

2/12/07

2-195

Dear Family,

The RR letter caught up with me as I was recuperating in Edenville 'swing care' ^{with} hospital from a R hip replacement done in Kingston on 1/23. Ray brought me home on 2/9 and is staying until next Sat, when Lorraine and gang will arrive for one week. After that, I'm sure I'll be ready for another rehab!!!

So far, this is the most snow-less winter in memory on Lockawock - absolutely no complaints on that score. Ken has returned to the sea - en route to Japan and points East for a 70 day swing. Steve is here most weekends, & Roy when possible. So it should be fun making it "on my own" for the foreseeable future. Should be quite a challenge. Thank you, God, for 24/7 phone, e-mails, TV, books and a full pantry!

Love to all,
Aunt Claire

2/28/07

Greetings from the Dreher's! Hope all are surviving this odd winter and anticipating SPRING. Our driveway is finally losing its sheet of ice so there's hope!

Changes since the last RR :

- a new job for Ian (supervising foster parents of special needs children) and a new address out in the northern suburbs of Baltimore. He found an apartment to share through Craig's list and it's working out well.

-Kate earned her doctorate in plant biology from UC Davis in December. She is going to Mexico (CIMMYT - an international research foundation where she has worked before) to work on a six-month project. She'll be looking for Stateside work to start after that stint, but may stay there longer if the project warrants it.

Matt is still at his marketing job and still looking for the right non-profit job to come along. He liked his fall courses at Seton Hall and is taking two more in non-profit management.

The big change is the one made on Feb 5, 2007. On that day I took my mother to live at the Little Neck Nursing Home. Her Alzheimer's had progressed to the point that she needed two persons to get her up and cleaned each day, and her big old house does not have a full bathroom on the first floor to allow for easy cleaning. She is also getting physically frail from her emphysema, lack of appetite, etc. She has not recognized 280 Lindberg as her "home" for quite awhile, and her mental faculties are shrinking. It has been a sad progression, but the fact that she is "mid-level Alzheimer's" makes her pretty much unaware of the change of address. Her lack of awareness is the one blessing the disease bestows, but it's a big one. We try to visit daily (Barbara, Bernadette or Joe) and so far she has not acted unhappy about her situation. We ask you to keep her and us in your prayers. It is hard to watch Alzheimer's rob your mother of her identity and health. George and I will be spending much time at 280 getting it cleaned out. Thankfully, I came upon a burst pipe in the basement in a timely enough fashion to avoid a potentially devastating flood on Feb. 6. Whew!

We hope Monica, Alan and Aunt Claire are on the road to full recovery, and that the winter has not afflicted anyone severely. Blessings to all as we journey on! Happy Spring!

Barbara + George

3-11-07

Greetings to one and all,

All is well with us here in NC. We are keeping ourselves busy with work and all the various activities involving the grandchildren. Seems there is always a birthday, sport game, competition or recital to attend. They are all growing so fast and we are so glad to be nearby to share these times with them and watch them grow.

I spoke to Debbie yesterday. She had to have an emergency appendectomy last week. She didn't have all the classic symptoms and it was on the verge of bursting. She's doing okay now though.

Unfortunately, even with Madeline + Ralph having their cabin in NC, we really don't get to see them much. Hopefully, that can change in the future.

Love and prayers to all ... Ronnie + Angie

Dear Family,

March 26, 2007

The Klein clan has had a busy 2007 already! As you know, Mom had hip surgery on January 23, so we shot up there to visit as soon as we could and spent a wonderful week in late February. The drive was extra-long due to weather conditions both ways, but we were lucky enough to enjoy the first *real* snow of the season while we were there! It was breathtakingly beautiful and the kids - including the triplets when weather permitted - had a blast sleigh riding and partaking in every aspect of snowy fun that we *almost* never get to enjoy down here in NC. Mom is a fighter and is improving every day, but this is only through sheer will as she continues to suffer with great amounts of pain and subsequent sleeplessness. We are hoping to visit again for a couple of weeks in May.

On March 12 Matthew had reconstructive surgery at UNC on his cleft lip. While his cleft lip was fairly minor, it still needed to be done because the muscles in his upper lip were not aligned properly and he was showing signs of speech difficulty. I have to say that I'm very proud of him as his recovery is going flawlessly. He has such a sweet disposition and mild manner that he cooperates with everything. At this point he still has a fair amount of swelling and redness, the latter of which will probably take a few months to completely heal.

Wake Forest continues to be an area of extreme growth, (where are all those damn Yankees coming from!?!), so much so that we have been re-zoned to a new year-round school. The school board is slowly converting schools with the traditional calendar to the year-round calendar. You can imagine the hubbub around here but I honestly don't know what all the stink is about. At any rate, Arianna (9) and Kaylin (6 1/2) will be starting 4th and 2nd grades in July or somewhere thereabout depending upon the track they get. We're excited about the change because this will be the first time the whole neighborhood will be zoned for the same public school!

I can hardly believe that Matthew, Mark and Luke turned 2 on February 26. My little babies are growing up. While they are a tremendous handful and have literally turned our household upside down, they continue to bring great joy to all who know them!

I continue to keep you all in my prayers, especially Aunt Helen, Aunt Rosemary, Monica and my mom. I'm sure I can speak for all of us at how relieved we are at Alan's speedy recovery. Those May genes have brought a cornucopia of wonderful talents to our family as is evident through reading this letter - art, music, athletics, creativity, brains etc., but also unfortunately along with that came some sinister genes as well that we must be aware of.

Love, Ronnie

April 7, 2007

Greetings from Milwaukee!

This time I actually have some news to report. After almost 35 years of newspapering – 36 if you include the internship—I retired from the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel as of April 1. It just seemed like the right time for reasons both personal and professional.

So what the heck do I do now? In the short term, lots of baseball watching, swimming, and hanging out at the apartment complex's pool. In the long term, some tutoring, and volunteer work at a Milwaukee Public School newspaper project, maybe some teaching, and even some part time work at the place I just left. And, of course, longer visits back east.

I need a home computer to replace the one I was able to use at work. Laptop is owned, but not yet set up. New email address coming after I spend some time in New York this month. Till then.....

God bless everyone!



April 14, 2007

Dear Family,

Here's what's been happening in beautiful Glen Allen, Virginia since the last visit by the RR letter!

In **August**, Danie & I flew out to Alaska to partake in a 12-day land and sea tour, as an early celebration of our 30th Anniversary. The weather was remarkably good for most of the trip (it ALWAYS rains in Ketchikan). // At the end of the month, Monica was hospitalized, briefly, for an infection in her leg, and is discharged to a nursing home for therapy. This was to be the beginning of her long-term residency, as it became too much of a challenge to care for her at Mom's house.

In **September**, Claudine moved out of the house the day after we arrived back from Alaska. We're empty nesters again!

At the end of the month, Eric & Danie traveled to the Big Apple to attend the wedding of Danie's cousin's daughter, Michele. During the weekend, we visited with Danie's brother, Richard, and his kids.

Bowling began again, but this year, we changed out starting time from 9:00 to 7:00pm. The new time slot allows us to get home well before midnight (much closer to my bedtime), but the rush to get from work to the alley is challenging. Claudine is again on our team. Chris did not sign up as a regular bowler, but is a favorite substitute (so far, he's missed only 3 weeks).

October brought refueling outages for Kewaunee (WI), Surry Unit 2 (VA) and Millstone Unit 2 (CT). All have their challenges, but the requests for Engineering Mechanics support are manageable. While Eric is busy, Danie and her buddies once again headed for the Beach for an extended weekend of drink . . . er, quilting.

In **November**, the whole Eric May family celebrated Thanksgiving by visiting Monica at the nursing home, then taking mom to dinner at a restaurant, then stopping by the Le Bris' (where Richard came to visit) for dessert. - Long day!!

December was an incredible month. With Monica now in a nursing home and mom alone at her home, mom quickly recognized that she didn't want to or need to stay in the house any longer. So we continued the search for a senior independent living community for her to move to. We quickly found the "perfect" place in Williamsburg, and by coincidence, the "perfect" apartment, as Alan described, became available on December 18th. So, she took possession of the apartment on the 18th, but we only moved her in on the 27th. As you might expect going from a 1900 ft² house with an attic and garage to a 750 ft² apartment presented quite a challenge.

While all this was going on, and I became aware of Alan's impending bypass surgery (which, by the way, went extremely well and Alan is now back to work), I was confronted with the reality that I now officially have Type 2 diabetes. I should have known, as the constant thirst and unexplained weight loss are dead giveaways . . . but isn't weight loss (explainable or not) a desirable thing??? I was given medication to stimulate the production of insulin (Glimepiride), attended nutritional training classes and purchased a glucose meter (By the way, giving an Engineer a device that is intended to collect data is like

giving them a new toy. I now have enough data to determine averages, standard deviations, and trends for particular times of the day and overall).

The good news is that after taking the nutritional training and putting the knowledge to work, I have continued to loose weight and my blood glucose is now being controlled in the "normal" range. Because of Alan's condition, I also had a nuclear stress test done (hmm. I'm in nuclear, I deal with stress (in piping & vessels) and I'm stressed all the time!) to check on the status of my own ticker. The very detailed report that I got from my doctor after the \$1500 test read: "*Stress Test - OK*" (We'll quiz him further at my next checkup, but I'll accept that report for now). Additionally, given the experiences of Monica's hospitalization, Alan's surgery and the ills and deaths of *several* of my contemporaries at the office, I've decided that I need to up the priority of my physical condition and have set a goal for myself of loosing additional weight and getting off, or at least reducing the dosage of the meds I'm on for blood pressure and cholesterol by the end of the year.

While getting my heath issues under control, I spent at least one day of all but two weekends this year in Williamsburg; getting mom's house ready to sell, making mom's apartment "homey" or visiting / dealing with Monica.

Continuing Monica's story from Alan's last entry, Monica was admitted to Mary Immaculate Hospital in Newport News in January. For **69 days**, she was treated to fight blood-borne bacterial infections, suffering numerous setbacks after seemingly being cured. At one time, an antibiotic-resistant bacterium seemed to take over (as the strong antibiotic killed everything else), but, fortunately, that condition cleared itself. Finally, she had her infected gall bladder removed.

Once her condition stabilized, she was transferred to a new nursing home (Walter Reed Convalescent and Rehab Center Box 887 **Gloucester**, VA 23061), because no nursing home in the Williamsburg or Newport News area had room, or could handle her needs. While Gloucester is just across the York River from Williamsburg, the closest bridge crossing is in Yorktown, which makes for a 50-minute one-way trip from mom's place.

After being at Walter Reed for about two weeks, Monica was again found unresponsive and taken to the adjacent Walter Reed Hospital (not associated with the VA Hospital), where it was determined that she had been overdosed with dilantin (epileptic control drug). She stayed there for a week before being returned to the nursing home. A few days later, she was again found to have a urinary tract infection and was moved to an isolated room. That's where she is today.

The effects of the infections, toxins and strong drugs have, hopefully temporarily, affected her cognitive functions. While she seemingly hasn't lost memory (she probably can still tell you every cousin's birthday, and what day of the week it falls on in 2010), she is unable to differentiate between her reality and what she hears, say, from the TV in her room. (We (mom, Danie & I) just visited her yesterday and found her cognitive abilities and communications much improved, but she kept insisting that she was living in my house in Richmond, and that Chris comes to visit her at night). We were supposed to meet with the Social Worker to review Monica's history and plan a course of action, but the worker called in sick. We'll have to reschedule. We'll keep you informed!

Danie: continues her relentless pursuit to find pieces of multi-colored & multi-patterned fabrics of all sizes, cut them up into little geometric shapes and sew them back together again. She enjoyed teaching several classes last year. It looks like she'll be keeping the computerized sewing machine she was given to prepare those classes. That makes the effort expended more than worth while! As noted above, she continues to look for opportunities to take classes, go on retreats and buy more fabric! In her "spare" time, she has been helping preparing mom's house for sale, taking her father to several doctors' appointments (the Le Brises are doing well for their age) and playing with Sophie Belle (our 4-year old Shih Tzu).

Chris: (29) Is doing well in his position as a Sr. Graphic Designer at Estes Express. He is now comfy in his new condominium, which he has made "his own". He traveled to FL in March to attend the 24 hour auto race in Sebring. Chris chose not to join a bowling team this year (to save money!) He winds up bowling most weeks anyway, as a favorite substitute (*for free!*).

Claudine: (27, just yesterday!) was a receptionist at Community Neurological Services, and soon became the Billing Manager and is now salaried. In September, she moved out of the house and into an apartment with a former dorm mate from Radford. They're just five minutes away from our house. She is once again bowling with us and has been key to the team's performance!

I am still working for Dominion as Supervisor - Engineering Mechanics. In the "fleet-izing" of the Nuclear Engineering Dept., my position remains the same, but the responsibilities of my group will change (we now support all four sites - 7 Units). Dominion did loose the bid to take over the Point Beach Nuclear Plant adjacent to our Kewaunee Power Station in WI. We really wanted that station, but the new owners paid WAY too much for it! // Softball season will start shortly (we can only improve from last year) and we're preparing for the NASCAR races in early May. Otherwise, I continue my involvement in the Knights of Columbus in both the local Council and the Fourth Degree Assembly.

Whew! . . .Lots going on!

Eric

Dear Family,

April 24, 2007 7

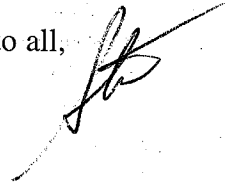
Summer has finally arrived after a very cold late-Jan. through early-April. We should have nice weather for the upcoming weekend when we will add 200 seedlings to the list of about 1500 hardwood trees planted in the last 5 years. This, among the many other projects planned for 2007. It's the only thing that helps me keep my sanity during this difficult year at The New York Times, where I'm intimately involved in moving 3,000 people to our new headquarters on 8th Avenue. The technology issues alone have been a nightmare when attempting to put a Newspaper to press each night while moving data centers, workstations, phones, etc.

Nicole has been excelling in school and is now a member of the National Honor Society. She continues to be a social butterfly and will be the West Babylon star hurdler in spring track. She is also receiving her Confirmation in May.

Megan has made plenty of friends in her first year of Junior High (6th grade) and has picked up her grades a bit. She's turning into a mature young lady. She was on the cheerleading squad this past fall but even though she performed well she didn't like the "clicks". She will be joining gymnastics later this year.

As far as myself, work and the Farm have pretty well consumed me and I'll be looking forward to July when the move is complete and I can kick back and relax a little.

Love to all,



↑
(Steve & I are both mixed up of the year!)

5/9/07

Dear Family,

There have been so many difficulties in the family these past 9 months since I last had the letter! We Zirkels join all of you in praying for everyone undergoing hardships, and thanking God for all of the blessings that the May Family does continue receiving.

As to the Bethpage branch - Kristen is officially going to Marist College (in Poughkeepsie) in the fall. It's a good location and has all the different programs in teacher preparation that she is considering. It also has "family ties" to the Zirkel side, as several of Bill's uncles trained to be brothers there back when it was still officially a Catholic college, & Bill's father & siblings all have fond memories of visiting there. Now that she has made the decision, Kristen can finally sleep at night - but Bill can't, thinking about the tuition bill!

Michelle - as always - has had her ups & downs. While the high school program we found for her is generally a good fit, her attention deficit problems & socializing problems keep her from getting as much as she should out of it. She was always very thin, but since Christmas she has been losing weight, which - together with some other symptoms -

makes them suspect a hormone or thyroid problem. We're awaiting the results of blood tests, and the doctors suggest we start all over again with a new set of specialists, as a teenager with developmental disabilities can present very differently than they did as a child. On the plus side, Michelle made her confirmation on April 24th (with Barbara as her sponsor) & she did a good job. She also has been able to tolerate having braces put on her teeth, which was really necessary & quite a cause of concern.

Danny is doing well, and with his birthday in September, we will be a 3-teenager family! I am still working part-time tutoring French, Spanish, & even sometimes beginning Italian to homebound or suspended students. I like the variety & relative flexibility, but if Bill's company decides to close this branch - a distinct possibility! - I may be going back to full-time work right as the rest of you are retiring!

The other main use of my time is taking my turn visiting our mom in the nursing home. We try not to let a day go by without at least a short visit from one of us, but it does get difficult. It's about a 25-30 min. drive for me. Thank God for the LIE (usually!)! She has been there 3 months now & is physically in pretty good shape; she always recognizes us, but her ability to hold a conversation is deteriorating & she has no concept of her age or that she has grandchildren. We try our best to keep her feeling that she is loved and important to us, which is all we can do.

We hope you all have a beautiful, restful summer. Love, Bernadette & family

Dear family,

Much is going on here in N.E. PA. Because of our growth it's necessary to put a small addition onto our convent. Right now we are heavily involved in a "begging plan" to raise enough money for the project. Yes, we are true Franciscans. Give us a basket, and we'll sit in back of a church!

Joannic is now superior of our second convent in a little country town called Bastress. It's right outside of Williamsport, PA. The parish is a German settlement from the early 1800's - so we kind of fit right in -

Not much else to say except that you are in our prayers each day as we sit before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament!

Have a wonderful Summer!
Love, Theresa

Dear May Family,

May 30, 2007 – my 81st birthday!

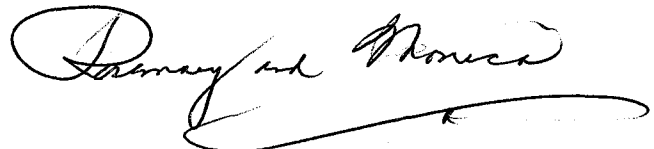
I kept this letter a little longer this time because I wanted to read it to Monica – also this reply to all. She is interested in what is going on with all the families. It is so great that I can now talk with her and she to me and she understands all and remembers all. It was scary when you would talk with her and she didn't understand what you were saying or when she'd talk to us and we didn't know what she was talking about. She thought she was elsewhere – not in a nursing home. For a time she thought she was living in Eric's attic (?) but now knows all - and remembers all. She is back to normal. She is now sort of 'infection free' but still gets urinary tract infections – but because this is not really contagious, she is in a room with another person. What she needs is therapy and so far, has not had much of it. She is talking with 'those in charge' about getting therapy – but so far, nothing is forthcoming. I sent an e-mail to most of you, or snail mail for those who do not have a computer, so I'm not going to go through all what's happened again. And Eric and Alan have written about Monica, also. Monica and I are hoping that she will be able to get into her wheelchair and get around the nursing home on her own efforts. Now she cannot get in and out of bed without the help of aids. She is satisfied that she has cable TV which gets her through most of the day.

Me, I'm in my independent living retirement community – have my own apartment. The only thing I wish is to have more room for Monica's things – out of season clothes, etc. I have been taking therapy sessions and I'm told that I walk better – I know I lost weight, about 21 lbs. The thing I like is that my car is parked right outside of my apartment and I hope I can continue to drive so I can visit Monica. I have one of the new kinds of walkers which has a seat you can fold down and sit on if you get tired of walking, etc. and a basket to carry things in. I've met some nice people – mostly women – I'm trying to remember names and the faces that go with the names or vice versa – not doing too bad in that department. I have my own little group with whom I have dinner with most of the time. So things are going along pretty well here at Chambrel in Williamsburg. I wish my house was sold – it is still 'on the market'.

Re. diabetes in the family. Bill had it, Alan and Eric have it. Monica was told 'yes' she does – then 'no' she doesn't. About a year ago, my doctor thought I was getting to be a diabetic '2', but then the next 2 blood tests showed I'm fine. And the last 2 cholesterol readings were 172 and then 150. Maybe this independent living in a retirement community agrees with me. Here at Chambrel, they have their own TV channel and every day they wish "Happy Birthday" to those people celebrating that day – today was mine – my name was on TV. There are many here well up in their 80's and 90's – and one man will celebrate his 100th in a few weeks and his wife is 96! You would never guess their ages – they walk fine, look fine – and as always there are some who walk slowly, with or without a walker or even some in a wheelchair. I'm glad I can still get around and that I can drive.....otherwise I don't know when I'd ever get to see Monica.

It is always good to read all the goings on with all the families. I agree with what Lorraine wrote re. the wonderful talents our family has in art, music, athletics, creativity and brains, etc.....no, I'm not even thinking about any bad genes. Keep the round robin going as fast as you can.

Love to all – together with our best wishes and prayers.



A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Lorraine and Monica", with a long, sweeping underline.

8/12/07

Dear Family,

This letter seems like a scrapbook and each time I receive it I see all the new snapshots of everyone's lives. For a lot of what we go through, all you can do is pray. Prayer is now part of my regular running routine. Each time I reach a certain point of my usual 1.75 mile loop, I make the sign of the cross and start in. Yesterday I finished first in my age group M(45-49) for the first time ever, so I guess God is listening.

In distance events, I had a super run at the breathtaking Big Sur Marathon and will tackle Marine Corps Marathon on Oct 29 in DC.

It's closing in on 2 years since I've been to Queens/CI, although I've put together a website for our grade school alumni (O.L.S.). I have a whole new "family" here in Wilmington. 2 roommates left virtually at the same time and within 5 weeks I had 2 new ones. Both are named 'Bob'.

It has been 2 years since I launched my own business! Not rich quite yet, but exciting things are happening all the time. Besides building websites for businesses and organizations, I sell advertising on my own website and recently got advertisers from NH and Sweden!

My USANA Health Sciences (nutritional supplements) business has been progressing and my latest big project is an informational site: www.FitnessBuildsHealth.com Visit!

I've been hitting the Farm about once/month to get in some physical labor and enjoy Mom's good cooking.

Take care,

Ray

Dear Family,

Greetings from Malverne—which has become quite hot and sticky as we head into the dog days.

As you may have heard, some major changes lie ahead for the Clines family. We have begun the process of selling the family house on Lindberg Street (after 52 years.) It has become too costly and cumbersome to maintain—and as Barbara rightly points out, there's no point in keeping an empty house. Our likely buyer is the daughter of our next-door neighbor.

Mom is being well cared-for at the Little Neck Nursing Home. The staff is, for the most part, courteous and attentive. Of late, she has been having trouble breathing, and the home sent her over to North Shore Hospital to be examined. Simply put, she's comfortable, though not terribly aware of her surroundings. I can't say enough about the tremendous efforts by Barbara on Mom's behalf.

Please keep Aunt Helen in your prayers.

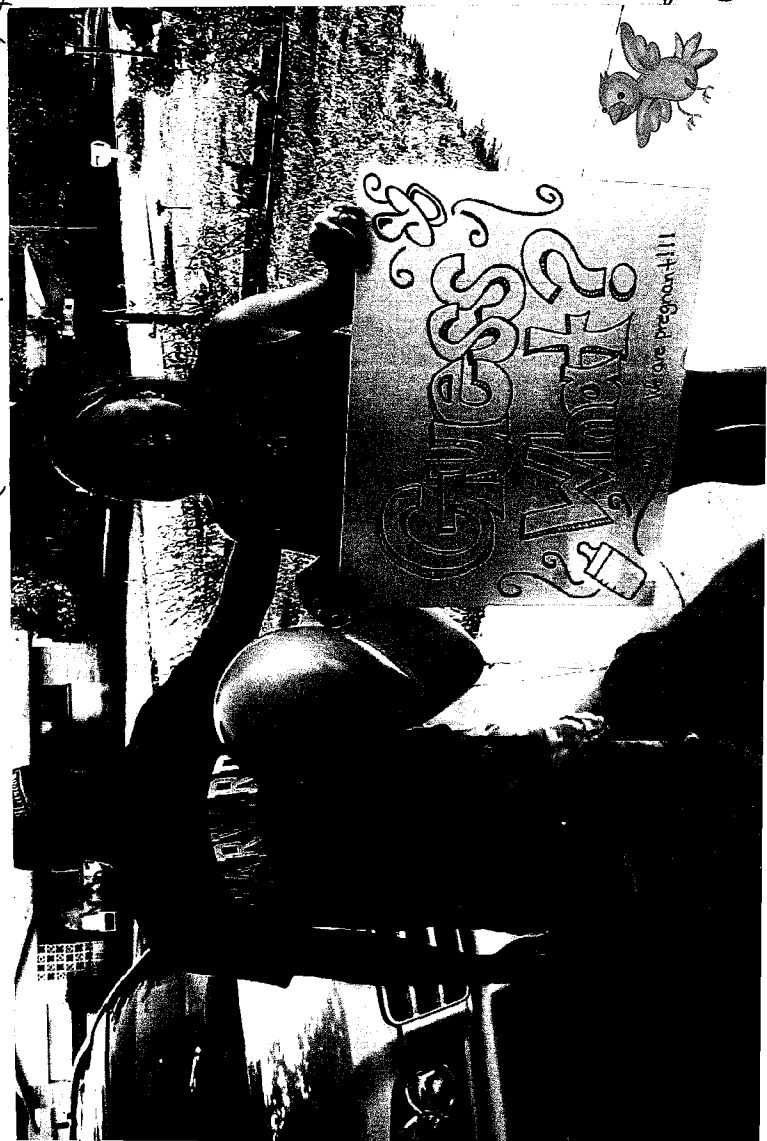
As for my immediate family, everyone's enjoying summer. Joseph is playing lots of baseball, after completing his first year at Kellenberg High School. Terence is preparing for his fall soccer season, and Kira is spending hours and hours on her boogie board at the beach..

Love from all

Dear All — *Joe Clines* SUNDAY August 19, 2007 12:45 PM

I received the RR after 10 days of babysitting my grandson Kai, Braur & Heather had a chance to go to Germany w/ her Aunt, so now I know who Dora the Explorer is, 'Go Diego' & the 'Backyardigans'. Talleen watches a couple of children his age (2) on Tues & Thurs when she's not working for the Doctor, (his grand kids) so they come on over & we had "Maddie's Camp Run a muck & my Care & Repair" I tried to keep him busy so he wouldn't miss mommy & daddy. There were 3 little monkeys jumping on my bed a play dough explosion, Sand Box & Baby Pool, Shave Cream & Whip cream fun ground in. But our most exciting news is of the photo "next door" when June & Stephen announced they expect in early March. I'm so glad as my clock was ticking & ticking (compared to Ronnie's almost 9 in October)! As always & always, my family is

I call them (the Blessed Mother Saint Theresa) are always there to hear our prayers. Love Madeline & Ralph



Dear Family,

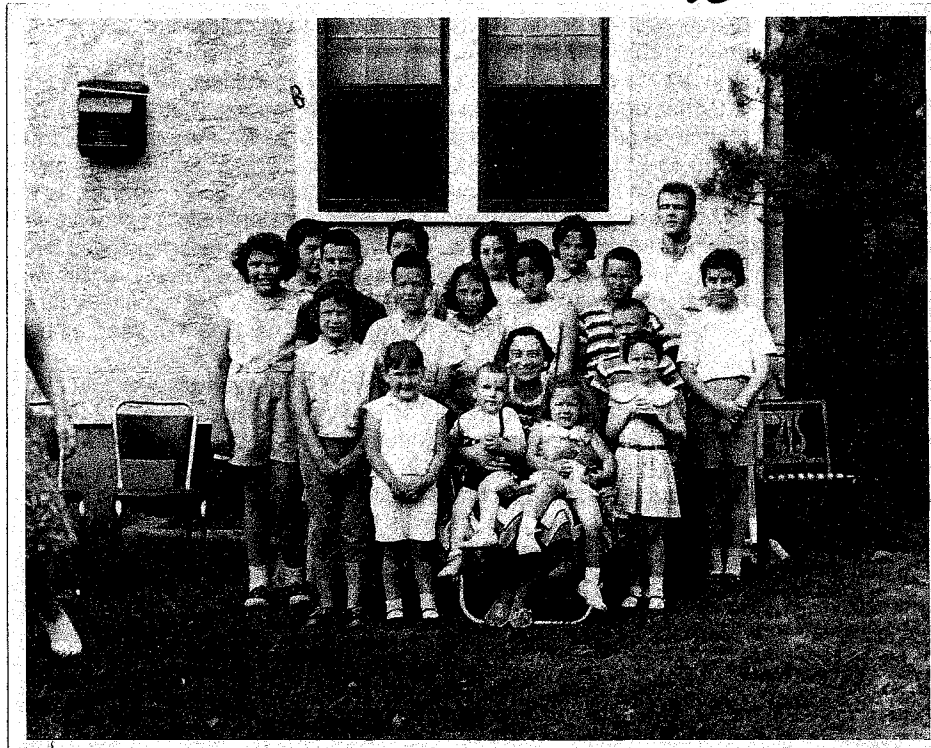
September 5, 2007

I have some updates for Joe's recent entry about the sale of Mom's home and her life in the nursing home. The sale, to the daughter of the family next door, recently was accomplished, and Mom has is back in the nursing home after her recent hospital stay. It's been sad to give up our family home, and we are now dealing with all of the "stuff" that used to be Mom's stuff and is now our stuff, but most importantly, as a family we will be focused on caring for Mom instead of her house. It's been overwhelming as well as fascinating to go through all of the china, crystal, knick-knacks, pictures and letters. Below is an example of one picture that lived in Mom's bedroom for many years. I think this may date from a 50th birthday party for Nana. 1962 looks about right. I'm wondering why I'm half the size of Alan and Joannie.

On the same day as the closing on Mom's house, we dropped my son Brian off for his freshman year at college. He is going to Lafayette College in Easton, PA (near the NJ border). He is interested in math and science, and is going to take an introductory engineering course to see if that would suit him as a major. Emily (15) is starting 10th grade, which is the first grade at our big public High School. She was picked for the field hockey team, and will be extremely busy with that (practices every school day plus weekends, two or three games a week). Colin has just started 6th grade, which is the final grade in his Elementary school, so he will be Big Man on Campus. Joe (Lynch) is going through reorganization at work, and I have been scanning old family photos!

Love to All,

Eileen



September 16, 2007

I am writing this on one of my "get away" weekends at the Pocono house. It is so relaxing to be able to drive out Friday night and spend two days walking the woods, pretending golf (which I rarely do), and swimming in our new indoor pool complex. It helps face another week of frustrations at work. G & S enjoy the pool, but pass on much of the rest of the beauty of the place. The TV here shows the same garbage they would be watching in Yonkers, so they don't care where they are. William likes the outdoors.

Last weekend, we spent most of our time at Sacred Heart. We had the ordination of 3 deacons and 2 priests for the Caps (one of the priests remains here to replace the newly-ordained we had last year, but who was transferred to St Michael's Friary, Brooklyn, for formation work). Then we had Fr. Charles' First Mass on Sunday. It was great to see so many friends and the growth of the Order. There were so many younger friars I never met. One of my classmates is the provincial. We had a little fun at Fr. Charles' expense: on Sat night, under cover of darkness, I stole into the friary parking lot and tied cans and a "Just Ordained" sign on the back of the car he uses. The joke was a real hit with everyone, as they arrived on Sunday for the First Mass.

Happily, Sept 11 was a non-event for New York. (Of course, in VA there was the popping of corks to celebrate the 31 years of marriage for Eric & Danie. Wow!) D had asked me to take the ferry service to NY and avoid all trains, but I just left earlier and came home later. The foul weather kept the crowds down. I saw no police on the trains I took in or home. But the usual semi-automatic wielding riot police were around the area of the Stock Exchange. In the same week, the old Deutsche Bank building caught fire, killing two firemen. The news kept referring to it as the DB building, but in reality, it belongs to the Downtown Development Corp, an arm of the City. Everyone now thinks DB is responsible for the loss of the firefighters, but it was the City's negligence. I would love to get away from the area altogether, but prospects are slim.

Mom did sell her house, so no more worries about that. She is in Chambrel and Monica is in Walter Reed. It seems strange: when I send anything to Mom, I begin writing "3316 Isle . . .", and then realize that is wrong. Unfortunately, Mom's car has been acting up, so she is not able to see Monica as frequently as she (and Monica) would like. Mom is thriving in Chambrel, as she attests in her writings. And Monica is as healthy and active as possible in her new home. A few years ago, I never would have guessed that this is where everyone would be. In retrospect, God has been with us all at all the prior turns in our life, so we believe He is with us and guiding us still . . .

Shannon is starting her sixth year at Montessori School 31. The school district has been shifting the grades covered in the various schools due to the change in City demographics. We had thought that this would be her last year @ 31, which would have led to problems (the Yonkers Middle schools are not as good as the elementary schools). So, we were wondering if we would move her to Sacred Heart Grade School and then let her continue with SHHS. But now, we may be able to let her stay at 31 for the next 3 years. 31 has been a great experience for all 3 kids, which is why we didn't put them into SHGS. I don't think she realizes yet that this means that she loses a "graduation" party, since she will not be changing schools!

She enjoyed her 6 weeks at Camp Rays (Yonkers Day Camp) and Vacation Bible School at a nearby Church. Gillian is enjoying her new status as an upperclassman at SHHS. She will continue with her bowling and the National Honor Society, and with helping us at Children's Liturgy and Religious Ed. She likes to try her hand at cooking, which helps since Mom begins another session of RE on Monday evenings (7 - 8 graders). She continues to excel at Math and loves to draw. If she could find a career that brings those two together, she'd be set for life.

William is the focus of a lot of our attention, as we enter the serious phase of college searches. He is still focusing on computers (whether graphics, science, security or technology). He wants to do game programming, but so as not to put all his eggs in one basket, he is widening his ideas to include all graphics and the Math side at which he excels. So, next weekend, we will be looking at Marist (Poughkeepsie) and SUNY New Paltz, and then sometime at SUNY Binghamton and Oneonta. Syracuse is also an outside possibility. Oddly enough, D's Mercy College has a pretty good program as well. It would be ironic for William to wind up right here. We'll see which one of these suits him. He continues to play his wind controller at the Saturday parish Mass, and also played at the Ordination. He, with the rest of the ensemble, was hired by the Caps to play their fraternity day Mass on Oct 5 @ SH. He is practicing with his soccer team, (they are 0-2 at this writing) and looks forward to indoor track. He hopes to continue these activities in college, so the colleges are being evaluated based on whether he could play on their teams. I believe Boy Scouts will be crowded out of his time this year, as homework is more demanding than ever.

Deanne continues coordinating the program for learning disabilities program at Mercy. She also directs Religious Ed at Sacred Heart. This week began the program. This year, she moved the middle school to Monday evenings (2 year Confirmation prep). So, more time away from the house. She also continues with the parish council and Children's Liturgy. Our pastor, Fr. John Gallagher, has hinted that he would like us to get involved in a Marriage prep program he wants here, but I think this will have to wait until something else clears out. She may have Shannon's Girl Scout troop this year; last year it never got off the ground.

Alan continues at Deutsche Bank. The stress and OT are greater than ever, which is undoubtedly taking its toll. I do work from home most Wednesdays, but that doesn't seem to reduce the tension. In January, I'll have my first stress test since the surgery to see how everything is progressing. That will be in the next round of the RR. I am minimally involved in the Scouts, still doing the Children's Liturgy and the Sunday part of Religious Ed.

Alan, Deanne, Billy, Gillian
& Shannon

Near Family -

Oct 14, 2001 (2-206)

SORRY for the delay in writing - I knew I had time as Tanta Claire was on vacation. In fact I could not write, as I was spending quality time with my new grand-daughter SAOLISE-MARIE (see-lda). Stephanie gave birth on Oct 3 with her second child and Mom + baby are doing well - that's only 4 grandkids for us and I am sure there will be more to come - So much has happened Adrienne and her Irish beau Philip were married Aug 4 and now we have 4 out of 6 married. Marc recently moved to Dublin for a year for his company and it seems our family is spreading out a little too far now. Where all this Irish stuff is coming from I don't know (SAOLISE is a gaelic name - I have an Irish son-in-law and Marc is in Dublin) Robert, now a H.S. senior is looking at colleges and will soon apply and before we know it, the empty nest will be here in Middletown. We are looking to downsize but selling the old house will be a challenge with the way the market is going - (our luck!)

Anyway - all is well here and hope you are all well - Love the pictures - Stay well +
God Bless you all
Maura, Alex + all