

July 18, 1996

Dear all,

Greetings from Lackawack Hill where the projects go on and on, between persistent raindrops. We now have two ponds sans water and in the process of being improved/enlarged/repaired, and numerous other jobs underway with the able help of our sons. Ken is back from the sea and will be with us awhile this summer. Steve and family are here often, and even Nicole 'helps' her grandpa. Ray pitches in whenever he can take a break from working on his own house.

I still have my little P/+ job on the Hill, and have been 'downsized' (with my enthusiastic approval) to a few hours each week - just enough to keep my little perks going (availability of a fax machine, copier, + elec. typewriter).

Our Feb. trip to S. America - Ecuador, Galapagos, Peru, Machu Picchu - was extremely interesting and adventurous. Life in 3rd world countries is just incredible. In May, we took a week's Elderhostel at Ocean City, MD - Assateague Island, that was excellent - also a lovely, inexpensive vacation (it pays to be a Sr. Citizen). Future plans include a 2 wk coastal steamer trip to the Norwegian fjords in Sept., + an Elderhostel to Appalachia in Nov. In between are visits to Floral Pk, Wilmington + Charlotte (where we all got an intestinal virus on our last visit).

The sisters have been utilizing the hermitages, + Joanie was here for 5 weeks, and we did have time for 'visiting'. We were also delighted to welcome the Zirkels on 7/4, tho of course it rained that day. ????. Key, who's the wise guy who allocated a web site for me. ????.

Love from Uncle Ed and "Computer Illiterate" Aunt Claire

Dear All,

Hi, the family letter arrived @ Leekawack hill while I'm here so I'm making a guest addition/entry. It's been a busy year for me ~~totally~~ so far - If I'm not driving across oceans on merchant ships I'm driving across country visiting friends and relatives. I've purchased some land in Star Valley, Wyoming and plan to build a house there in Spring '97. It's less than an hour to Grand Teton NP and 2 hours to Yellowstone NP so if anyone plans on a trip to the area get in touch with my Mom, she usually has some idea where I am and what I'm up to. *Ken*

8/1/96

Howdy from the Dreher's and soggy, but cool LI. Not one day over 90 in July - what a blessing! We're all doing fine, but not exactly lazing away the summer. I work my 22 hours at the library, which will increase to fulltime in Sept. Building renovations and union negotiations are livening up the summer there. George finishes teaching his 2nd summer computer course today. That will leave more time for painting my Mom's house (remember... 3 stories AND stucco - don't ask!). Matt is helping a lot with this task and I pitch in with the "low" work. Ian is putting in his 40 hour weeks at an import/export firm near Kennedy, but plans to return to Towson in Sept. for the final college plunge. He may be able to get work at the firm's Baltimore office as well. Kate is working several jobs including the summer reading program at the library to build her college spending chest. She had another good semester at Williams and is looking forward to returning as an "upperclassman". That first year went QUICKLY - and she still has not decided on her major. We hope to get some sort of vacation in mid-August. So, the fall will see Ian and Kate off again and Matt starting high school. Always readjustments! At least, from reading the RR we know that we are not alone. Thanks to all for keeping us informed of family doings. Oh... one last late-breaking report. Joe Clines called this morning to report the birth at 3:45 am of daughter Kira. Just happens to be Joe's birthday today, too. 8 lbs 5 oz. All are well. Eileen and her brood are due up this weekend, so we can all meet the newest Clines. God bless us all -

- Barbara

PS Our email address changed and will probably change again, so I'll update when I have a definitive one. Sorry for the confusion, Eric!

August 16, 1996

Dear Family,

We just love hearing all the happenings in the family. We are all set (hopefully) for the wedding in just 5 weeks. It will be so great to see Madeline and her family again and to reacquaint the cousins.

Patti's company has moved from Great Neck to an office in Manhattan and last night she got her first taste of commuting delays and missed connections. She only has two more weeks to go though since she will be moving into an apartment in the city with 2 friends on Sept. 1. Paul and Karen are looking forward to being able to "crash" at Patti's after a night in the city.

Congrats to Aunt Helen, Eileen & Joe and Joe & Mary Jo on the arrival of Colin and Kira. We have had an extension on our branch of the tree also. On July 30 Kristine (Krause) gave birth to her second daughter, Erika. Jimmy's wife is also expecting their second in Dec.

We continue to keep Michelle in our prayers...her progress is wonderful.

Love to all.....

Ronnie, Peggie  
& Family

Dear Family,

August 26, 1996

Congratulations to all in regards to new babies and weddings! Wow! This family is growing so rapidly that I think even Auntie Anna would have a hard time keeping track!

We are beginning to get used to life in The South. There are certain things about living here that are wonderful, but lets face it--there's no place like home, especially when your home is NY City! There is simply no comparison!

Both John and I have recently changed careers. I left The Observer to take a position as a Market Research Coordinator at a small real estate company only seven miles from home. I compose Apartment Reports for six different metropolitan areas in the Carolinas. John is now working with international freight. He has the *long* commute at about 30 minutes! (I jokingly stress "long" because when we lived in NY <sup>our</sup> trips via bus and subway were almost 3 hours a day!)

All else (the house, animals, health) is great. Nothing else to report on our end (thank God). I would like to express particular thanks to both my Mom and brother Ray for telling the whole family that we all came down with nasty stomach viruses on their most recent Memorial Day weekend visit. This will certainly make everyone want to just drop everything and come down in droves to visit! I assure you, it was a fluke!!!

Love and prayers for all!

*Lorraine & John*

9/7

Greeting from Milwaukee!

What a great summer it was here! Mild and comfortable, nothing even close to a "dog days" period. Best of all, my apartment complex has an outdoor pool, so every day included a real good workout and lots of poolside reading. My days of competitive sports are almost over, so swimming has become the great athletic passion and the best way to fight off the late-forties spread. Except for all sorts of joints that ache, I never felt better!

My second trip to Ireland was in April, and it proved to be a little more hectic than the first one because this time my friend Betty and I had a car the whole time. Great for mobility, but the kind of thing that makes you feel compelled to go somewhere every day instead of relaxing where you are. But Ireland is just the greatest! We stayed away from Dublin and touched three corners of the country and the midlands. Killarney, Kilkenny and a neat place called Westport were the highlights, and as always the people are enchanting!

And so, by the way, is the latest addition to the Clines family in Malverne, NY. My brother's Aug. 1 gift from God, Kira Elizabeth, is gorgeous and has the first hint of reddish hair that I can recall in any branch of the Clines/Dreher/Lynch/Zirkel clan.

Next on the travel agenda: a week in the East for Kira's baptism, among other things, and of course Christmas in New York. God bless everyone!

*Frank*

Dear Family

It has certainly been a hectic summer here in Richmond . . .

Some of you may not be aware that my mother gave us quite a scare this Summer. In mid-July she developed a back pain so intense that she was transported via ambulance to Williamsburg Community Hospital. Initially, she was treated by her orthopedic doctor with pain killers and anti-inflammatory drugs but her GP noted that she had a fever. He examined her and ordered a blood test that showed the existence of a staph infection. He immediately began treatment with antibiotics, but she continued to get worse. Additional testing revealed that the infection was in her urine and in the fluid in her knee joint, but no test could determine the cause or source of the infection. As she continued to slide, they finally performed a spinal tap on Friday, July 26 and confirmed that the infection had also invaded the spinal fluid. She had meningitis.

Suspecting that the infection was sited at the heart valves, the doctors recommended that she be transported to the Medical College of Virginia (MCV) here in Richmond so that a trans-esophageal echocardiogram could be performed to confirm their suspicions, and the facilities were available to perform emergency open-heart surgery if necessary. The doctor also recommended that we prepare for the worst.

So at 11:00 pm, the ambulance sped off to MCV, with us in pursuit, and Alan, Deanne, et al. jumped in their car and headed south . . . long night! Once she was stabilized in the ICU at MCV, we went home.

On Saturday morning, they completed the procedure and the doctor reported that test results were negative for heart valve damage.

When I visited her after the procedure, I could clearly see an improvement in her condition. Apparently, during the night, she had reached a turning point where the antibiotics finally kicked in and her body was fighting back. By the time Alan arrived that afternoon, she was sufficiently coherent so as to be surprised by his presence. Alan stayed the weekend, returning home by train on Monday morning while Deanne and the kids stayed with Monica for a week. Alan returned the next weekend and took his family home.

Mom's recovery and some rehabilitation at MCV took 25 days. On August 21, she went home. Unfortunately, the back pain she started with persisted, requiring her to use a walker and other assist devices to move around.

After being home less than a week, she went back to the hospital (Williamsburg) because she was feeling lightheaded. Turns out she was three pints low on blood as a result of a gastric ulcer (most likely due to all of the medications she was taking). Although they were quick to "top her off" with transfusions and get the ulcer under control, the doctors in Williamsburg wanted to identify the cause of her back pain before they discharged her. (MCV didn't seem to care about her total well-being). They performed a bone scan and found nothing but arthritis in her lower back, shoulders, knee and wrist. Because she had spent another week immobilized in bed, the doctors had her transferred to Williamsburg Rehabilitation A across the street from the hospital. She will stay there for three weeks ('til Sept 26?) until her regiment of antibiotic injections is complete and she has had an opportunity to work her back so that she can move around at home.

We are finally in our new church! The dedication of St. Michael's Catholic Church took place on Tuesday night, March 26. With the first two weekends in the place being Palm Sunday and Easter, the overwhelming crowds of folks who descended on the church were expected. After the P&P Catholics went back into hibernation and summer vacations started, attendance lightened. Now that summer is over, the crowds have returned and we fill the 550 seat worship space at each Mass. Plans to start on Phase II (1000 seat worship space) are being accelerated.

Claudine became one of the three young Head Ministers to assist at the 5:30 PM Sunday Mass, which our Pastor is hoping to make into a Youth Mass. Claudine continues to sing in the church choir. At school, she is involved in the drama club and had a part as one of the singer/dancers in the spring production of Bye, Bye, Birdie. She also played softball again with the school JV team, and with the community girls' league, but she chose not to play with her dad on the St. Mike's Defenders team. She also received her drivers license in April, but has been slow to take advantage of it. She has been timid about getting behind the wheel and refused repeated offers to practice with the manual transmission. With my mother out of action, we have her Camry, which Claudine is driving from time-to-time.

This past semester, Chris came home only once, for his spring break. He wanted to come home for two events at the Church (Confirmation Retreat and Dedication), but those trips were thwarted by bad weather and the need to concentrate on his schoolwork. He spent the summer working at Burger King. On August 23, we took him back to Blacksburg to start his second year. Overall, he's doing well, but math has become a problem for him.

Softball season has ended for again, and although both the K of C and St. Michael's teams did better than last year, we still ended up dead last in both the Henrico County Men's League and the Henrico Church Mixed League, respectively. All I can say is that I did my part.

Re-Engineering of the Nuclear department at Virginia Power is drawing to a close. The first phase examined the so called "non-strategic" groups, including Security, Training, Records Management, Human Resources, etc. Those groups were hit hard, with staff reductions of from 20-40%. The second phase looked at the station Operations and Maintenance staffs. As expected, this effort was over in a hurry and resulted in very few changes or layoffs.

As for Nuclear Engineering, I served with eight representatives from other Engineering groups and three consultants on the redesign team. The team was assembled in late April and worked through to August 15, when our recommendations were made to management.

The key themes in our redesign effort were "rightsizing" for the reduced capital improvement spending at our stations, and a transition to a "proactive" Engineering organization. "Rightsizing" resulted in the proposed total reduction of 60 positions (from 349), however, we increased staffing in the "proactive" plant support area by 10. Of the 50 positions we identified for reduction, most are vacancies, contract clerks, and co-ops. Therefore, few Engineers will actually leave the Engineering organization and even fewer will hit the streets, due to the creation of new positions in other groups.

As for me, my group continues to exist, with the reduction of one Engineer, but the addition of two designer/draftsmen. So I probably still have a job. We'll find out in mid October.

The usual quiet of our neighborhood has been shattered for the past nine months as construction is under way for the new Capital One credit card production/billing and support services facilities behind us. Every morning we feel like cursing Rudolf Diesel for his invention and OSHA for requiring backup alarms on construction vehicles (Don't those people ever drive forward?!).

In addition, the lot next to our house and the one across the street will be built upon soon. We're expecting construction to start at any time, but they'll probably wait for the construction behind us to complete to maximize the annoyance factor.

Well, that's about it for now!

Eric

Fig. 2-25

10/10/96

Dear Family,

What a lot of news - it's wonderful to learn all about your lives! Auntie Nana and all the other May siblings up in heaven must be pleading for us and cheering us on. Aunt Rosemary sure had everyone here scared to death. We are all pulling for her and praying. Keep up that therapy, Rosemary. News like this makes me sorry I gave up driving so long ago or I might have been able to visit her. But not having a car does keep me solvent. (Of course my kids have a hard time of it making sure I get transport here and there.) Thanks a lot Clineses!

The trip through the Panama Canal was spectacular. It is almost unbelievable to see the water under this huge ship receding to almost about 3 inches while the side of the lock seems to be only a foot away. The islands we visited were quite beautiful -- most memorable the blue plastic roofs on all kinds of buildings on St. Thomas; the result of the hurricane damage the previous year.

Since the trip I have been kind of vegetating in my retirement but still working 8 hours weekly at the library shelving books. Meet a lot of St. Thomas people from Rel. Ed. who keep asking why I'm not still there.

The 12 grandchildren are all wonderful. I think uncle Frank is "up there" boasting! The only difficult is I realize my age when I am with the younger ones -- 9 from almost 8 to 2 months. Other times I really don't feel 71. Visited with Kate up at Williams College recently with Mrs. Dreher and our driver Barbara. A lovely campus and town. Ian, no. 1 grandchild just turned 22.

Eric, don't expect E mail from me. I am so glad I retired from that computer at work - but I do like my word processor which as you can see I'm still learning how to use.

Keep the news coming gang. Much love to you all. Aunt Helen

10/18/96

Dear Family,

We're all fine in Floral Park after celebrating Megan's 1<sup>st</sup> and Nicole's 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday last week. Nicole has started PRE-K and loves it. Megan is walking now and on the move constantly. We spent lots of time at Mom and

Dads this summer and now have been busy helping out with Gina's sisters wedding (tomorrow). Gina is still working part-time at Caldors and enjoy it (except for a robbery that took place in early Sept.). I'm doing OK at the Times and have been doing some fixing up here at the house.

Hey -- with all the new additions to the family it would be great to get together sometime next summer! Aunt Anna would want it that way! Lets all keep this in mind and try to plan on a weekend in '97.

Love & prayers to all,

Steve, Gina, Nicole & Morgan

Hi to all! P.S. A happy & blessed holiday season to all! 10/30/96

Nothing very new in Bethpage this time around. Bill & I are still muddling along with our jobs, & the kids are all generally healthy, thank God. Kristen is in 2nd grade & has a busy year preparing for both First Reconciliation & First Eucharist (Confession & "Communion", for the traditionalists). Michelle continues to make progress on all fronts, although her inability to speak clearly is a constant source of frustration for her (& us). Our district does not offer much in the way of special ed, so we're presuming she will still be in a specialized school at least through kindergarten next year. (Decisions as to her placement are made by the district's special committee early in the new year; we do give our input & that of her doctors & therapists, but the final decision is theirs.) "Terrible Two" Danny keeps us "hopping" & laughing! He still talks about sitting up on Uncle Ed's big tractor during our visit to the farm in July, & about how many "mow-mows" (lawn mowers) Uncle Ed has. We also got to see Joanne on that visit as she was on her extended hermitage. Stay healthy, all - esp. you, Aunt Rosemary! Love from the Zirkels

Dear All,  
 Thought you'd be interested in reading about our life.  
 As you can see from our smiling faces, we are indeed very happy!  
 Be assured of our prayers for you too!  
 Love,  
 Theresa & Joanne

THE ANCHOR—Diocese of Fall River—Fri., Feb. 16, 1996



**WITH SMILES** that brighten a room, Capuchin Recollect sisters at the Mother of God Convent, New Bedford, try to live an austere, contemplative lifestyle similar to that of their founder, St. Francis of Assisi. From left are Sister Barbara, Sister Ada Maria, Sister Kelly Francis, Sister Mary Dawn, novice Agnes Marie, Sister Joan, and Sister Theresa. The sisters prefer to be identified by their religious names, omitting their surnames. Sisters Joan and Theresa are also blood sisters. (Anchor/Mills photo)

## Living the Gospel in a material world

by Christine Vieira Mills  
 Anchor Staff

Barbed and smiling, Sister Ada answered the door of the Mother of God convent adjacent to St. Anthony of Padua Church, New Bedford. She is a young sister, part of a newly formed order of Capuchin Recollects invited to the diocese by Bishop Sean O'Malley.

"We live on divine providence," said Sister Theresa, superior of the order, that lives an austere and contemplative lifestyle akin to the original ideals of founder St. Francis of Assisi 469 years ago.

"We do without many things like television, radio, fancy furniture and clothes," she said, alluding to the sisters' bare wooden floors, chairs and tables and their habits homemade from coarse wool. "We find that our poor and happy lives are not a hardship in the Gospel as

Six sisters and six friars came from religious life in upstate New York about a year ago to form two Capuchin reform communities, each located in New Bedford. They are involved in community projects and church ministries, but have no strong ties to one area. Truly mendicant, they are a religious order that combines monastic life with outside religious activity. They own no personal or community property and beg for their basic needs.

"Prayer is the essence of our lives," Sister Theresa said. "Everything else, all works, are subordinate to our prayer and community living." The importance of their prayer is evidenced in the peaceful atmosphere of their home, their bimonthly solitary retreats and even the sign on the front door: "Due to the sisters' prayer schedule, the door will not be opened before 9 a.m. from 17 to 1 and 5 to 7 a.m.

have a full day of prayer and silence on Friday. This lifestyle does call to some, as both the sisters and friars have added one person to their orders since their arrival here.

The idea of the "reform" orders to live, in 1996, the primitive, contemplative lifestyle of the Capuchins as it was intended and originated in 1536. The sisters awaken every morning for the 2 a.m. office, then again at six for morning prayer in silence. They sleep on the hardwood floors, impeccably cleaned and polished throughout all three stories of the large convent. Eating no meat or sweets except on Sundays or special feast days, the sisters give any leftover food from their meager diet to the poor.

"God sends people our way who provide us with the things we need," said Sister Theresa, with the excitement of a child speaking

witness the Gospel by our example of the power of a prayerful life and as peacemakers.

"In the Gospel, Jesus said that if we trusted in the Father He would provide for us," she continued, beaming. "He isn't a liar. People need to take the Gospel literally when He tells us to trust."

Part of their vocation is manual labor, so the sisters have devoted themselves to the pursuit of self-sufficiency. They have learned carpentry skills and have made and finished wooden stools and benches for their chapel and dining room. Also, with the help of their brother Capuchins, the sisters constructed the hermitages used for retreats where each sister may spend four days every other month in prayerful solitude.

Since, as mendicants, they do not own anything and must move from place to place as necessary, they do not originate new groups or services that they must staff. They do, however, participate in a number of community activities involving the poor and the youth.

"Tuesday and Thursday are our apostolic days," Sister Theresa explained. "We go out into the community, visit people and pray with them. Sometimes they have fallen away from the faith and have questions. Ours is the role of witnessing the Kingdom and helping people get to know Jesus as their friend."

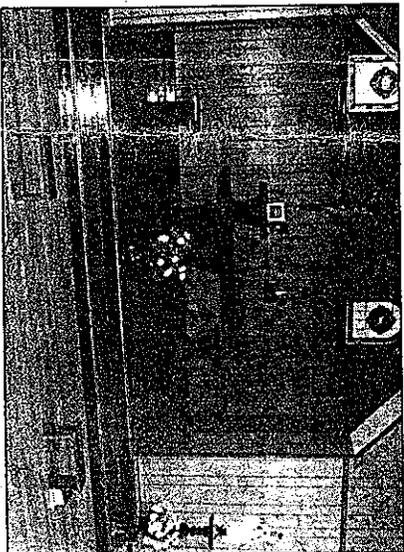
Their apostolic work reaches those in the New Bedford area. They participate in the Youth 2000 retreats and parish missions by giving talks and witnesses to the Gospel. Their next mission will be St. Julie Billiart parish, North Dartmouth, from February 26 to 29. "It's important to bring the Good News to people," Sister Theresa explained, "because it is so liberating, so freeing."

The sisters are also involved in the food give-out program at St. Anthony's every Thursday night where they not only provide 35-40 families a hot meal, but also try to nourish their souls by praying with them and helping them seek treatment if their problems include addictions.

A gift from Bishop O'Malley, the sisters take a large statue of the Blessed Mother to those who want Our Lady enthroned in their home. The statue is received into the home and the families promise to pray the rosary every day it is there. The statue, a gift to the bishop from Our Lady of Lourdes shrine in France, is then taken to the next family seeking the special devotion.

"She wants to be with her people," said Sister Theresa. "Many are touched by her grace."

And, like the images, many are touched by the caring compassion of these meek and humble servants of God.



**THE CHAPEL** at the Mother of God convent, New Bedford, reflects the simplicity with which the sisters live. The small benches on the floor were made by the group and the altar, a tree stump, serves well for daily Mass. (Anchor/Mills photo)

Nov. 25, 1996

Greetings from Virginia - from the house of the handicapped!

Can you imagine 2 people walking with a walker and sometimes a wheelchair getting around the house - sometimes we need a traffic cop!!!

Eric did a great job explaining my illnesses. I didn't know I was a candidate for open heart surgery. Eric says there's a lot I don't know about that first week. That week is gone from my memory - I was 'out of it'.

I'm home 2 months - I still have to use a walker. I still get stabbing pains in my back. I have a regimen of exercises to do daily. I finished one prescription of outpatient therapy doing bicycling for 15-25 minutes during each of the visits and the prescription will be renewed. My doctors suggested I go to see an osteopath/anesthesiologist who also evaluates people in pain. His diagnosis is that I have inflamed muscles and possible pinched nerves and suggested I get a steroid injection. My medical doctor doesn't want me to get an injection. He believes any invasion would possible stir up any infection or bacteria that may still be present and the meningitis may return. My doctor said I was a very sick woman, hospitalized 2½ months - and it will take double that time for me to be fully recovered and feel like my old self again. Like many diseases, there's no guarantee the meningitis won't return. So now my doctors are looking into my seeing a chiropractor. My orthopedic doctor knows a chiropractor who does work on students who are injured in sports at William and Mary College. He is to explain my case to him and get back to me. That's what I am waiting for.

Monica fared well living alone during my hospitalization. She got help from a neighbor to put the garbage and recycling curbside each once a week - and they bring the newspaper and mail to the front door every day - and about 4 friends and neighbors to do shopping and transport her to the hospital to see me and then take her back home again - and also to take her to any appointments she had.

Monica has been doing most of the cooking and washing. I do what I can. I still can't drive - I have trouble getting into some cars. Thank goodness for friends who have bigger cars and they take me to my appointments.

Well, that's enough about us. Just keep the prayers going for my full recovery - and that Monica stays healthy. Thank you!

Happy Thanksgiving this Thursday. Eric and family will be coming with a full dinner, courtesy of Ukrop's, on Saturday. That's when we'll celebrate. Chris is home from college and we'll get to see him again.

We're awaiting the birth of Deanne's and Alan's 3rd child due in a few weeks - due in mid December.

Then comes Christmas and the New Year - Have a Merry Christmas and we hope only good things happen in 1997.

Love to all,

Asenay (and Monica)

2/2/97

DEAR ALL:

SORRY FOR THE DELAY, BUT I COULDN'T DREAM OF SENDING OFF THE NEWSLETTER WITHOUT FIRST GETTING THE RESULTS FROM GROUND HOG DAY. (OUR OWN "MALVERNE MEL" SAYS WE WILL HAVE SIX MORE WEEKS OF WINTER, BUT THAT'S NOT SO BAD, SINCE THIS IS A WIMPY WINTER ANYWAY.)

EVERYONE IS WELL HERE IN MALVERNE. KIRA JUST CELEBRATED HER HALF-YEAR BIRTHDAY. SHE STILL HAS RED HAIR AND IS ABSOLUTELY DELIGHTFUL -- EXCEPT WHEN LUNCH IS LATE. I HAVE NEVER ENCOUNTERED A BABY WITH SUCH A HEARTY APPETITE. SHE EVEN DEVOURS THESE AWFUL GROUND-UP MEATS. THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT HER "BIG" BROTHER TERENCE IS STARTING TO EAT AGAIN, TOO, AFTER SEEMINGLY TAKING DECEMBER + JANUARY OFF. JOSEPH IS DOING VERY WELL AT NURSERY SCHOOL. KINDERGARTEN COMES THIS FALL. (ALL-DAY, NO LESS.)

AS YOU CAN IMAGINE, OUR DAYS + NIGHTS ARE HECTIC. MARY JO TEACHES 5 MORNINGS PER WEEK THIS SEMESTER AT MOLLOY COLLEGE. I STILL WORK NIGHTS AT FOX 5. I DID FINALLY GET MY PROMOTION TO EXECUTIVE PRODUCER. WHAT THIS MEANS IS THAT I GET TO WORK LATE WHEN FOX CARRIES THE WORLD SERIES AND THE SUPER BOWL, AND THEY DON'T HAVE TO PAY ME OVERTIME.

AGAIN, SORRY FOR THE DELAY. HOPE TO SEE YOU ALL SOON.

Jane & Joe Cline

Dear Family,

Winter greetings. I'm thankful for a mild winter so far, although I had to deal with some minor flood damage when my basement took on a couple inches of water in December while I was visiting my old pals in California (now that's some real flooding!). Things are calm with me - job stable, and 2 roommates keep the balance sheet looking good. I second my brother's motion for a family get-together, but I realize that's easy for me to say, not having a family to coordinate with. It's always fun for me to hear about the new bundles of joy! I'm a choir member again... As far as my house, this spring I'll tackle some outdoor stuff: building a shed, re-coating the driveway, and planting shrubs and flowers. Again, I do have a guest room!

Love,

I love this RL - I write in red because by the time you Ray get this it will be ♥'s day. Hope it's happy. I received it on Feb 10 1997 Tommy would of been 57 years old today

Grandma Maip oldest grandchild. Congratulations on all the new additions. Spoke to Aunt Rosemary last week & she sounds wonderful considering all her difficulties. Aunt Helen, you're just a mere 20 years older than I am & you've accomplished so much. You're too young to be retired!

Andy's wedding was too much fun in Sept. We danced every dance including the chicken, macarena, train lindy, line, twist stroll, I will never have as much fun at a wedding again. It was great all being together there. Braid came up from St. Landrydale. I love to go off from the Nursing Home where she works & the stories she tells make me laugh. For example: A lady fell off her bed while trying her pants (she didn't get hurt) but picture this, she had on a pattern dress & was sitting on a satin sheet. It'd like having a slip & slide on your bed. Gannoe took off from school (she's on cross-country this year & has made some really nice friends)

I loved the photo of Sisters Theresa & Joan. Hey I grew up spending alot of time at Aunt Betty's home & I want to know how come they look so young now while my oil of olay isn't doing all it promises! But seriously, I did enjoy the article & seeing you both very much.

I sprinkled Holy Water on this RL so all who read it

God's Blessings be yours always. Love, Dadelene,  
(Now if I could pack age the 80's weather & send it up north) Ralph, Brand, Helen & Janice

~~2-30~~  
2-31

17 February 1997

Dear Family,

Greetings to all. We are doing well here in PA, although life can be challenging these days. With one kid in grade school, one in preschool on a different schedule, and a baby with his own nap + meal schedule, I feel like one of those entertainers that used to spin plates on the Ed Sullivan show. If I spend too much time with one obligation, the other "plates" may come crashing down around me! But so far all of our plates are still on their poles.

Joe continues to be very busy at Merck. He's involved in a lot of projects that involve more than one department, so he's got a lot to keep straight. The company is doing well right now but there will probably be more changes in store for the pharmaceutical industry. Brian + Emily are both doing very well with school this year. Brian is in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade + taking more responsibility for himself with less complaint. Emily is no longer afraid of going to preschool (after 2 1/2 years of it) and feels more comfortable in social situations. Our baby is 10 mo. old now, still cute + still quite big for his age. This is surprising to us because Emily has always been way underweight and Brian is on the small side. It's really rough on my back carrying Colin around, so we hope he learns to walk soon. He's a happy guy and not as clingy as his siblings were. His main fault is that he's a terrible sleeper, up 4-5 times a night. (On the plus side, Emily at age 5 has finally started to sleep through the night.) We're looking forward to the Spring. It will be fun to see the baby discover the outdoors now that he's more aware.

Love to all

Eileen + Family

March 13, 1997

It's becoming more difficult to think of all the things we'd like to share about our family since we last wrote. The arrival of Shannon Rose is the most important, of course. She arrived December 10, weighing in at 6lb, 8 oz and 19". I had always told Deanne that I didn't want the kids to outnumber the parents, but I lost. (not really a loss!) She has added so much to the family, as she's the center of attention and brings out the best in everyone. Billy and Gillian love to fuss over her, as do we! She started sleeping thru the night early, and is now cooing and smiling all the time.

We recently had a rough time with B & G. Billy started vomiting on a Wed night and continued thru the night. Thurs morn, we took him to the doctor, who put him in the hospital overnight. So, Dad got to spend the night on Pediatrics with Billy. During the night, Billy woke up and started joking, so I knew he was doing well. We got him out of there Friday in-time to pick G up from school. After dinner that night, G started the same. She spent the night on the bathroom floor, continuing her sickness. So, Saturday morning, we took her to the doctor, who sent us to the hospital. No overnight for her: instead, a day in the ER with intravenous fluids. She wasn't herself when we got her home, but the next morning, she was dancing and playing. They are such great patients: we never know they're sick unless there is some external symptom. Hopefully, Shannon will be the same!

Billy is doing very well in first grade. He's taking Karate on Saturday mornings, in our effort to help him socialize and develop some coordination skills! Gillian has finally decided that she likes school (most days). She is speaking with the teacher, an improvement, and has made friends. She even has a boyfriend! She flatly refused to go to a gym class we signed her up for, so we have to keep working on getting her involved in things outside the house. When we're trying to juggle all three kids involved in dozens of activities, someone can show me this letter and tell me it's all my fault!

Deanne has added a new career to her prolific list. She's teaching Math to learning disabled students at Mercy College, about 10 minutes north of us. It broadens her horizon from teaching grade school and high school. I can't learn Math, much less figure out how to teach it to others! That's why I'm in accounting!

Luckily, the snow storm is passing us by, and soon we'll be into Spring. I know I'm looking forward to days of sunshine and getting out of the house on weekends. We've flown a kite another month, and will hopefully give it a better workout soon. Everyone have a Blessed Easter and a relaxing summer!

New E-Mail address: [ajmay@juno.com](mailto:ajmay@juno.com)

Alan Alessi

Billy, Gillian  
and Shannon Rose



4-13-97

Dear Family,

Hi everyone. Since it is spring, I thought there should be a hint of color in this letter. Sorry for the little delay. The letter arrived on Holy Saturday, and I have been quite busy for the past 2 weeks. The news from all the Fields' is the engagement of our Jason to Tricia. The wedding will be in 98, only because the arrangements will take some time since the affair will be in N.Y. and he lives in Florida. Stephanie decided to finish her last classes at the Univ. of So. Fla., and has landed some substitute teaching jobs at a local H. School. Nothing new back here except Alex and I are planning a trip with Marc and Robert to see Jason and Steph the end of April.

Alex and I will be celebrating our 25th Wedding Anniversay this June-----Time is marching on. Hope all of you are well and our Best Wishes to all these growing families.

Love to all, Alex, Maria and family.