, a totally different experience from Beijing. Hong Kong is a beautiful, cosmopolitan city with high end hotels, restaurants, and shopping. Victoria Harbour is absolutely

gorgeous! We were able to see it during the day and night and experience A Symphony of Lights, the multimedia, colored light and laser show the city provides nightly on the buildings along the harbor.



A Musical Bonus!

Bette Midler & Barry Manilow sing
On a Slow Boat to China
[Click here!](#)

Denny and Dave Reconnect Over a Few Fish in Utah

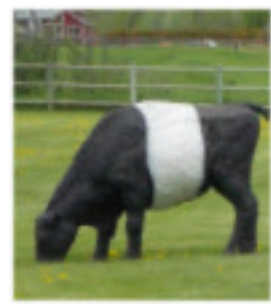
by **Dave Dickinson** (California)

A few years ago, **Denny Walton** and I began sharing our fishing pictures on Facebook, secretly wanting to make the other envious. Many of his pictures were fish he caught on some of the spectacular canyon lakes around his home in Utah. With SoCal lakes being so dry, I hadn't been able to do any freshwater fishing. So Denny and I started planning my visit in May to fish and reconnect.

Denny picked me up at the airport and then the sightseeing, fishing, laughing, and reminiscing began. We had lunch at the oldest saloon in Utah (great burger), laughed hysterically at the craziest colored cows I've ever seen, and viewed the breathtaking scenery of massive green valleys protected by snowcapped mountains. True God's country.



Our conversation bounced from fishing to our classmates at TF South. Although Denny and I played football together, our friends didn't always intersect. But that was then and this is now. We found that our lives had followed similar paths—marriages and divorces, fighting demons and raising extended family.



As to the fishing—In three days we fished four beautiful lakes with bass, crappie, and trout. And all the while, we told our life stories, recalled old times, laughed till it hurt, and made new memories.

I feel truly fortunate to be able to reconnect with Denny and meet his wife Barb, who is a sweetheart (as anyone living with Walton would have to be!), and granddaughter Kathlene.

I recommend that all of you reach out, make the call, send the email, comment on Facebook, do whatever it takes to do the same with someone. You'll be a better person for it, because the friends we made at TF South are part of our personal history.



TFS TEAM69 Heard from...

Dan White (South Carolina)—Another great newsletter! Happy Birthday to all the June Birthdays. Can you all believe it is our 65th already this year!

Scott Tatje (Arizona)—Great article from Dave Kats! ["Think I Can't Play?," *Life & Times* June 2016] Reminded me of my Little League playing days with St. Anne's at Lions Park.



Ken Hanes (Indiana)—Great memories, I also played in Little League, "The Hornets," and I also sat most of the time on the bench. Although I had no awesome ending to my baseball career, I did learn that we all can't be stars, but we could still dream! Thanks, Dave [Kats], for the great story. ["Think I Can't Play?," *Life & Times* June 2016]

Diana Steinweg Plese (Illinois)—Always enjoy the newsletter. Dave [Kats], you did a great job. ["Think I Can't Play?," *Life & Times* June 2016]

Cheryl Ridder Woldhuis (Illinois)—Nice uplifting stories from Dave [Kats]. ["Think I Can't Play?," *Life & Times* June 2016]

Judy (Kaufer) Lohr-Safcik (TFS English Dept., ret.)—I so enjoy the *Life & Times* each month. The article about Curtis Granderson and Bill Anderson was especially good. ["Highest Honors to an Outstanding TFS Player and His Coach," *Life & Times* June 2016] Looking forward to seeing you guys one of these days.

Darlene Barzda Snell (Florida)—I look forward to reading stories about our classmates. Makes me realize what a great class we had. I am sad now that I didn't take advantage of getting to know more people. Too bad I didn't have the knowledge then that I have now. Keep up the great work on our newsletter. I volunteer for many things here in Florida, so I know it takes up personal time. Thank you!

Patrick Sassone (Arizona)—I really enjoy the newsletter, and it has made me feel reconnected to T.F. South and all of you! Thank you for doing what you do.

Happy July Birthday!

Robert J. Murray, Glenn Wierzbicki, Jack Wiers, Al Greenfeld,
Dan White, Rob Garrison, Nancy Horvatich Tschischik,
Deb Ruth Mazzocco, Mike Wright, Robert Hanink,
Mark Feigenbaum

Celebrating June Wedding Anniversaries

Rick and **Marilyn Rea Beyer** (Massachusetts)—30 years
Sue Taylor and **Fred Hasse** (Kentucky)—16 years

Congratulations on Your Retirement

Sally Steeb Harvey (Indiana)—21 years as Spirit of God Accelerated
Education's first grade teacher

Welcome, Baby!

Barb O'Dell Johnson (Arizona) welcomed her 14th grandchild, Haleaux
River, in June. Barb says, "We're crazy in love again!"

Help Us Connect with Our Classmates

If you are in contact with any of these classmates who are not subscribers to our *Life & Times* e-newsletter, please invite them to subscribe for free. They can subscribe at our website tfsclassof69.weebly.com or by emailing us at TFSouth69@gmail.com

Denise Zygowicz Gordon
Mary Zych Malinsky
Erica Zimmerman Ryan
Donna Zentz Diver
Marcia Yuskowitz Irvin
Roger Yochem
Ken Yates
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
Jayme Walton Kennedy

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For the July Life & Times

Photos: Bonnie Van Kley O'Connor,
Donna Torgerson Clark, Dave Dickinson
Technical and Design Consultant: Bill
Hutchison
Editorial: Pat Walsh, Cheryl Ridder
Woldhuis
Correspondent: Dave Dickinson
Slow Boat Captain: Bud Jenkins

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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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