

Dear Family,

August 27, 2019

This month marks the third anniversary of mom living with us here at 135 Lackawack! First, I want to thank you all for your continued prayers. They *must* be working because otherwise I have no idea how I would be surviving! As you already know, caring for someone with Alzheimer's is extremely wearing, especially when it's someone you love dearly and already miss considerably. It hurts twice as much to drag out the mourning and continue to be reminded day in and day out of the shell of a woman mom once was...brilliant, energetic, helpful, kind and capable, just to name a few! It takes a toll on our whole family, spiritually (why God?), emotionally, physically and logistically. No matter what I do with an already incredibly busy family, I ALWAYS need to make sure mom is not alone! I have a nice lady, Barbara, who lives up the road that sits with mom during the day when everybody in the family is busy, but besides that it's ALL on me, John, the kids and to a certain degree, Ray, Steve and Ken.

Mom's health is incredibly good besides having advanced Alzheimer's mentally. After the precipitous decline in February where she can no longer walk, her health has been completely flat. Most of the time she doesn't know where she is or who we are. Surprisingly, (or maybe it shouldn't really be a surprise at all) she knows Jesus and says her prayers along with EWTN. She also receives Communion every Friday from one of our awesome priests, and she KNOWS it's Jesus! Besides the brain being gone, her vitals are fabulous! We all wish we were so healthy!!! All that good living - exercise, eating well, staying slim, never smoking or drinking (besides that 6 oz. glass of wine while making dinner), have kept her body strong...TOO STRONG!

As for everyone else, besides the blessing of Isaac (almost 7 months) being born on February 4th, 2019 has been a pretty rough year! John is slowly recovering from Lyme disease which hit him hard in mid-July and completely destroyed our tiny little getaway that we had planned for our 25th anniversary! Really? We just can't seem to catch a break anywhere! We've also been down to North Carolina twice, but neither for fun. The first week was in March to help John's mom who had been recently diagnosed with Pancreatic Cancer, and his Dad who needed a valve replacement in his heart. The second week was in May to bury my mother in law. She lived less than 3 months from diagnosis to grave and was only 72 years old. You can imagine the shock and heartbreak! John's parents were *just* up here for Christmas and Arianna's baby shower in early January, when my mother in law cooked a turkey and made five pounds of macaroni and potato salad!

We also lost 2 pets, our cat Mittens and beloved Labradoodle Bree who was almost 14! Both thankfully, died basically in their sleep which at least saved us the agony of that horrible decision of when to bring them to the vet to be put down.

Finally, some good news! Arianna (21) got a new job that she will be starting shortly, still in the healthcare field, but a set 8 to 4, Monday - Friday schedule, which should be much better for raising Isaac, and better for me who babysits him! At least I will have a somewhat set schedule too!

Kaylin (18) is back at Cobleskill. Classes started Monday and her workload is heavy - Biology, Chemistry, Physics and even an English class just to create a little balance.

Matthew, Mark and Luke (14) are now officially in HS! They had a busy summer between working on the farm, making some extra money processing and stacking firewood for neighbors and taking Junior Lifeguarding at our local pool. School starts on September 5th, but they're already involved in fall sports, Matthew and Mark on Varsity Soccer and Luke on the Cross Country team.

As for me, well, I continue to take care of everyone and run myself ragged! Therefore, again I want to thank you for your prayers because I really need them! God bless you all ^{and} praise God for all the *mostly* wonderful news of our awesome family!

Love, Lorraine, John, Arianna, Kaylin, Matthew, Mark, Luke & Isaac

Hi All,
Except for a bear breaking into the garden and destroying my sweet corn it's been an uneventful summer. I'm staying busy with the usual mix of gardening, woods work, and helping out with mom. Yesterday we artificially inseminated

the eligible cows in my beef herd so in 9 months I'll find out how successful we were. Other than driving out to my place in NY for a few weeks in late September I'm figuring to stay pretty local in upstate NY getting ready for winter.
Peace to all, Ken

2-382

Greetings, all. Always good to hear about our May family and be mindful of the good we enjoy and the challenges that we face. Hooray for grandchildren! Impressive travels reported, too!

Autumn is close by ... and we will bid adieu to our homegrown tomatoes. We had a good season – but George was even more successful with his cucumbers, including a rogue store-bought plant that turned out to be a “lemon cucumber”. Yes – google that and see what grew in abundance in our garden. Next year I’ll cut back from 60 to 50 plants and hopefully avoid some arthritis in my right hand from all the pruning and tying up I had to do. (Cherry tomato plants can grow 6+ feet tall!) Summer went quickly. One short trip to visit Massachusetts friends. Many Sundays with the grandkids; George helped take them to the local pool for long visits. Claire is a mermaid – staying in the water until she turns blue. (BTW – ask Frank about being a merman!)

We will take a September trip to the Vermont/Lake Champlain wilds to share a house with friends. Claire (5) just started kindergarten. WOW – too fast! Nate is 3 and a little boy now with his own ideas of adventure that Grandpa indulges with short train trips and creek “explores”.

Meanwhile I still work full-time and contemplate retirement a little more. George still has a few months “off” until track starts in November. In late May Eileen, Colin and I tripped to Mexico City. Kate was a great guide and we saw the Pyramids of Teotihuacan, and varied Mexico City sites from an Aztec temple to the house where the film *Roma* was made. Kate is a great tour guide, so if you want to see Mexico City, look her up! She continues to work for CIMMYT in Mexico. Ian still works for Tiffany in Parsipanny. So - no big changes with the Drehers, but that’s ok. We count our blessings and remember all who face life’s struggles – especially Aunt Claire, the Christensens and the Kleins.

Enjoy Autumn and all its pleasures. Can’t beat the weather. We’ve had an over-abundance of black walnuts and acorns ... does that bode for a serious winter??? Time will tell. Be well! Be graced!

Barbara

To ALL my dear family,

Sept 23, 2019

Happy Autumn!!! Though we are expecting temps in the 90s this week, the cooler weather has to start sooner or later. As Madeline mentioned, we celebrated our 50th wedding anniversary in May. We never imagined on our wedding day that we would get to this point. We look back now and wonder where all the time has gone. But then again, our oldest, Andy just celebrated his 23rd anniversary!

We welcomed grandchild #12, Bruce Henry, to the family on 8/16 and we are currently on "maternity" leave. His big brother August turned 3 on 8/2 and we will continue to watch them once mommy goes back to work. It takes a lot out of us at this point in life but we wouldn't trade it for anything since they bring so much sunshine and smiles into the house. (But I do understand why God cuts off those childbearing years at a certain point.)

My girls came up with a "girls' weekend" plan so on Oct 3 Patti, Karen & I are going to FL for a weekend with Madeline, Taleen & Janna. Something I am looking forward to. :)

Love and prayers to all,

Rosie & Augie

P.S. Soooo Frank, what's with the merman???

Well, see, there are these tails - not quite rubber, but real flexible fabric that you can roll up over your waist, with your feet anchored in the flipper. Lots of cool colors, too! One of the lifeguards at our summer pool has a bunch, and they make for a great workout - you can only kick like Flipper, and it really tests those abs on a soon-to-be septuagenarian... 9/28

But alas, the merman days are done for now. Marquette U has an implicit no-tail policy. So it's on to the always cheery Milwaukee winter and trips back east in October and Christmastime.

All the best,

Frank

October 5, 2019

Dear Family,

For those who were waiting, it seems that Fall has just arrived! With temps in the high 90's for the past week, yesterday's high was 83, and the forecast is for highs in the low-to-mid 70s for the foreseeable future!



Eric, Frank and the "Bronze Fonz"

2019 has been a year filled with travels, as the release from the responsibility of caring for older family members caused us to take advantage of our newly found freedom. (*There is hope for those going through what we went through!*) The last round of the letter arrived one week before we departed for our 19-day trip to San Francisco / Hawaii and cruise to Vancouver at the end of April through mid-May. That trip was followed in June by a 12-day road trip we took to meet up with Chris & Kristy in Chicago for a few days. After our meet-up, we drove up to Milwaukee, where **Frank** tried desperately to show us how vibrant the city he calls home is. Unfortunately, the cold & misty day kept everyone inside, which did not help him in making his point. We'll defer to his judgment. 😊

After spending July at home, we were off again in August for a 2-week trip to France, where we visited with Danie's relatives, who she has not seen in *many* years. Our hosts, Danie's cousin & his wife, who live in Toulouse and have a home in Aulus-les-Bains in the foothills of the Pyrenees Mtns., were incredibly warm and welcoming! And what a cook her cousin's wife was! A primary reason for the timing of the trip was for Danie to visit her 92 year old, only surviving aunt (mother's side). Danie was concerned that her aunt was sounding very frail during previous phone conversations, so she wanted



to, and did, have several long face-to-face conversations with her. Danie also made her a quilt that she presented at our first meeting. Sadly, as Danie feared, her aunt passed away just two months after



our visit.

Next came a 19-day road trip to Florida that had us dodging hurricane Dorian on the way. We took a 4-night cruise out of Port Canaveral for our 43rd anniversary which included a non-scheduled humanitarian stop in Freeport, Bahamas to drop off 10,000 meals and transport 373 hurricane victims to Nassau. After the cruise, and a 3-night stay at Universal Studios, we traveled to Tampa to visit **Madeline & Ralph**, and my cousin on my mother's side, **Lori & Ted Russell**. We had wonderful visits with them! On the way back, we stopped in Charleston for 3 nights and visited two of Danie's cousins in nearby Mount Pleasant.



Before the ship ever left port for our cruise, we had already booked the next two cruises: a 10-night Canadian cruise out of Montreal in September 2020, and a 7-night southern Caribbean cruise out of San Juan, PR in February 2021.

Next up is a Rhine River cruise in November. Then we'll have to start working on plans for additional adventures in 2020!

Danie is now an official Medicare card carrier (yes, they've started giving them out to 39-year-olds). This year, she has been completing many quilts, including three that she presented to her cousins and aunt in France.



Claudine (39) & Laughton just celebrated their 10th wedding anniversary (!) and continue to do well. They have learned, like most parents, that having two babies (in their case, fur babies) is not 1½ times the amount of work, but, in fact, more like 2½ times the work. Hermione and Albus keep them on their toes!

Chris (42) & Kristy joined us on a trip to Chicago in June. We drove and they flew and stayed in town for three nights. Chris is becoming a master at using the Python computer language, has started a users' group in Richmond, and is working on a book of tips and tricks for Python users.

Me: I continue to run the monthly breakfast for retirees from the Nuclear Engineering Department at Dominion. The list of retirees has grown to 108 people and average attendance has grown to 30-38 people as we're still picking up retirees from another retirement package. I continue to be active with the Funeral Reception Ministry and as the Blood Drive Coordinator at St. Michael's, and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. I'm still doing newsletters, maintaining the web sites, and the electronic sign outside the Council home for the K of C. According to the American

Red Cross, I've donated 440 units of blood products (currently donating platelets at least monthly).

I've had no repeat of the false alarm related to my heart & health. I had a Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP) machine that I received over 20 years ago, after a sleep study. Shortly after receiving it, I lost some weight, and the need for the machine diminished. Lately, however, Danie hinted that I should consider using the machine again. I did, and it made a big difference. However, the 20-year old mask was not as pliable as it should be and air was leaking out around the seal (and into my eye). There's no way to get supplies for these machines without a prescription, so I had another sleep study, and received a new, modern CPAP machine. Now I'm sleeping like a baby!

Eric & Danie

Dear Family,

October 24, 2019

Amazingly June's Mom and Aunt Claire are both pretty much the same as six months ago, and not far from the way they were a year ago. Between cancer meds for June's Mom and Aunt Claire's spirit...they keep on chugging like the energizer bunny. That said, quality of life is extremely poor and they're both in pretty sad situations.

June and I are well, while our lives seem on hold. June is in her 25th year teaching and is thinking about staying a few years longer. I'm still Managing the Service Desk at Montefiore, but I am seeing retirement much sooner....getting a bit tires of the long days and corporate BS. Really looking forward to a new stage in life now that the kids are pretty self-sufficient.

Tim is the youngest and now with an Engineering degree he's looking for the perfect job. Of course that's not reality, so he's gone through 2 very temporary spots as he keeps looking for something more fitting. A few good prospects in the works now. Megan turned 24 and is making a career change after 2 years managing a restaurant. She's getting into the insurance business. Bill has his Physical Therapy doctorate and is working locally at Kids Therapy, and doing 2 days in Long Island schools. He's busy paying off student loans and is thinking about his own apartment in about a year. Nicole just turned 26 and is still teaching Art, living with Matthew in Brooklyn and making wine and cider on weekends.

Love to all.... Steve and Family

11/5/19

Dear Family,

We were happy to hear everyone's good news, and are grateful that, in general, our immediate family is doing well. Unfortunately we have to say that for us 2019 had "the summer that wasn't"! Bill's father went into the hospital (LIS) on July 2nd for pain in his lower back that prevented his walking; usually LIS has a good reputation, but they completely dropped the ball this time! They were understaffed because of the holiday, and those workers who were there, were mostly newly-graduated. Now we know that he was 89, but he had no complaints except pain when he entered the hospital, & within days he had serious UTI's that caused kidney damage, aspirational pneumonia & had lost major cognitive functioning. Bill & his brother fought for their father all summer, but after many slight "ups" & major "downs" & after the poor man went from hospital to nursing home, to another hospital, to hospice, he lost the fight on Labor Day weekend. So, needless to say, we did not do anything much over the summer, and we are still trying to work out a good situation for Bill's 91-year old mother.

[The pain was from a "compression fracture" of the spine - treatable if diagnosed correctly!!!]

On the happier side, plans are moving along very well for Kristen & Josh's wedding on May 30th of next year. And we are so relieved that my brother Joe is doing well after a recent health scare - he's almost the next one on the RR list, so I'll let him tell you all his story. Best wishes to all for happy, healthy holidays!!

Love, Bernadette, Bill & family

11/15/19

Dear Family,

Nothing much to write about here. All is well at the convent and the family. I want to get this out so...
Have a Blessed Christmas and New Year - God Bless, Theresa



Sorry! The letter got caught in
Bernadette pumpkin painting!

12/17/19

Dear Family..

For once, I have some real news to deliver. In late October, I suffered a heart attack (mild to moderate, according to the cardiologist.) I was out running when I felt a pain in the chest unlike any I had felt before. And it wouldn't go away. So I staggered home—a mile away, and did the only logical thing: I tried to take a nap. When that didn't work, I finally decided the hospital was the place to go.

Mary Jo drove me—very quickly, I might add—to Mercy Hospital. My ekg was fine.. Pulse fine. They actually wanted to send me home. But Mary Jo all but demanded they catheterization—and so I was transferred to St. Francis.

Turns out, the right coronary artery was completely blocked. The left anterior descending and the circumflex were partially blocked. Two days, and four stents later, I was back home, pondering a life without red meat, snickers bars and with very little beer.

I was fortunate, in that 45 years of running probably helped me function as well as I did with all that blockage...

But I want to echo—and amplify—a warning Alan May gave us all a few years back. Our family history amounts to a time bomb. We tend to have bad hearts. And we need to be checked regularly. Obviously, angiograms may not be possible in all cases, but echocardiograms and stress tests should be part of our regular checkups. Please monitor your cholesterol, blood pressure and sugar levels.

I don't mean to be a nag, but you cannot beat family history.

I hope everyone has a great Christmas season—and a great 2020.

Joe Clines

Dear Family,

12/21/19

My last entry was at Summer Solstice and now it's Winter Solstice. Wow! Praise God for summer and winter, pain and joy!

My earth-shaking news: I recently shaved off my mustache for first time since college graduation day 6/20/03. So yeah, not much is new :) Thanks Dr. Joe Clines for your medical advice above. The VA is taking good care of me (for past 3 yrs) and I even got a flu shot for first time in 12 yrs. I also had a new roof put on my house.

As Lorraine repeated, Mom's condition never improves — but the silver lining is that she keeps our family working together and in closer touch than if she were well or not with us. The Lord works in mysterious ways. I recently created a couple YouTube videos of my parents' old slides, including NYC World's Fair and even before they were married!

Some car troubles made things interesting for me but all is good.

Merry Christmas. Ho! Ho! Ho!

Rg

2020

2-388
Jan 10, 2020

Happy New Year ~

Congratulations on the engagement of Emily & Andrew
It's always a happy time for family.

But when I read Lorraine's letter I shed a few
tears. I remember how difficult it was w/ Ralph's
mom who died at 95, but when you add
Alzheimers & keeping Aunt Claire at home, well, I
for one will add more prayers for you all.

Then to hear of Joe's heart attack - when
my dad died at 59 over 50 years ago from
a massive heart attack, they know so much
more today - when I filled out my paper
work years ago for my new Dr. He commented
on my family history, after two stents myself
& Ronnie's heart attack at 39 yrs old, the
only way to deal with it for me is that it's all
written down in God's book & all we can do is the
best we can.

When Ronnie & the girls came here for a visit we
were able to live stream the funeral of our
nephew Jim Krause (Alicia's oldest son). It was
so good for us to all be together even though
we cried the whole time. It was a beautiful service
He died in a bike accident while riding for a
Charity event - his tire caught on a roadway
marker in Arkansas & fell off a steep cliff to
his death. He was so well-loved by fellow
riders & his church group. He was the president
of the bike club "River Valley Cycling Club"

Ralph & I celebrated our 50th Anniversary & the
kids sent us (& them) to "Gaylord Palms Resort"
in Orlando for a weekend. It was the most wonderful
time for all. Love Madeline & Ralph

PS. Please note: RE Davis Photo - I look better in person! HA!

02/02/2020

Dear Family,

Palindrome Day

There isn't very much news from our family. Everyone is living in the same place, working and volunteering at the same places. The summer and the fall will bring some changes. My youngest, Colin, has applied to graduate schools for Chemistry and will be visiting several schools in the coming weeks. He will start school somewhere in the fall semester. By that time, we will be deep into preparations for Emily's wedding, which will be November 14th of 2020. Emily and Andrew considered lots of locations for the wedding. They have family and friends throughout the country, with concentrations in Boston, New York, Philly and Baltimore. They were investigating places in the Philly area, but none fit the bill, then they fell in love with a venue in Carlisle PA, just west of Harrisburg. It is two hours away from us, and many hours away from the bride and groom, so I foresee some logistical challenges. The good news is that it is not that far from the Baltimore area, and that means that Joe's mother, Emily's last remaining grandparent, might be able to attend. She will turn 88 this year.

I hope that everyone is staying healthy this winter and that your weather is as mild as mine has been in PA.

Love to All,

Eileen

Dateline: 02/10/2020

Ditto to Eileen's opening thoughts. In the big picture, not much has changed, which is a good thing. Everyone is doing basically the same as at the last writing.

Last I wrote, **Shannon** had recently taken a trip with Magnificat to LA for a convention. In Sept, she took a quick one to Charlotte, NC. And she is preparing to return to LA in a few weeks. She is loving these jaunts that she didn't expect when she took the job.

Gillian had been an assistant to the teacher in the PreK4 class at Sacred Heart. Coming into this year, it was known that the teacher would make it about halfway through the year, then be on maternity leave for the remainder of the year. So, now Gillian is the full teacher in the room. Still not a great amount of money, but it does give her the experience of setting goals for the class and students individually, deal with the parents and the administration.

Will weathered the merger of companies rather well. Not much has changed day-to-day and the future looks good. This week, a new colleague joins in the Ukraine to support Will's efforts, and Will will manage him. **Alysha's** program in Criminal Justice at Albany is moving to Rochester. Since she will be done with formal classes this semester, it is unclear what, if any, effect this will have on her program.

Deanne is being honored by the Yonkers Chamber of Commerce with their Humanitarian Award on March 25. She is trying to figure out why they are giving it to her, while everyone else is saying "it's about time". She certainly goes far above and beyond in all that she does, and that affects more than just the Sacred Heart community.

I received a call last week from the Archdiocesan Real Estate office, telling me that we have a green light to sell the former Mount Carmel parish property in Mount Vernon. It is the closed half of our merged parish. The Cardinal had declared it no longer to be used as a Church (profane), but former

parishioners had appealed that decision to Rome and it has been sitting idle for a few years. There never was any way for that Church to open and operate on its own. It was an Italian National parish, and any Italians who had gone there have long moved out. The few Spanish who attended can easily attend any of the other three parishes in Mount Vernon. It is in disrepair, although I have been working to fix a lot of the issues. So, during the next few weeks, I will be meeting with engineers, real estate agents, and people from the Arch who deal with the "patrimony", meaning all of the statuary, stained glass, altar and other fixtures. Hopefully, when I next write in the Round Robin, it will no longer be my concern, and the parish will be relieved of the burdens. It is a sad business to be about, but it is a reality that has to be dealt with.

D & I managed to take a cruise to Bermuda before Thanksgiving. It rained a lot of the time, and my plans to snorkel were dashed. While it was great to get away, we learned a few things we should not do on future trips. This just means we have to try again...

Lots of love to all!
Alan, Deanne, Gillian, Sherrin, Will (& Alysba)

2/20/20

Dear Family -

As I read all the pastings and stories of our wonderful history of the May HEART disease, I find myself scheduled next week with a cardiac cath appx - Had a few episodes and now my doctor said "we gotta check this out" - Really feel connected with you cousins! Beside that hopefully I will get to see my family in Fla in March + then a 2 week plan to see my Stephanie in Seattle as she is going to Europe for her 20th Anniversary trip. I am still busy with work - bowling + the yearly show at my complex. Looking so forward to spring and seeing something other than Shadow Lake Village - Hang in there TARA CLAIRE too Bless you Joanne!
See well lil cousin! -
X Maen