

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 its been an uneventful summer. I'm staying busy with the usual mix of gardening, woods work, ... 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

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!

