

Dear family,

What a winter!!! I write this as ^{ANOTHER} snow is ^{2-320B} engulfing us as it has for the past 2 months. Our local gov't has informed us by phone to expect another week of around 0° temps and another storm on its way. I've been under "house arrest" since our first snow of the season has never left us - just turned into a layer of ice that it adds to subsequent snows. No one wants me to flop down and become the "ice lady of Lackawack Hill!"

Our chickens are doing remarkably well after some problems have been solved (nothing like learning by 'trying') and much cooperation. Len's dog, WICK-LAF, has turned one year old, and looks more like a small bear as she frolics in the snow and ignores the cold.

God bless us all as we look forward to Easter, and SPRING!

With love,
Aunt Claire

Happy greetings to all!

March 17, 2015

I'm typing this on good old Saint Patrick's Day as the corned beef and cabbage bubbles away on the stove. Our once a year treat! I'll send a lucky Irish blessing to all of you. Of course, having not a single stitch of Irish blood in me gives me no authority whatsoever to do such, but I'll send blessings, love, luck and plenty of prayers anyway!

With Arianna just turning 17 and the boys 10, I can officially say that I'd like time to stop! No more birthdays around here! Arianna feels the same way as she has absolutely no interest in leaving the nest and going out into the big bad world. At present she has no interest in going to college. This winter has been brutal so she's taken a hiatus from theater, but this summer she plans on being part of no less than three plays at the local Rivoli Theater, Death of a Salesman, Godspell, and Fiddler on the Roof (which Kaylin and possibly the boys might join as well). The most important thing to Arianna right now is getting her license and subsequently a set of wheels. Me too as I won't have to drive her all over creation this summer!

Kaylin is acing ninth grade. She's in all honors, continues studying Spanish, and is even in a college computer class! Her schedule is too jam-packed for even a study hall! She continues her involvement in 4-H and FFA at school, but her one true love is her chickens! Currently we have 13 hens, all of which we purchased from a friend at around 8 weeks old. Well, this Easter we're taking the next step and planning to raise 8 new chicks from only a few days old. If you haven't noticed, we've taken to country life hook, line and sinker. Oh, and of course ALL ORGANIC! Anyone want some eggs? The best you'll ever eat!

Matthew, Mark and Luke continue to struggle with the Common Core in 4th grade. None of them are particularly scholarly. Therefore, the constant demands and pressure of the curriculum causes anxiety. It's certainly a foretaste of the real world, but really, do we have to kick the stress into high gear straight from the cradle? As for sports, basketball just ended and Little League will begin once we can see the grass! John plans to coach again this year.

John and I had a lovely time on our cruise last September. It was a real treat! However, as soon as we came home, a torturous busy season started! He continues as Supervisor at Kohl's, but grows more miserable every day. Corporate America is really ugly. Push the employees to the brink without compensation and if they by some miracle succeed, the only thanks they get are higher expectations. Is this really what he can look forward to for the next 30 or so years?

I actually joined the workforce in January. I'm now a substitute teacher at the kid's school. I only work an average of about 2 days a week, but that's more than enough with all my other commitments. I enjoy it and my kids love to have me there. I think it's really that when I work they don't have to take the bus! I also usually spend one day a week taking Mom to town for shopping and socializing. Of course, we have to start out with 8AM Mass, followed by coffee at McDonalds and then our errands. I try to enjoy as much time as I can with her as age is really starting to take its toll on her...pain, sadness for the loss of 'the way things were', etc.

We must continue to count our blessings every day, and then to pray for each other as much as we can! It's hard in today's world, but we must keep the faith and keep smiling!

Love, LouAnne, John, Arianna, Kaylin,
Matthew, Mark & Luke ☺

2-322

4/6/15

Easter Greeting and Blessings to all! Spring has finally sprung - and we are all relieved to have an end to the snow and ice and bitter cold of this past LI winter. George has seedlings growing in the basement and peas planted outdoors. We're looking for our asparagus plants to reappear any day. In another month, the tomato plants can go in! Hooray!

Granddaughter Claire is 14+ months. We survived a three day babysitting gig last month when Daddy and Mommy took a vacation to St. Lucia. Now that she's walking she really keeps us on our toes. But she is a happy girl (usually!) and lots of fun. Wish they lived closer, but we take what we can get. We try to visit every week or two.

George has started spring track coaching. I'm not planning retirement from the library yet, but the uptick in projects - both short and long-term are beginning to weary me a bit. I just get more jobs and tasks and nothing is removed. Sound familiar? It's nice to have the mental "out" that I can retire whenever I want.

Kate continues in Mexico. She's made trips to science meetings in San Diego and Abu Dhabi - capital of the Arab Emirates. On the way back from there she took a quick train trip into Paris and saw Notre Dame between two flights. She is an efficient traveler! Frank visited her last month. George and I hope to get to Mexico in July. Ian has moved back to our house as he plans his next moves. He wants to relocate and is working out his plans. He'll be happy to leave his current job - ridiculous work demands with no backup or support.

So, no big changes here, but we always count our blessings. We hope and pray that all of you have the good health to enjoy spring and the renewal it brings. God's blessings on our FAMILY!

Barbara + George

4/18/15

Happy Birthday Frank!!

The letter was at our doorstep when we arrived home from our trip to FL to surprise Madeline for her 70th birthday which happened to also be Easter Sunday, a holiday we haven't shared in 46 years!! We then spent a wonderful week with them and getting to see all of their beautiful grandchildren. Happy times ☺ After a week home we next head to SC to babysit our 2 grandchildren for a week while Paul & LeeAnn head to CA for a wedding. This "retirement" thing sure is time consuming!!

Since the last visit of the round robin to our house Augie took a fall, hurt his groin and ended up in the VA hospital for several days. It turned out to be a blessing in disguise since they found his oxygen levels were too low due to the emphysema he has. Since then he has been on oxygen for sleeping and any activities. It's a pain for him to have to carry around but it's been helping. He is even at the point now where he is going to the gym a few times a week with a portable tank.

Our kids and grandkids are all doing well. Andy's oldest, Ashley, had to have her gall bladder removed last month and has recovered well and is now preparing for prom on 5/16 then her HS graduation on 6/13. Seems like only yesterday we were rushing to the hospital to meet her for the first time!!

Please know that I keep all of you in my daily thoughts and prayers.....with love,

Ronnie + Augie

4/24/15

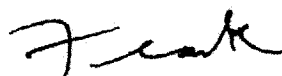
Man, this being 65 (and one week, at this point) is super-duper! A Medicare card, and the MASSIVELY reduced health-insurance cost it carries, is good enough. But the other day I obtained something REALLY valuable -- A "Go Pass" card that enables all 65-plus-ers to ride Milwaukee County buses for free! Pure gold for someone who has NEVER owned a car! Trips to the ballpark, to swim at Marquette, to my wonderful Irish bar, to the airport for flights back East -- all freebies forever! As they say in Monopoly, "Do not pass Go, but do Go Pass."

And as I said on Facebook recently, if I'd known how awesome this would be, I'd have turned 65 years ago!

Of course it's still "spring" in Milwaukee, which means more sunshine but hardly any warmth, especially for us folks who live near that big lake. But in a little over a month, my apartment complex's glorious (and heated) outdoor pool will be open, which is the main reason I've lived in the same building for 24-plus years.

And with plenty of baseball to watch and three visits back home on the schedule, geezer-hood just looks brighter and brighter . . .

Happy summer, everyone!



May 1, 2015

Dear Family,

Lots goin' on here in Central VA! First, and foremost, the letter arrived on my last day of employment with Dominion. While I was on vacation since the beginning of April, I held on to my company laptop, and periodically checked in to see how things were going (especially concerned for the employee who was named as the temporary supervisor). On April 30, I went back to the office to return the computer, pager and badge, and say my 'final' goodbyes to multitudes of co-workers. As of 1201 this morning, my electronic ID ceased to exist, and I am just a memory. I will go in as a visitor one day next week to meet with my newly named replacement for a little turnover. I am now to be counted among the ranks of the Retirees! (Went to my first Retirees' Mass / Luncheon at the K of C hall.)

After several rounds on the latest chemo drug (injections in the belly), **Mom's** hemoglobin count rebounded to 10.4 in April, however, while her Waldenstrom's numbers have been continuously trending down (good) her hemoglobin count has been inconsistent. This led to concerns that she is losing blood, and in fact, blood was found in her stool. So, at 88, with severe arthritis and scoliosis, she is going to undergo a colonoscopy and upper endoscopy in mid-May. Details to follow. In the meantime, she will take a break from the chemo injections, and continue to be monitored.

As Mom noted in her entry, **Monica**, is now scooting around the nursing home again, as the power chair is once again working. The batteries have not yet been replaced, so her trips are short, but she is still getting around. I have not had many opportunities to visit her lately (will visit more frequently in the future), so I have not instructed her about getting on the internet, and no progress has been made with respect to Facebooking or emailing.

Danie remains busy and stressed taking care of her Father (at least, she is now relieved of having to take Mom with her doctors' appointments). He required a replacement pacemaker (found out during the replacement, that without it, his heart would not only be arrhythmic, but it would stop), has experienced bouts with skin irritations (maybe because he uses bug spray like a room freshener??) cellulites, and other maladies that affect 86 year olds. Danie continues to participate in quilting guild meetings and events. She has made progress on a number of projects that have been started in past months / years, finishing many of them. She has been helping to set up a "Dear Jane" quilt exhibit by one of her guilds, that is being displayed at the Quilting museum in Harrisonburg, VA in early May. One of her own works is being displayed.

Claudine & Laughton are doing well, and their jobs are stable. Claudine has continued to handle more and more responsibilities, at Fahrenheit IT and was recently promoted to the account manager for Capital One in Virginia.

They will be celebrating Laughton's 40th birthday (early) mid-May as they take a 1 1/2 week trip to Ireland.

Chris & Kristy are also doing well, having just passed their six year anniversary. They have completed the first freelance project that they have been working on together outside of their regular jobs, and are on standby to being given additional work in the future.

While we took a break from **bowling** for the 2014/2015 season, we continued to meet up with our former teammates at Friendly's each week. We were horrified when, on the first bowling night after Christmas break, we drove to Friendly's and found it dark. A note on the door simply said, "Thanks for your patronage for the last 30 years . . . visit our other Friendly's at . . ." (20 miles away). Probably the worst part is that the waitress who has served us since we moved to Richmond (27 years ago!), who we know only as "Carol", has disappeared. We never said goodbye and we have no idea how to find her.

As for **Getaways**, there haven't been any since my last writing. While I was off for two weeks at the end of last year, three trips to Williamsburg (including one to bring Mom to see Monica), the holiday activities, and phone calls galore from work (dealing with the shutdown of North Anna Unit 1 because of a piping leak), ate up all of our time and prevented any impromptu day trips. As planned, I took all of my vacation (1 week carryover from last year and three weeks earned in the first two quarters of 2015) to take most of the month of April off. That time was spent getting acclimated to being home all of the time, and to start on the projects that we have planned for retirement. So far, I have made three trips to Goodwill, and multiple trips to the dump for the (very) initial efforts to clean out the garage. Mom had three doctor appointments that I had to take her to, and, of course, Danie had a similar number to take her father to. We have, however, combined two of those doctor visit trips to Williamsburg with visits to Colonial Williamsburg (got VA residents passes for unlimited visits this year). Additionally, we've been to Richmond International Raceway for the NASCAR Xfinity series race, and to Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens (became members, so we can visit at will) and will visit the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in the near future. I am planning a road trip for about 1 1/2 weeks in mid-June to the Northeast, and we are looking ahead to a return to Alaska in August, when we will take a land tour / cruise starting from Calgary, CN and ending at Anchorage, AK. We have already booked an Eastern Caribbean cruise in February 2016 with Ed & Janet Ebert.

Eric & Danie

5/30

Dear Family,

Nicole graduated FIT last week and has been doing an internship as an assistant teacher for mentally challenged kids as an Art therapist.

Billy completed his 3rd year at Buffalo and is doing another 5-week summer course that will cut his time at home very short.

Megan finished her 2nd year at St. Francis and hopes to transfer to Queens College for a shorter commute in the fall.

Tim graduates Molloy HS. this week and will join his brother in Buffalo in the fall.

June and I have been busy paying for all of this, as well as doing a new upstairs bathroom and roof over the fall/winter, and now new cement and pavers in the back yard. The house is almost done and we are tired and ready to enjoy it. June will be off for the summer and my hours at work are changing to afternoons, 3^{pm}-11.

Love to all, Steve +++

6/13/2015

2-325

Dear Family,

It's funny to read-about - and re-live in my thoughts - all those freezing, snow-filled days of this winter, when it's bright sunshine and 82° outside right now! Now we're complaining that it's too hot too soon(!) and we could use a little rain!

When Frank wrote about turning "65," he didn't know that we were going to be surprising him with a party during his next visit east, on May 3rd. Except for the nieces/nephews who were still away at college, we all were graciously welcomed by Matt + Carolyn to celebrate at their house in New Jersey. I think we pulled off the surprise aspect, but the biggest accomplishment was bringing Frank into the 21st century by underwriting the replacement of his little 1941 TV "box" with his first HD set - a 40" Samsung! Even Kate came in from Mexico for the party - & to see her niece!

Bill + I did get away for a few days in San Antonio in November, for our 30th anniversary. (Why San Antonio? Long story!) I don't know if we'll be able to take any family vacations this year, as Kristen is teaching summer school up in Mamaroneck, + Danny is doing a summer internship with Northrop Grumman down in Melbourne, Florida. After spending just one week here, during which he was "down and out" with pneumonia! - he drove down all by himself in a second-hand car he has just for the summer! He'll be going back to Princeton for his final year in the fall, and then who knows where he'll end up. There's not much on LI anymore.

Please continue to pray for Michelle. She's hanging in there with her 3-day program but has some very bad issues, and there is much less in the way of activities to keep her occupied over the summer. Ronnie was kind enough to send me some info on St. Dymphna, patron saint of the nervous & emotionally ill, so we're storming heaven, praying for guidance for the psychiatrist + other doctors treating her, and patience for us!!

We're so glad to hear all your good news. Have a wonderful summer!
Love, Bernadette, Bill, Kristen,
Michelle + Dan

Dear Family,

Summer is here and so is the holy father's encyclical on the environment. What a great way ~~the~~ to start this season! I think having a copy of it and sharing it with others is a good way to evangelize as the Pope is always asking us to do. All is well here - Glad things are going well with the May clan -

Be assured of my prayers -

God Bless, Theresa + Joannie

Greetings from Gloucester and Williamsburg,

July 17, 2015

Monica is still waiting for her power chair to get a new battery. I don't know exactly why it is, but they are waiting for an okay from Social Services in James City County for the money to be dispersed to Monica for the battery. It is still holding a sufficient charge to take her where she wants to go around the facility, as long as she doesn't make any side trips.

And me - I'm on another vacation from chemotherapy. My hemoglobin has been fine for the past months so I didn't have to go into the cancer center and get an injection 2X a week. July 30th is the next appointment with the hematologist and see how my hemoglobin is and find out if I go for more injections. It would be so nice if all is okay and I continue to be 'on vacation' from trips to the doctor's office. I'd just rather not do it.

On June 1, I fell getting up from my recliner, as I was getting dressed. I was unhurt, but in pain for days afterward. My right foot, and the big toe in particular got caught somehow and I now have a wound on the outside surface of my right big toe. I went to the podiatrist and she cut away some bruised skin and she calls it an ulcer - and I had to have my toe cleaned, Bacitracin and a bandage applied every day - and they woke me up every morning around 5:30 - 6:30 to do this. At today's follow-up visit to the podiatrist, the ulcer was declared healed.

We remember, especially Michelle, in our prayers - remember to pray for us.

Love to all,
Aunt Rosemary and Monica

Dear Family,

2/2/16

So I write this on Groundhog Day, and reading this letter after last week's blizzard brings me back to the terrible winter of last year. Things are decent with me. Just finished paying off my mortgage, 20 years in Delaware. It's also 10 years in business as "Webmaster Ray" for Attraction LLC. Also good was watching the Mets have a remarkable summer until a devastating World Series!

My own athletic ventures hit a bump as I'm sidelined from running with a hamstring injury. First 2+ week period of no running in 13 years. But prior to that, enjoyed a great weekend stay at Eric's house to run the Richmond Marathon last November. He couldn't help but brag about retirement life (as I'm catching several of you doing)!! Besides completing my 27th marathon and attending Sunday Mass with Eric, a highlight was a mini-reunion with Kathy + Wayne!

I'll be feasting at the annual Super-Bowl party next week with my runner friends. In September, organized 5k as usual for "my" Little Sisters of the Poor. Mother Superior won an age group medal and a couple weeks later shook hands with the Pope.

I still do virtually zero cooking, but thanks to my awesome Godchild Kaylin Klein, I regularly make scrambled eggs from her chickens. Since there are now 30+ chickens + roosters, I helped Ken + Steve build the strongest chicken coop in the world - Ken's "timber framing" specialty. This fall, we erected a barn extension, which will basically be a carport for our new Kubota tractor. Drop by the Farm for eggs + hard work!

Take care,

Ray

2016

2-327

1/24/16

Dear Family,

Happy New Year! As I write this, I am looking out at about 30 inches of fresh snow from one of the biggest storms in recent memory. Hard to get an accurate measurement with all of the drifting. All I know is that it was next to impossible to find the cars in our driveway—or even the driveway itself. It took six scoops of the shovel just to get down to asphalt.

For once, I did not have to schlep into some newsroom to cover the storm, as it happened on the weekend, and I no longer work in local news. So, I got to enjoy a rare snow day at home. Mary Jo and I were alone, as Kira is off at the School of Visual Arts, Terence is at Notre Dame and Joseph recently got an apartment on the Upper East Side of Manhattan.

So, how did we spend our snow day? By watching the coverage on TV! I have to admit, it is addictive—not unlike staring at a fish tank.

At work, we have devoted a ridiculous amount of coverage to the Presidential election—and there hasn't yet been a single vote cast. I do not wish to start an argument, but someone will have to explain the attraction of Donald Trump to me.

But please keep watching the CBS Evening News. Every viewer helps.

Talk to you soon—

PS: Thank you to Eric for resurrecting the newsletter after it got away from me.

3/9/16 Dear All — When I read about your winters - it's just the opposite here. We dread summer & all the heat - such is life. We are all doing well, just celebrated Skylers' 4th & before that Taylors' 5th, Kendall's 6th & Sydneys 7th - Kai will be 11 in July. Retirement is wonderful, I'm busier than ever & thankful for all our blessings.
HAPPY
EASTER to all - Love & Prayers
Madelene & Ralph



3/17/2016

Dear Family,

I am writing this on St. Patrick's Day, after reading Lorraine's entry from last St. Patrick's Day. I'm ashamed to admit that I am not making Corned Beef + Cabbage, or even Irish Soda Bread, nor did I make pie for Super Pi Day on 3.14.16. I probably should honor my ancestors by making Corned Beef, because if beef OR cabbage were available to them, they would have remained in Ireland and I wouldn't be here!

We are having an early spring as I write this. Crocuses, Daffodils and Hyacinths are all popping up at once, probably because of the warm periods we had throughout the winter that woke them up. It was a mild winter here overall, if you overlook that massive 2 foot snowstorm and one prolonged cold snap. We were snowed in for quite awhile after the snowstorm, so I took the opportunity to join Facebook and create a social media presence.

There's not much to talk about here besides the weather. Joe continues to have to commute to New Jersey several times a week for work. He really dislikes all the driving, and contemplates how long he wants to continue. Meanwhile, we have been doing a lot of work on the house to update the things that need updating, and replace the things that need replacing. I'm in charge of day-to-day planning for that. There is not too much to report about our kids. Brian is living at home and working a couple of part-time jobs. Colin is in his second year in college. He likes his major, really a double major of his Integrated Science Program and Chemistry. Most people in the ISP program take a second major to get the best of both worlds: interdisciplinary background + specific concentration. Anyway, he got a chance to do some undergraduate research last summer and hopes to do that again, he has put in applications but hasn't heard yet. Emily is the only one with real news. After having some part-time jobs in nursing last year in the Boston area, she got a temporary job at Mass General, which paid almost nothing but led to a real job on staff there. This is a good step for her and will look good on her resume down the line, as Mass General has a great reputation. The downside to her staying on in Boston is that it will continue to be difficult for us to get together as a family, with one family member in college in the midwest who is only home at breaks and holidays and another a nurse in Boston who has to work on holidays. But I see I am not alone in this dilemma; like Maria, I say "Remember when...?" and plan on a lot of travelling.

Love to all,
Eileen

A Blessed Easter to one and all!

We just entered Spring, but on day 2, we had a wet blanket of snow. Not much of an accumulation, but a reminder that all is not well with the weather.

William is working long and hard at Jump Ramp Games as their "Android Doctor". In his little free time, he still plays his Wind Controller at the Iona College Mass on Sunday evenings and side jobs working on web pages for the Christian Brothers and others. He has been searching for an apartment, as it is time for him to establish his life apart from the rest of us. He has also been dating Alysha Gagnon for about three years now. You can meet her through his Facebook page.

Gillian continues to work at Sacred Heart Grade School. This year, she is not a floater, but an assistant in a PreK 3 class. Each evening, we are entertained by stories about the kids and their antics. It is obvious that this is more than just a job for her: she loves the kids and does all she can to help them grow. She is looking into a Master's in Education program at the College of New Rochelle so that she can pursue this field in her future. For the summer, she will be working again for Destination Science, about which she is very excited. Playful, interactive education.

Shannon is progressing in her journey through Manhattanville College. She had a rough end to last semester, when she struggled with pneumonia. She missed just a few classes, and it took the wind out of her sails – literally. But she fought back and finished well. She is looking into internships for the summer: we'll see if she comes up with one. If not, she can fall back to the Yonkers Day Camp that all three have worked in, but she would prefer not to continue.

Deanne and I continue with our routines. D is in the busiest time of the year, with Holy Week and all the other sacramental celebrations. But that also means that in a few weeks, all should settle down for a summer calm. I am still commuting down to Wall Street every day. I had moved on to a new position within my group, but with the resignation of the guy who replaced me, I am now doing both jobs while managers deliberate how to fill the spot. D&I had promised each other a cruise for our 25th anniversary (2 years ago), but still have not made it happen. We're also looking into shorter getaways. I look forward to the day when I join the growing ranks of retired people – or at least retiring from Deutsche Bank.

Mom will be having blood tests this week to determine the status of her Waldenstrom Macroglobulinemia. Her hemoglobin has been rising and falling each time tests are taken. With so many different ailments, it's hard to determine which aches, pains and other symptoms come from cancer and which are from other issues. Eric will fill us in during his upcoming installment.

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

April 3, 2016

Happy Easter Family!

Can't believe it has been almost a year since last sighting of this R.R. Aside from the expected aches + pains of senior life, I am doing OK still working part-time (jealous if you retirees!!!) The job keeps me able to pay the bills and my sanity — Recently surprised both my daughters in Seattle with a visit that they had no idea that I was coming!

It was 18 mo since I last saw those faces +
 how the 7 grandkid have grown. Next month I
 plan on another visit to attend 2 First Communion.
 My Robert calls me the "Jet-setter grandma" -
 besides the job I bowl with Village team, and
 rehearse for our annual show in June. My kids
 are all doing well and Adrienne is expecting my
 12th grandchild (a girl) in July. God is so good
 to me ~~in spite~~ in spite of my small sufferings -
 God Bless all of you - Enjoy the Summer -

Love
 Maria

4/11/16