

27 Feb 2019

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Hi All,

The news from Lackawack Hill is a mixed bag. Mom continues to decline, she can no longer walk but unfortunately she incessantly tries to get up and has been falling a lot and repeatedly bruising herself. She also seems to have lost function of her left hand, and is constantly slumping forward in her chair. We'd lost all assistance several months ago, hopefully her doctor can reevaluate her soon and order insurance/Medicare to provide help from Always There again. It's been a tough few years for Mom, I suspect she'll have only a brief stay in Purgatory when the time comes, due to time served here on Earth!

As Spring nears (although it doesn't feel like it at the moment) I'm hoping for a better growing season than last year's marginal one. With any luck we should have a decent crop of apples and grapes to press in the fall, and fresh vegetables throughout the season. My dairy farm continues to face tough commercial conditions as well as the uncooperative weather, but we're chugging along regardless. I hope to be able to tighten up on my beef herd management to get that running more smoothly than it has been. We'll see what the warm weather brings...

- Ken



Dear Family,

March 8, 2019

Your baby cousin became a grandma at 49! Isaac Lee was born at 36 weeks on February 4. Praise God Arianna and baby both got through it happy and healthy. I was honored to be present at the birth! The miracle of life was so acute I was smiling through my tears of joy to the point of my cheeks hurting! Arianna is doing an incredible job as a new mom nursing him and plugging through those sleepless nights. He was just under 5.5 lbs. at birth so he's eating a lot to catch up! He's in my arms at this very moment as I type with one hand!

On a sad note, mom has made a precipitous decline as of late. She had been really chugging along up until February 22, the day before my 50<sup>th</sup> birthday. She suddenly became very unsteady on her feet and fell 4 times in one day. Besides patching up her bangs and bruises, we noticed that her left hand wasn't working correctly, sort of just hanging there. Also, she's articulating as best as possible that she's feeling horrible and she's sleeping considerably more than normal. We've made some make-shift modifications of our own (since as of this writing we have absolutely no outside professional help at all) such as pushing a lazy boy chair up against her bed to keep her from falling out. Mom's doctor came for a home visit yesterday afternoon and is trying yet again to get her services through either Always There or Hospice. We'll see...

On yet another sad note, we found out earlier this week that John's mother has pancreatic cancer. She's only 72. With this incredibly disturbing news, we're planning on going down to NC as soon as possible to see how we can help. This year will be a struggle no doubt. Although it is tempting to cry in our soup and feel sorry for ourselves, we have to put our trust in God, push forward and offer our suffering to those who have it much worse than us.

As for the rest of the kids, they're doing fine. Kaylin is working hard up at Cobleskill. She takes her studies seriously, works in the barn, is involved with clubs and even got a job on campus that is a precursor to being an RA. This takes 25% off her dorm fees and pays her \$100 every two weeks...better than nothing and will make it easier to hopefully get an RA position in the fall that will cover 100% of housing fees. Matthew, Mark and Luke continue to stay on honor roll or higher and are also busy in band, sports, altar serving and the usual activities of 14 year old country boys.

John's job at Frost Valley is status quo and up until recently I've managed to sub roughly a half a day per week. We've gotten involved as group facilitators in a 7 week program called Discovering Christ., like we have nothing better to do! It was one of those things that truly *just happened* so we have to believe it was God's will!

I love reading the good news of our beautiful and growing family. We really have to pray that our children keep the faith and stay strong in their foundation. God bless you all!

Love,  
 Terance, John, Arianna, Kaylin  
 Matthew, Mark & Luke

3/23/19

Springtime Greetings to all! Thankfully, we had no extreme winter weather. Now we'll count the days until we get the veggies going. George will start the early crops in April and in May I will get the tomato plants in. I will try to cut back a bit on the 70 plants I put in last year. My best discovery last year was *Black Cherry* tomatoes. The sweetest cherry tomatoes ever! Plant some and see! Otherwise I am still at the Library full-time and George is coaching spring outdoor track. (His meet today features a windchill of 41 degrees!)

Kate was just visiting from Mexico for a Dreher family wedding. On a recent work trip to the Philippines, she met with my Mom's caregiver, Lita. We keep in touch with Lita – she is an honorary member of the Clines family. Ian is still with Tiffany in New Jersey, but edging toward a job search for a new position where he will better use his Customs Brokerage license. We still visit Jersey most weekends to play with Claire (5) and Nate (~3). We help Matt and Carolyn – and have a lot of fun. Claire is starting to read so that adds another layer of activities.

That's the story – busy, simple days. We are grateful for that – especially knowing the many challenges the Christensen family now faces. Welcome Baby Isaac Lee! Prayers for all as Aunt Claire's illness progresses. Prayers for John's family, too. We admire the dedication of the Christensen and Klein families.

Hooray for all May grandparents, retirees, caregivers, farmers, students, professionals, travelers. WE ARE MAY FAMILY! Easter blessings to all -

*Barbara + George*

Hi to all the family from the Carolinas

4/6/19

It is always such a good feeling to hear from the family. It brings back memories of us sitting at tablecloths on the floor at Aunt Anna's at Christmastime with all the adults around us. Skip a generation and we are the ones putting out the tablecloths for our grandchildren. Speaking of which, come this August we will be adding one more (a boy) to our family. This one will make an even dozen for us and also make an even split of 6 boys and 6 girls. How truly BLESSED we are. Augie & I are doing well though he has become almost totally dependent on oxygen from emphysema/COPD. We still continue to watch little August during the week and are trying to prepare ourselves for handling a newborn and 3yr old together. (There is a very good reason why God gives us children when we are younger.) August's newest phrase is "Oh gosh, my back hurts". Not sure if it's something I said or from his other grandparents. Sending our love and prayers to all, especially to those of you acting as caregivers.

*Ronnie + Augie*

4/12/19

Hi Everyone -

The big news from me this winter was that I moved. Not from Milwaukee, or even from my building, but vertically - 2 floors straight up, from Apt. 1118 to 1318. The attraction: A vastly renovated unit, with lots more amenities. The other, bigger impetus: It was just about the easiest way to relocate - and the only way I would ever do it! And I'm quite glad I did.

Otherwise, I had a great visit with niece Kate in Mexico, my swimming regimen has never gone better, baseball is back and sooner or later Milwaukee is bound to have more than one warm day at a time.

All the best to y'all!

Frank

April 16, 2019

Dear Family,

This entry will be shorter than the last several rounds of the letter, as we no longer have of Mom, Danie's father or Monica to add excitement to our lives. In fact, since we no longer are responsible for any family members older than ourselves, life has changed significantly; mostly for the better, but we do miss the frequent exchanges with our lost family members.

The last round of the letter left our home on the day before we departed for a cruise out of Cape Liberty, NJ in October. At the end of that vacation, Alan hosted a memorial Mass for Monica at Sacred Heart in Yonkers on September 22. There were 22 in attendance for the Mass and following luncheon.

This round, the letter arrived one week before we depart for a vacation that includes several days each in San Francisco and Honolulu, before boarding the Ovation Of The Seas that will ultimately take us to Vancouver. The 11-night cruise itinerary has us making several stops around the Hawaiian Islands before heading out across the Pacific for 5 nights with 4100 of our closest friends.

**Danie** has occupied the time she would have been spending with her dad with more quilting pursuits, including actually *finishing* more quilts. She's also began several crochet projects as well. Additionally, she has been attending Toastmasters group meetings at our church, which are being conducted in French. She is doing so for an upcoming trip to visit her cousins in France - more on that in a moment. While Danie was born into a French-speaking home and did not speak *any* English when she went to first grade, she has spoken English ever since - even when her parents spoke to her in French. So now, she's a bit rusty.

**Claudine (39) & Laughton** continue to make their new townhouse theirs. Laughton has finished transforming a room on the lower level into the new "Nuckolhead Pub," while Claudine has free reign over the rest of the house. Just three weeks ago, we were surprised during a visit to meet Hermione Weasley's new brother; another Cavalier King Charles Spaniel named Albus Severus. The hope is that the two puppies will entertain each other on work days.

**Chris (41) & Kristy** celebrated the 'burning of the mortgage' on their condo in October. Chris purchased the condo in May 2006, before the real estate crash. They looked into refinancing several times, but the then-current value of the condo made it difficult. So they knuckled down and made it a priority to pay down the mortgage principle. The plan came to fruition in September, with their final payment. Now they're looking for ways to spend the increased available cash each month, although most is being put aside for their retirement.

They approached us about going with them on a vacation trip to Chicago in June. While plans are still in progress, they are looking to keep the vacation to five days, so they will fly. Since we have time, we're going to drive. We'll likely pick them up, and drop them off at the airport on both ends of their stay, and do our own thing in the days before and after to stretch the vacay to two weeks.

**Me:** I continue to run the monthly breakfast for retirees from the Nuclear Engineering Department at Dominion. The list of retirees has grown to 91 people and average attendance has grown to 28-36 people. Yet another early retirement package has been announced, that I suspect will significantly add to those numbers. I continue to be active with the Funeral Reception Ministry at St. Michael's, and the first chapter of the St. Vincent de Paul Society in central Virginia (growing rapidly, I might add). I'm still doing newsletters, maintaining the web sites, and the electronic sign outside the Council home for the K of C, and recently took over the coordination of the quarterly blood drives at St. Michael. Oh, yeah, and I plan vacations!

I had an interesting month of March that began with a trip to the emergency room because of symptoms that I thought

might be associated with a mild heart attack. (In retrospect, much of the pain was skeletal-muscular, from raking leaves for the first time this year. And I'm sure that ingesting mold and other nasty stuff kicked during the raking and blowing the leaves didn't help). After negative test results, I was sent home with directions to see my doctor. My doc upped my BP med and seemed satisfied with that. I asked if it would be smart to see a Cardiologist, and, given the health history of our loving family, she agreed. The Cardiologist reviewed my health history and didn't seem too fazed, but when we discussed the family, she agreed that a nuclear stress test was in order. I completed the test (studied all night! - ha!) and, while the techs are forbidden to draw any conclusions, they gave me two thumbs up after reviewing the results sufficiently to assure themselves that I would not have a heart attack on the way out the door. I was feeling great until I received a call from the Cardiologist two hours later and was told that there was a suspicious indication of poor flow in a portion of my heart. A heart catheterization was scheduled for the next week. At this point, I was expecting at least some angioplasty, but more likely a stent. However, I was surprised after the procedure, to find out that no intervention was necessary. I was (am) good to go. The Cardiologist later conceded that the stress test results really weren't bad, but they were focused on family history.

The 2000 Ford Focus has finally found a new owner; a young man who is in the Boys to Men program at St. Michael's. He was the first person identified who both needed a car, and was able to handle a manual transmission. I like my new car, but I sure miss the fun-to-drive aspect of that one!

**Getaways:** As mentioned, we made our planned 10-night "Northbound Fall Foliage" cruise out of Cape Liberty, NJ to Quebec in September. Ed & Janet Ebert met us in Quebec, and provided transportation back to CT (a rental got us back to our car in NJ). In October, we spent a week in Naples, FL with our friends from Williamsburg (this was the trip we re-scheduled from February, when Poppi was taken to the hospital). We had intended to stop on the way back to see Madeline and Ralph, but they were out of the state when we were there. We booked the aforementioned ship relocation cruise from Hawaii to Vancouver for May, the aforementioned trip to Chicago for June, a combination road trip/cruise in FL in September (try again to see Madeline) and a Rhine River cruise in November. Since being sold on the river cruise by the Eberts (took a lot of arm twisting), Danie had been pushing to make a stop in France, either while coming or going, to see some of her cousins. However, the river cruise is a complete vacation package (including airfare) and changes to the itinerary would be difficult and costly. Therefore, it was decided that we will make a separate trip in August to southern France (Toulouse / Bordeaux), where we'll stay with Danie's cousins who will act as a guides through the region where her mother was raised.

Eric & Danie

Dear Family,

4/30

Very busy in New Hyde Park over the last few months. Our second oldest cat died over the winter, so we are down to one pet, Boo, a 6 year old cat.

Nicole is still teaching Art and has closer to full-time hours as a consultant for NYC schools. She and Matthew share an apartment in Ridgewood, Queens.

Megan has been working for Core Life restaurant and has now been promoted to Manager after being Asst. Manager for a year. She is at a new location in Garden City, about 5 miles from the house. Her and her boyfriend just moved in together to their first apartment, now living in Kew Gardens. Bryan is a nice kid and they've been together a little over a year.

Billy is graduating Stony Brook with a Doctorate in Physical Therapy. He will be doing Kids therapy with a job already lined up for September. Bill has been dating Emily for 6+ years and they are solid.

Tim graduates Buffalo with his Bachelors, so we will have a combined party in June. He will have a degree in Engineering and has some job

prospects lined up. He's been dating Valeria almost 4 years and time will tell as they both graduate and start "adult life".

June is finishing her 24<sup>th</sup> year teaching, so retirement will be any where from 1-3 or 4 years from now. She loves the kids but is growing weary of the BS.

I'm going on 3 years at Montefiore -- and also looking at 1-2 years to hang it up. Working for a living gets real tiring!!

June's Mom and Aunt Claire are both degrading in health, but seem to have a constitution that keeps them going like the energizer bunny!

No trips planned as we wait for the next "Mom Health Crisis".

Love to All!  
Steve and Family

5/14/2019

Hi to all!

The RR was held up at our house an extra week, as it arrived while Bill & I were in Paris for a short trip - an early celebration of our 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary! I had lived there for a year, but that was 42 years ago (!!), and Bill had never been there. Of course our joke was that Notre Dame Cathedral had stood there for 800 years - but it couldn't have waited another 2 weeks till we got there!! We still have many photos of it, but all from outside, & across the Seine from its empty plaza.

Our big news since the last RR is that Kristen got engaged to Josh at the end of January. He teaches social studies in the same middle school where she teaches math, and they already have the "venue" booked for May 30, 2020, up in Westchester County. That date worked out well for them, as it's the Saturday after Memorial Day - thereby allowing them to take a day or two off around the wedding (something that's not allowed on a holiday weekend). But it also meant something special to Kristen, as it was my mother (Aunt Helen)'s birthday. With Michelle as a "bridesmaid" & Danny as a "groomsmen", we're all going to have a very busy year!

Our other happy news is that Danny is now all settled into a great apartment in South Orange, NJ, and working for the Prudential Corp. in their cyber-security division. He is so happy to be back up where his family & friends are after two years in West Melbourne, FL. And we're so happy to have him nearby! Although it wasn't planned as such, he wound up living quite close to Barbara's son Matt & his family, so often on a Sunday afternoon he'll walk over there to play with the kids & see everyone, including Barbara, George & often Ian. (And to have some of Carolyn's good cooking!) For the 1<sup>st</sup> time in 42 years, there's no "Zinkel" at Grumman! So we're feeling very blessed, with all our good news. We do have some increasing responsibilities with Bill's parents (ages 90 & 92), but so far they're still living on their own in Queens. Our prayers for all the caregivers - especially Lorraine, who has a very large part of the responsibility for the oldest & youngest members of our wonderful family!! Love, Bernadette, Bill & family

6/20/19

Dear Family..

Greetings on the eve of the summer solstice! It's been raining here in New York for about five months straight. But brighter weather is promised.

2019 is another busy year for us. Here at CBS News, we are going through another slow-motion anchor change—the second in a year and a half. A new management team is coming in, and I am assured they have all the answers, though I seem to recall the last team had all the answers, before they were fired.

I have two years and change left on my contract and I will reassess my future when that time is up. Maybe working part-time wouldn't be so bad! Mary Jo intends to teach full-time for about three more years. So we may be looking at the next chapter around the same time.

The kids are all doing well. Joseph just moved into an apartment in Williamsburg (Brooklyn, not Virginia) with a marvelous rooftop that provides a spectacular view of the city.

Terence has graduated from Notre Dame and is doing work in data management.

Kira is doing temp work and freelance animation. She created a wonderful video for some friends of ours who have a band.

Hope everyone else is doing well..



6/24/19

Dear Family,

Since I don't have my own family, I sometimes feel like an anthropologist learning about my housemates, web design clients, running club members and many business friends. Record "housemate" turnover this year allows me to briefly become part of peoples' lives. Stable for past few months and my latest roommate volunteered to pay more rent than I ask so she can "round it up." ☺ I continue to build websites for anyone who needs one and recent clients include landscapers, contractors, consultants, salons, restaurants, a church, vanilla seller and a Jamaican guest house.

I drive 220 miles to the Farm each 3 weeks for quality time with Mom, baby Isaac, and anyone else who drops in to the bossy Klein household. And I get to enjoy beers with my brothers, especially while working outdoors.

Had a spot of skin cancer removed. Now a 6 gallon blood donor. Continue to become more involved with my Knights of Columbus council. (Fish Fry, Carnival Parking, Car Show) - now they made me Treasurer.

Every one have a super Summer! I pray for strength and patience for each of us on this crazy path called "life".

Love,  
Ray

July 10, 2019

Dear Family

Ralph & I attended our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Mass held in the Cathedral of St. Peter in St Petersburg around Valentines Day even though our actual anniversary isn't till November. There was a couple there celebrating their 76<sup>th</sup>! But we are 6 months behind Connie & Augie who celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> in May.

Congratulations on the new babies, engagements & graduations  
So wonderful. too

Ralph & I celebrated the 4<sup>th</sup> of July w/ Braud's family & in-laws & Talceen's family & in-laws (Jannae had to work the next day so she couldn't make it) Well, you'd think by 74 I'd know how much food to prepare - Not yet! A mile way too much & had to have my neighbors help us finish it all. Ralph's new grill turned out 6 racks of ribs. We had chicken skirt - kabab, burgers, hot dogs, pulled pork, rigatoni & beef, deviled eggs, asian slaw, potato salad, cucumber salad, kale salad, corn bread cheese tray, credits, chips dips & forgot to serve the Baked Beans. Don't get me started on the desserts. I'm watching too many food cooking shows!!! We enjoyed fire works at the beach. It was fabulous.

We're planning to meet up w/ Braud's family in mid-July in NC then Jannae & Eddy the following week. Our kids all go back to school the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of August.

Hope to see Danny & Eric in Sept.  
Love to all especially my Aunt Claire & children.  
Mabeline & Ralph.



Dear Family

20 July 2019

We received this letter about a week ago, and I thought, I have nothing to talk about, except for the terrible heat wave we're having now, which I do not want to talk about. Then my daughter Emily called to report that she is engaged! She has been dating Andrew for about five years now, and we've been expecting this news. He fits in well with our family, and has also met a lot of the extended family in NY and MD. We are delighted for them!

Otherwise, nothing has changed here. Joe and I are still doing volunteering. Joe still spends one day a week with his mother in Baltimore. Emily is still an ICU nurse in Boston. Brian has made a lateral change at work, but is at the same company he's been with for a while (ACTS retirement communities). Colin is starting his second and last year at the NIH in Bethesda and is working on applications for graduate school in Chemistry for the following year.

I have taken one trip so far this summer. In May, Colin and I joined Barbara for a visit to her daughter Kate in Mexico. Kate is a very good tour guide and is fluent in Spanish to boot! We saw Texcoco, where she lives and works at an agricultural research center, and Mexico City which has neat museums and gardens and Aztec ruins in the middle of the city. Next on the agenda is a trip in August to visit Toronto with Emily. She was stranded there for a day in the winter when a connecting flight was cancelled, and everyone was so friendly that she wants to go back and see the city!

Love to all,

Ellen

28 July, 2019

This May family has survived the heat of the summer so far. We've gotten away to the Poconos a few times, and will go again Aug 10 – 18. Otherwise, it has been the daily hassle to and from work, made worse by storms. But we are surviving.

It is sad to hear of people (esp Aunt Claire) in the family failing, and others thrust into the role of caregiver. We had that role with Deanne's Mom. Eric had it with Mom, Monica and Mr LeBris. I have been regularly visiting one declining Capuchin priest, and now have visited with two others and taken them out to breakfast. These simple acts are greatly appreciated. They also reveal to a degree the psychological dimension of sickness and no longer being able to function as you did before. It seems God blesses those who take care of others: it is the essence of Love.

**Will** is still doing well at Jump Ramp Games. JR was taken over by another entity, but it Will is not worried about layoffs or other disruptions. Lucktastic, their main asset, will become part of a larger portfolio of games, just after Jump Ramp had begun expanding on its own. I have to admit I don't understand how all these games-of-chance business models work, but theirs does seem to work. Will joined the board at his Coop, though he will get involved slowly. We finished his apartment, though there are tweaks needed (paint, polish, etc.) Alysha is here this weekend. They have not yet gotten engaged, but that is just a matter of time. This is still complicated by Alysha's remaining work on her PhD. Then we'll see where her career brings her.

**Gillian** just finished week 3 of 4 at Destination Science, a summer science camp. She is the site director for the camp in White Plains this year. It is a good experience in her chosen field – early learning. She finished her Masters in Education in May. Time and again at her ceremonies, it was pointed out that this is the last graduation from the College of New Rochelle. This is due to the former Controller, who pleaded guilty to charges of securities fraud and not paying payroll taxes for years. The college could not climb out of the hole he dug them into. Sad, especially for the 800+ employees, but at least G finished and was not disrupted in her degree as so many others are. (CNR entered an arrangement with Mercy College whereby Mercy will make it easier for students to transfer there without losing time or credits. Some

faculty and admins will move to Mercy as well.) Shortly, G will be certified as a teacher, and can decide her career path. For this year, she will return to Sacred Heart in their Pre-K programs.

**Shannon** is doing well at Magnificat. She went to Anaheim California March 21-24 for a Religious Education congress at which Magnificat was displaying its products. It was her first flight and trip without someone from the family. Since she was the only woman, she had her own room – excuse me, *suite*. She hopes she will be invited to other such events in the future. It was a lot of work, but a great experience for her. She didn't get to visit Mickey & Co, but did walk around the outside of his place.

**Deanne** has had an interesting year so far at work. Fr. Matt, the pastor, informed us in January that he was planning to leave the priesthood. He announced it to the parish and left in May. Obviously, this caused a bit of upset to the parish, but more so for D who had to deal with the transition and "covering" both before and after. Our new pastor is also the Vicar Provincial for the Caps and becomes the head of the High School. (BTW, you might be able to guess the last priest to announce he was leaving the priesthood from Sacred Heart.) Somewhat helping the situation was the ordination of a friend to the permanent diaconate for our parish. He has taken on some of the load that Matt leaves behind. Otherwise, D is enjoying the respite from Religious Ed and other school year activities.

I am still struggling with keeping St Mary's parish from further debt. This is hopeless, since two of the three air conditioning units at the Church failed in the summer heat. One is being replaced as I write this – we'll see about the other. The third is held together by paper clips and bubble gum, so it should quit any day now, since it is doing the work of all three. The boiler also has a compromised feeder system- water is getting into the feed, though it is not in the tank itself. We still have to excavate the tank to see where the problem is and how to fix it. The pastor is no closer to walking after his knee replacement. I believe he is not trying as he should. He does therapy, but not the exercises in between sessions. He had lost a lot of weight, but is now regaining it. I spoke with a bishop visiting Sacred Heart, and he remarked that the pastor should retire. Good to hear that they believe so. We'll see how that goes. The closed Church still gives us issues, and we have not officially heard that all appeals to keep it from being profaned have run their course. So, we cannot begin to sell it and have to maintain it. I have also been watching the news on Deutsche Bank. It plans to let 18,000 workers go, mainly in the US. I spoke with several friends and they all still have jobs, for now. It is a dismal place by all accounts.

with love, Alan, Deanne, Will, Gillian & Shannon

8-8-19

Dear Family

Hi! Hello all from N. J.! Happy Birthday Ronnie!  
I still have not decided to retire yet, as I enjoy my P.T. work @ Little Silver Medicine. My children are doing well with new employment. In fact my youngest Robert is presently residing in Singapore for 3 yrs. with an awesome job opportunity heading an office for his company. Still traveling mainly to see the grands as they are at a distance. Will keep dear Tasha Claire in my prayers and you too Laraine Will write more later - wanna get this RR off before the 1 week deadline  
Love you all Maria