

NEW ROUND!

2-145

6/2/04

Hi all,

As always, it's good to receive the RR with news of the latest doings in each extended family. I only wish the RR would procede at a faster pace so the news would be fresher.

The Lackawack story plays like an old record -- more projects, more hardwood trees planted, etc....with a new 'toy' added - a portable sawmill (aka WOOD MIZER). This is already in use milling lumber cut from our forest, to be used in repairing our barn and myriad other projects. Steve has been the No.1 miller so far (and quite professional at that), while awaiting help from his brothers (volunteers always welcome).

Ken is now Chief Engineer on a container ship still floating about in the Gulf. We expect him home in July for several months before he joins his new assignment as permanent chief on a sister ship. So he will be here for the reunion on Aug. 21, as we hope as many of you as possible will be, also.

Ed had 2 shoulder arthroscopic surgeries in '02 which were only partially successful. But the arthritis "hardened" and so he was operated on for a total (left) shoulder replacement last December. Now he is going for the other (right) shoulder replacement on June 9th. We're hoping this will be as successful as the first. We're also getting pretty tired of the never ending therapy sessions.

Last month we joined Lorraine and family on a 1 week cruise to Bermuda, sailing from Norfolk. It was very enjoyable and the kids were great sailors.

See you soon. Love,
Uncle Ed and Aunt Claire

My first thought after reading the RR is a "puzzlement"- how do all the children keep growing up, graduating, marrying, etc. when we parents cannot possibly have aged that much?! (Never mind the stiff backs, aching knees, graying hair, etc!)

George and I are bonified empty nesters now with all 3 kids living elsewhere. WE had two proud graduations this May - **Matt** from Drew (BA) and **Ian** from U MD-Baltimore (MSW). To their credit, both graduated summa cum laude and - more importantly - both have jobs! Ian has parlayed his internship into full-time clinic work and Matt is working for the company he worked for p/t for the last two years of college. Ian lives in a traditional Baltimore row house - 12 feet wide. We've been inside and can attest that it's cozy but not claustrophobic. Matt is sharing a nice apartment in Madison, NJ and has 5 minute commute to work. **Kate** remains in the plant bio doctoral program at UC Davis (although she sometimes has a notion to leave with the master's degree). But she can escape for day trips to the Napa wine country or the coastal redwoods or Yosemite of San Francisco, so I hope she stays long enough for another trip or two (for me!) out there. She does not expect to spend her life in labs whenever she returns east, so a career change will be in her future.

My library weathered its latest big change - a new circulating software system. The only problem it caused me was to prevent me from visiting Kate this spring since my presence was required during the transition. The plans for our new library building inch along - projected completion date is now Aug. 2006. I won't hold my breath!

I spend a bunch of time helping my **Mom** with doctor visits, provisioning, transport, house upkeep etc. Many of you know how that works. She's hanging in, but I fear she is getting truly disheartened by all the pills that the docs now want her to take (up to 8 a day and growing). I don't blame her.

I think the RR missed **Bunny's** medical event. She slipped on ice in my Mom's driveway in February (there to take Mom to the foot doctor) and tore up her RIGHT shoulder rotator cuff. She needed surgery and is still slowly getting her right arm back to decent capacity. She does not recommend that anyone follow in her footsteps!

No big plans for the summer. Kate will visit for a week in July and we'll try for another short trip in August. George is mulling which "projects" he will undertake in his free time. He deserves a rest from his 3 jobs! I'm hoping for my usual bumper crop of tomatoes, too. They'll make the steamy summer days worthwhile!

Thanks for all the news. Wishing you all graces, blessings, cool breezes and a safe summer -

2-146

7/18/04

Dear Family,

I've held on to this letter a little longer than I should have but I was waiting to get the okay to forward all our news. I apologize.

First of all, Paul and LeeAnn's wedding was wonderful in spite of the fact that for two hours prior to the ceremony, which was supposed to be held outside, it literally **poured** (the worst rain SC had seen in 40 years!!!) It just goes to show that when it comes down to it, being together with family and friends for a wonderful celebration is all that matters. It was great to celebrate with Madeline and her family and Kathy Krause (Alice's daughter) too.

On the trip down to the wedding, Andy and his family stopped by Karen's in NC and found a house. Since he was able to get a job transfer, they bought the house and will be moving on 8/1. It will be a wonderful move for them and the girls but will be a big tug on the heartstrings for Augie and I. However, Patti and her new husband Seth just told us they are expecting their first child in January (☺!!!). Then a few days later we found out Karen and her husband Mike are expecting their second child in February (☺!!!).

It is the best to be able to share our good news with all of you.

Love to all, *Ronnie + Augie*

P.S. Just heard the news about Alan. Our prayers are with you

Dear Family,

July 28, 2004

Greetings from hot, muggy Wake Forest! We are looking forward to our annual trip to NY next month (for the family party of course) and hoping that besides seeing many of you, we can get in on some of that nice cool weather that you've been enjoying in the northeast. I hope we don't bring the heat up with us!

All is going pretty much the same around here for us. John remains at Menlo (formerly Emery) and I'm still at UPS working evenings from approximately 6 to 10PM. I've noticed a common theme in the family letter that many of you are not exactly thrilled with your jobs (whether it be the hours, the pressure, poor management etc.) and John unfortunately is right there with you! He likes his field but there have been so many cutbacks made in Menlo that he is completely stressed out doing the work of at least 3 different people at any given moment. Of course there is absolutely no compensation for this *except* for the fact that he wasn't one of the people who were cut back!

Arianna (6) is in year-round school and the official beginning of the 2004-05 school year was July 12, so now she's in 1st grade and claims that she likes it better than kindergarten. The year-round calendar is still taking some getting used to (like the fact that she had only a week and a half off between kindergarten and 1st grade!) but overall I really like it. She's very proud of the fact that she just lost her 3rd baby tooth, this time one of the one's right smack in the front!

Kaylin (4 in September) will be starting pre-K on August 31 at St. Catherine's, our parish school. We'll see how that goes! She's a real "mama's girl" and I have a feeling that she won't take too well to the separation. To be honest, I'm not looking forward to it either!

As for me, all is about the same. I'll be teaching 4th grade again at Faith Formation (CCD) at St. Catherine's this fall, and I'll be volunteering in Arianna's classroom one day a week.

John and I just past the decade mark with our 10-year anniversary this month. We celebrated it a little early (as Mom had mentioned) by going on a family cruise to Bermuda in May. Mom and Dad came as well as John's parents so the kids had both sets of grandparents with them! It was enjoyable and very relaxing. Arianna especially *loved* the ship-mate program!

As far as all the good news is concerned - keep it pouring in! As for the challenges that we all face from time to time, we must remember to pray for each other! Hope to see you soon!

Love and blessings, *Louise, John, Arianna + Kaylin*

Greetings from Milwaukee!

8/3/04

2-147

Usual summer stuff here-- lots of Brewers baseball (somewhat better quality) to watch and occasionally cover. Lots of Milwaukee's famous ethnic festivals at the lakefront-- alas, the one-quarter of me that's Irish takes control, and Irish Fest gets my major business instead of German Fest. And of course a visit to the East Coast (in mid-July) to jump in various pools and the ocean with various nieces and nephews.

And now here come the Olympics. Our newspaper is sending only two reporters, and so I'll be in charge of organizing all the other copy that comes over the wires on the many sports we don't have a chance to cover. As a result, I'll be pretty work-bound for the second half of August-- which will keep me from the family reunion. I've got to get to the farm-- my memories of it are four decades old!

Hope everyone has a great rest-of-summer, autumn and winter!



August 9, 2004

Dear Family,

Chris' (age 27) first professional job has come to an end. While advertising is a great place to be for a Graphic Designer, and the work was fulfilling and challenging, he was having a great deal of difficulty working with the owner, who repeatedly created unnecessary crises, and was too unpredictable and irrational. By chance, while he was bowling with us as a sub one Thursday night, he met a former high school classmate, who happened to work for Estes Express, a nationwide freight moving company headquartered in Richmond. As they were discussing their lives since graduation, Chris described his work and his displeasure with his current job situation. His classmate mused that she thought Estes was looking for a Graphic Designer. Chris e-mailed his resume to her, but heard nothing for a month. Then, he got a call on a Friday, interviewed on Monday, and was made an offer on Tuesday. (A far cry from the four-month long, and seven interview process that preceded his offer at the advertising company.) Chris accepted the offer, which was for a little more money, but superior benefits, and bade farewell to his first "real" job. He's now three months into this new job and has noted that the worst day he's experienced here is better than the best day he had there.

Chris is now living in a friend's home, about 7 miles from here, but a little closer to the city. His current location and the location of his new office make for a very comfortable commute (far enough to thoroughly warm up the car, but not much more).

Claudine (age 24) finished up her job at the Northern Stage in White River Junction, VT, and is now back home. The reality that continued work in this field, and in this manner, will not support more than subsistence living has finally hit her. She really wants her own car (*I don't understand why she has a problem with my smelly, manual transmission-equipped '85 VW Jetta with a nonfunctional A/C!?*) and place to live (*we'd kinda like that too!*). So, she's looking for local work again. This time, I'm trying to get her to look higher than retail sales (*I did pay for four years of college, after all!*). While she looks for something better, she is now working for an acquaintance from church who supervises a group of data processors for Anthem. Claudine is working as a temp through Kelly Temporaries.

Danie continues to participate in quilting guilds, occasionally going on weekend quilting retreats (*at least that's what she's telling me!*) and is also a member of a book club. She keeps busy at home tending to our seemingly attention-starved puppy, Sophie. Just last month she celebrated an important event: the twenty-first anniversary of the first time she was 29!

Danie & I completed our second season of bowling, with our team moving up to seventh place. Chris frequently subbed on the team this year, due to a fair number of Thursday night conflicts among the team members. He finished the season for one of our teammates, who suffered a "mini-stroke" and was out recovering (full recovery expected, and the team member will be back next year). At the awards ceremony, Danie was recognized for high handicap game (259) and we were both among the top five most-improved bowlers. We both had higher total score games this year, but consistency still remains a problem.

No softball for me this year. Neither the K of C Council, nor St. Michael's fielded teams. I guess no one wanted to be a coach.

We've taken several short vacations since we last wrote . . . visiting Claudine in Vermont in December (*26 inches of snow*

fell while we were there . . . barely slowed us down) and again for her birthday in April. We also made a weekend trip to Baltimore to meet up with Alex and Maria and tour the Inner Harbor area. We're getting ready to leave for a trip through Niagara Falls and the Finger Lakes region on the way to the reunion. Hope to see many of you there!

Over the last year, much has happened at our parish concerning our pastor. For several years now, three former students of a now closed seminary school where Fr. John Leonard had served as rector have been pursuing him, charging him with sexual abuse during their time at the school. While I believe Fr. John did something at that school back then (we are talking the late sixties / early seventies here) that might raise some eyebrows today, I can't believe that he engaged in anything that would be considered sexual abuse. However, I believe that these three accusers have some kind of beef with Fr. John and used the current anti-priest political climate to effect some sort of revenge. While nothing could be proven (indeed much of the complainants' testimony was contradictory and/or denied by others), the county attorney brought charges of assault (not sexual) against Fr. John, to which he pleaded no contest and was given probation as a sentence. Somehow, Fr. John was under the impression that this action would clear him to go "back to work", however, we have a new Bishop in town who is determined to stay "clean", so he placed Fr. John on administrative leave "pending a complete investigation" (I thought that was what the county did!). Seeing this as a continuation of the hell that he had been through for the previous three years, Fr. John tendered his resignation.

Fr. John did more to teach us about our faith and build community than all of the clergy I've ever known and it's a shame that the diocese will not stand behind him. We now have a new pastor who thinks himself "the great healer", but a church full of bitter parishioners. St. Michael's will never be the same!

Having completed the reactor head replacement effort for our four Virginia units, the work in our office is settling back down to it's "normal" frenzy of activity. Meanwhile, the growing nuclear business unit is preparing to assume ownership of the Kewaunee Nuclear Plant in Wisconsin. We are supposed to take over the plant after the fall refueling outage, in which its reactor pressure vessel head is to be replaced and a power uprate implemented. However, since we're very interested in seeing that this outage goes well, we'll be very much involved. It looks like additional personnel, from our already thin staff, will be going to Wisconsin to support the outage work.

Our little singer/songwriter buddy, Susan Greenbaum finally got to tour with pop star Jewel on a 10-show concert series, that had them criss-crossing the Northeast for 11 days. If you feel so inclined, you can read about her adventures at the following websites:

<http://www.richmond.com/output.cfm?id=3012819>

<http://www.richmond.com/output.cfm?id=3013952>

<http://www.richmond.com/output.cfm?id=3025357>

Since returning from the tour, she has been contacted by at least two record companies. No signing offers yet . . . but it's only a matter of time!

Eric

It's really great to recd all your information. Old age is ^{8/18/04} really keeping up on me - but I expect it won't be too long before that won't be creeping up - but it will be a big journey!
 Hope to see more of all of you - maybe in the summer.
 - Take care and have a wonderful summer -
 Love from grannie Clives to all - I hope I'll still be around for a while and spend some time writing to you. Love to all - Aunt Helen.
 (from Bunny)
 P.S. As you can see, the "family matriarch" is doing well, having just celebrated Birthday #79 in May. Next year is the big "8-0"! She has had the same wonderful caregiver for over 2 years now (with Leta taking off every other weekend, when another lady fills in), and Barbara does 99% of the work that keeps the arrangement viable! (She certainly has earned her "angel's wings"!

Hello again!

8/29/04 2-149

I'm writing the Zirkel entry a little out of sequence, since I was with my mom when she wrote hers. In the meantime, we were lucky to see many of you at the Christensen Farm for the reunion on August 21st. Although the weather was "iffy" at first, it turned out to be a beautiful day. While my generation was content to stand on the sidelines and watch, most of the youngsters really enjoyed the pond once again, & Uncle Ed was right in there with them! Thank you to all the Christensens for getting us all together once again!

We Zirkels had a rather rough winter after I fell and had to have surgery on my shoulder, as Barbara mentioned. Bill had to do everything for weeks - I couldn't even drive for 6 weeks, which is very difficult when you belong to two carpools & have active kids this age. (On top of all this stress, Bill lost his best friend to cancer in early March.) Six months later, my right shoulder is still nowhere near 100%, & I'm still going to therapy. But I'm making do, and just hope the inevitable arthritis won't be too bad.

Fortunately each of the kids had upcoming events to look forward to and practice for. Kristen was in the chorus, singing & dancing, in a really excellent production of the musical "Footloose" at her high school, and then went with the Select Chorus to a competition in Virginia. Danny played a solo on the violin for Visitors Day at his school, & then played a solo on the saxophone for the Spring Concert. (The latter was a jazzy, improvisational piece that the director had him play half of while down on his knees - quite a hit!) He also tried for & made the "travel" soccer team, so we'll be experiencing the joys of "travel" team sports for the 1st time this fall. And while Michelle can't play an instrument, dance or do regular sports, she, too, had her "moment in the sun" when she represented Bethpage at the Empire State Games for the Physically Challenged in Uniondale, bringing home 3 "gold medals"!

Let's all pray that we have a safe election season & that the right man is chosen to be president. Have a wonderful autumn! Love, Bernadette & family

9/13/05

Hi all!

Sounds like 2004 has been pretty good for the family. The reunion was great and we can be thankful the early rain gave way to sunshine... it was so nice to see many of you there!

School has started and Nicole (11) + Megan (9) are back in the swing of it. Nicole is now in 6th grade and started middle school. She's getting involved in Art and Drama. Meg is eyeing Basketball but also pursuing Art. I'm still at the Times and the stress level is at an all-time high! Just gotta deal with it, right? Attended the NY Jets opening day and at 1-0 we're looking at a great season.

Love to All,

Steve and the kids

R

2-150

Sept. 30, 2004

Dear family,

Sorry, not much to share this time around. We are all well and busy with various retreats, missions... etc. God is so good! Glad to know that the May picnic was a success despite the weather. Please be assured that you are all remembered daily in our prayers. Have a very Happy Thanksgiving and a Blessed Christmas.

God Bless,
Theresa

A big "HELLO" and greetings from WILLIAMSBURG, VIRGINIA!

10/06/04

We love to read about all the families in the Round Robin. This time it took 10 1/2 months to come back to us...the time before, it took 5 months. So you see ---IT CAN BE DONE! LET US ALL TRY HARDER!

It is over a year since Hurricane Isabel left its mark on our house -- and this year's hurricane season is not over yet. We're still waiting for our roof and siding to be fixed because of Isabel. I hope by the next time the RR comes again, our house will be fixed and we can tell you all about it.

Monica is fully on Medicaid. She gets personal home health care (an aid comes Mon. thru Fri. from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.). Most of her medicines are free and she gets transportation to the doctors -- but not the dentist. The home health aid Monica has now is very nice. (We've had our share of nice ones and some weirdoes.) Monica is to get a power chair -- but we're still waiting on that. Monica is to get injections in her shoulders, elbows, thumbs, knees and toes. She gets them every 6 months or so -- they do help her. She has pain because of her inactivity -- her muscles contract, go into spasms and the left elbow hurts still from the shingles she had 2 years ago. They say that pain can last for years...and of course, pushing the wheelchair around does not help her arms. The power chair should help greatly.

I've had injections in the knee, which have helped me. I've had different pain medicines which do nothing for me. I was referred to the Pain Management Clinic. I had to get another MRI, which shows degeneration of the spine, a real arthritic spine plus other things like stenosis, subluxation and arachnoiditis -- and I have scoliosis. The doctor suggested injections in the back -- during one visit he gave me three injections in the left side of the spinal column and three in the right side. He also prescribed another medication, Endocet, a more powerful dosage, which makes me feel better but I still have pain. I go to see him next week -- I'll see what he has to say then.

Alan had a little scare -- he was to get his gall bladder out -- but pre-op testing postponed that and the doctors did more testing including a stress test, a catheterization which showed one artery about 50% blocked and the others less. The doctor would not do the gall bladder surgery -- thoughts were Alan should have triple by-pass. Consultations with five cardiologists and surgeons opted to postpone the by-pass and treat him medicinally until 2 weeks ago, Alan had a bad gall bladder attack -- and then the gall bladder surgery was done --

laporoscopally -- and was successful. Now the thinking is that medicines, diet and exercise will hopefully postpone bypass surgery for years, his cholesterol will get better and also his blood pressure. He lost 20+ lbs. so far and hopefully will lose more. (I am sure I am not writing this correctly and probably not using the correct names, etc. for the procedures -- but all I know is that he is fine now and I hope and pray he stays that way.)

I will let Alan write all about him and his family -- what ages the children are and what schools they are attending and what work Deanne is doing, etc.

Eric and family are fine -- Eric will fill you in on the outage at NorthAnna he just went through, a real hectic week -- what quilting Danie is into -- Chris' job at Estes Trucking and Claudine's new job at Tiffany's Bridal Shoppe.

That's about it for now. Everyone take care, stay healthy and happy. God bless us, everyone!

Love, Aunt Rosemary and Monica

11/12/04

Dear Family:

I concur with Steve & Bunmy -- The Reunion at the CHRISTENSEN FARM WAS TERRIFIC. By my estimation, it had been 31 years since my last visit. A lot HAS CHANGED, BUT NOT AUNT CLAIRE and UNCLE ED. They are still as active as ever, and a TRUE INSPIRATION. My CHILDREN LOVED THE POND and KEEP ASKING when they can RETURN.

CURRENTLY I AM WORKING at WNBC TV, PRODUCING "TODAY in New York," WHICH REQUIRES ME TO WORK OVERNIGHTS, WHICH IS TIRING. BUT IT'S A GOOD ORGANIZATION and I HAVE BEEN ASSURED that the OVERNIGHT hours are TEMPORARY. (I'M SURE THEY TELL THAT TO EVERYONE.)

SPORTS REMAIN a BIG PART of OUR LIVES HERE. JOSEPH (12) PLAYS BASEBALL 8 MONTHS out of the year. His TEAMS GOT TO PLAY in 2 TOURNAMENTS in COOPERSTOWN. TERENCE⁽⁹⁾ PLAYS BASEBALL and SOCCER, THOUGH HE'S TAKEN A YEAR off from SWIMMING. KIRA (8) PLAYS SOCCER and is INVOLVED in GYMNASTICS. Mary Jo TEACHES elementary French and LATIN in the Spoorset DISTRICT, SO WE ARE ALL QUITE BUSY.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS & BEST OF LUCK in the NEW YEAR
Joe Cline

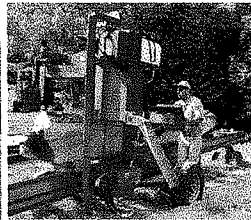
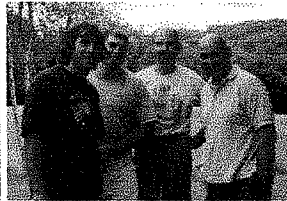
Dear Family,

11/23/04

I guess I'm one of the few who's life is pretty much the same as it was when the Round Robin was in it's infancy. Still single, with roommates. Still singing in the choir. Still not set on my ultimate career...
 ... although my brothers envision logging, milling lumber and tapping Sugar Maple trees as a big part of my future. Speaking of work, the huge barn renovation project at the Farm is underway, with lots of concrete and several large, custom-milled Hemlock beams in place. Ken will be at sea through early January.
 Since I got to start a fresh page, I'll take advantage by including some photos:



2004 May Party - including a Joe Clines sighting!
 See: <http://attractweb.com/may>



Steve mills lumber

<http://attractweb.com/wood>



Ray works on barn



Marathon Man

<http://attractweb.com/run>

Of course, the family party was great. First photo is Kaylin, Nicole, Arianna, Megan. 2nd is Ken, Steve, Ray and Joe. Stop by our family website to update your info. **Please** invite the younger generations to do the same. I'm still pumping out the jewelry at QVC while spending most of my free indoor time in front of the computer learning advanced web design techniques. For example, visit my famous beer bottle site where you can sort through my bottle collection by nation, state or other parameters: www.angelfire.com/de/beerbottles Wow!

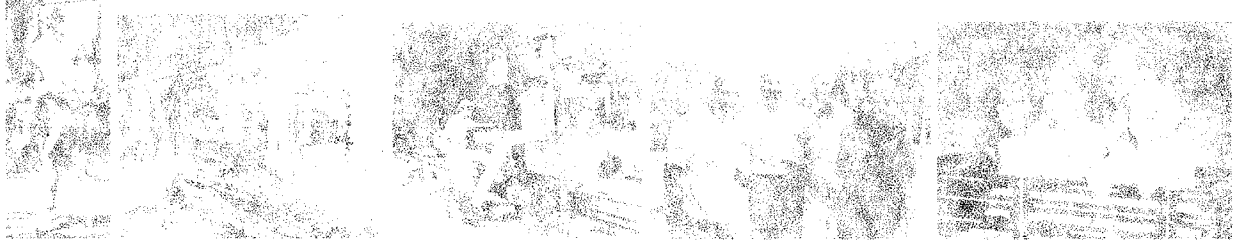
My 3 year old running career has reached a milestone. In October, I ran the Chicago Marathon in 3:19:47, which qualifies me to run the Boston Marathon in April. It's televised. I do much of my training with a group called the Rebel Runners, but found time to run the 17.3 mile loop around Rondout Reservoir (down the hill from the farm) over the summer. I pray that everyone enjoys a peaceful holiday season!

Ray

Two Days after Thanksgiving 2004
 Since Brant is very much into genealogy, & has put into his computer every spec of information he can find from our family tree - this is how he announced on Thanksgiving that he & Heather expect our 1st grandbaby in July. We are so surprised & happy to hear the news. Up till now, we only had grand dogs HA! I guess something good came from Hurricane Season in Fla. The 1st hit on Ralph's 60th Birthday (Aug 14) & the whole family planned a trip to go to Belasi. Even though the trip was cancelled, the kids all came here to be together, only to see on TV the storm was going straight over their houses in Orlando (Orlando). Next day Allen & Chris brought their chain saws to Oviedo & helped Brant & Janice & about 8 other neighbors remove trees etc. I also retired from school kitchen in May & don't know how I had time to work. I love my volunteer work feed the Homeless in St Jerome & my blood pressure is better already! I will always be thankful for our wonderful family Love Ralph & Tadline

2012

Our family...
 I was born in the year 1912...
 I have a brother and a sister...
 I was married in 1935...
 I have three children...
 I was a member of the...
 I was a member of the...
 I was a member of the...



Left: ... Middle: ... Right: ...

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6 January 2005

Dear Family,

I'm sorry to have kept this letter for so long. It arrived just as we headed into the Christmas season, and with two December birthdays, Concerts, parties to attend and help out with, and so on, the Family Letter got set aside. This year I was quite behind with my Christmas preparations, and was up until 3 AM Christmas Eve wrapping (now I know why Santa never wrapped the gifts for our house). On Christmas day, Colin was sick and gave up halfway through unwrapping all the things I had wrapped. It was a disappointment to the rest of us because he's the only one who still gets toys, and of course we all want to play with his things. However, he recovered quickly and we were able to do all the traveling we do between Christmas and New Year's.

There is nothing really new with me this year. I have been doing lots of volunteering again, the same sorts of things I've done since Colin started school. There are plenty more meetings to go to, however, since I now have children in three different schools in the district. Things at Merck, where Joe works, are not the same as they have been, as people who follow the news know. The setback they have had with their pain drug has been demoralizing, and will have long-term consequences for the company. Employees are waiting to see what they will be.

Brian started at the High School this year (10th grade is the first at his HS) and Emily started at the Middle School (7th grade). Colin is left at the elementary school, and seems to be doing pretty well in third grade with the exception of writing assignments. He started playing the cello in our school's string program, which he enjoys except for the practicing, and played soccer as usual in the fall. Emily picked up a new sport this year because she played field hockey for the first time with her Middle School's 7th grade team. She liked playing on a school team for the first time, even though the coaches were inexperienced and they lost all their games. So far her transition to Middle School has gone smoothly and since she turned 13 in December, we now have two teenagers in the family.

Brian seems to have made a smooth transition to the HS also, except for being prepared to leave the house at 6:40 AM. He made the boy's JV Soccer team (not easy to do at a school with 3000 kids) and that really made him feel at home at the HS. (The tryouts for the team were last August, which is why he was not at the family reunion.) He is now doing Winter Track, and plans to try out for baseball in the spring. He has also continued with music and is in the band (trombone). He wanted to do every sport and sign up for every club but is learning to be realistic. We're trying to figure out when we can possibly schedule driving lessons for him, now that he has turned 16.

Hope the winter weather has been gentle for everyone this year. We have missed every storm so far.

*Love to all,
Ellen*

January 13, 2005

Dear Family,

Last year was a time of ups & downs. In retrospect, it was a good year, but at times it seemed bleak. Both I and Deanne's Mother had our health concerns that clouded our futures. But we're both here in 2005, though Mrs. Landy is still having a very rough time.

My heart condition was debated for a month or so in July - August. Montefiore, where the catheterization was done, felt that quadruple bypass surgery was immediately necessary and scheduled it in July. In a whirlwind week, I visited several cardiologists from various hospitals, and the consensus was to treat the blockages medically for now. The blockages were diagnosed as anywhere from 50-70% depending on the doctor. This was frustrating and quite frightening, as each one would end by saying - "this is what I'd do, but you have to decide for yourself!" I was asymptomatic all along, and have remained so. But the question is always what is going on inside. Tests in November revealed that my bad cholesterol (LDL) had plunged to 65 - below the new guidelines for people at risk - so all the doctors are happy. I have to have regular cholesterol tests, then stress tests in May to determine if it is reasonable to keep this medical approach. My next cholesterol test should be this week, and I am afraid of what it will show after Holiday festivities. I had lost 30-40 lbs, but then gained a few back. Unfortunately, since I am asymptomatic, there is no immediate punishment when I have desserts and snacks! It is sad how little control I have, especially after the scare and doing so well. But with a new year comes new determination.

Mrs. Landy has had a series of TIAs (*Transient Ischemic Attacks*), and one stroke that left physical brain damage, but no real symptoms. So, mentally, she is fully alert and very sharp, but physically she is weak from the strain, but without any loss of motor activity from the stroke itself. However, her good days now are like her bad days a few years ago. She is in a nursing home for now, and may return home if she can maintain basic strength and mobility.

Deanne has borne the burden of all this, and the kids as well. Thankfully, everything else in our lives is somewhat calm and there have been numerous high points in the year.

Billy (15) had his first public performance as a clarinetist at Sacred Heart's Christmas concert. A fellow student played the piano with him for *What Child Is This?* Billy did very well - Deanne and I were on pins and needles until the performance was over. We're so proud! Billy was instrumental (*pun intended*) in starting a band at Sacred Heart High School, as well as getting the track team up and running (*I'm on a roll!*). He averaged 99.5 in the first marking period, so he is obviously handling the transition to High School very well! He also continues to show his leadership skills with the Boy Scout troop. He's determined to make Eagle rank soon, and I'm sure he will.

Gillian (13) is looking forward to getting out of Museum Middle School. It remains too noisy and crowded for her. She is struggling in everything, except Math. She's in Math Olympiads and Math 24 Club. You can learn more about the latter at <http://www.24game.com>. It is an amazing game of mental dexterity at which she excels. Hopefully, the calmer atmosphere at Sacred Heart next year will revive her interest in school. She's having fun with her Girl Scout troop, and helps the Brownie leader (*Deanne!*) with Shannon's troop. Gillian is an artist and overall crafty type person! She will be confirmed at Sacred Heart on April 12. She is the proud mother of *Violet*, a Build-a-Bear born around Shannon's birthday this year.

Shannon (8) is making her way through 3rd grade *summa cum social*. She'd rather chat with friends than work in class, much to her teacher's dismay. We refer to her as the social butterfly - everyone at Montessori School 31 knows Shannon. We have to get her more focused on her work and less on her social life. She will celebrate her First Eucharist on May 1. She is having fun with her friends in Brownies.

Deanne continues her many jobs and avocations and playing chauffeur. She is not on Parish Council this year, but is just as involved in all the behind-the-scenes work. I continue to work for Deutsche Bank on Wall Street. The commute takes a lot out of me, and I've taken on more responsibilities lately whose effects remain to be seen. Being scoutmaster fills out the time I'm not working or commuting. No wonder I don't get enough exercise!

Alan, Deanne,
Billy, Gillian
& Shannon

2-157

1-22-05

Dear Family -

As I write this, we are having our first major snow storm and Robert is enjoying every minute of it. We are all well and have escaped the Flu so far. We had a wonderful Christmas holiday and was so happy to hear of the engagement of our Krista to Martin. They have been together for 2 yrs and have finally decided to tie the knot - a Nov. wedding is planned. There really isn't much more to say with us. Adrienne graduates from Rutgers Univ in May and has plans to move out of New Jersey possibly Vermont. My mother is doing as well as to be expected, after a recent stay at the hospital for a bout of Bronchitis.

We hope all of you are well - especially you Alan - I guess we all have those Dan May genes - HELP!!!

Take care + God bless you all
 Love
 Maudie Alex + all
 the clan