

Dear Family and Friends,

2019 is almost done and has been filled with visits and handyman work with so many of you. I went to Paris, saw Notre Dame after the fire, visited the cathedral in Beauvais plus Vaux-le-Vicente and Chantilly chateaux before taking the train to Bordeaux where I met up with Bob and JoAnn. We drove around the Dordogne, eating and drinking with abandon many of the delights that are banned in California like fois gras. Besides the markets and chances to climb to tops of things, we went to Lascaux IV - the latest replica of the cave with fantastic prehistoric drawings, an amazing feat both then and now. On the way to their village, they dropped me in Nimes. This is a former Roman Empire city with much of its original architecture still in place, including the well used amphitheater. By luck, it was the Feria, a Pentecostal celebration that demonstrates the nearby Spanish influence. It was a wonderful experience of food, drink, music, dance, parades, and bull fights.

In August and September, I took a road trip that was mostly east on I-80 to New York City and west on I-40 back home, providing a good chance to visit friends approximately along those routes. The excuse for this was to officiate the wedding of Marissa Lane whose mom and dad, Karen and Wayne, worked at Tigers with me. It was an honor to wed her to Arun Meka and meet all their friends and family. Side trips to Bartlesville OK and Ghost Ranch in NM were worthwhile.

The other big event was my 50th Santa Clara University reunion which I mostly avoided since I prefer to remember my youth unencumbered with the realities of now. I joined my college roommates and their spouses for drinks and dinner since even though I see them often, it's not often together. It is amazing how one great memory triggers another and another.

A quick rundown of my family's latest adventures:

Nona's time is taken with real estate court battles. She has continued to develop her legal skills as she battles against evil while still waiting for a victory. She also managed to travel a bit thanks to the "use it or lose it" of her time shares.

Pat has embraced retirement by doing last minute cruises as he's discovered he likes having staff and a life of ease, not adventure. That's surprising coming from the former king of the emergency room visits. Karen hasn't gotten her passport so she stays home with Rusty, the dog, while their various children happily go with him on these trips.

Mary has had more than her share of battles with lingering effects of chemo but she soldiers on. She is the point of contact for everyone so really runs the Tobin social calendar and provides updates as to what's going on. By continuing to provide cookies to all and even expanding her repertoire to include chocolate chip bars, she keeps many, many people happy.

Johnny finally got his home sold and got rid of enough stuff that he lives fairly uncluttered in an apartment near his old place. He's part of the bureaucracy now, working for the Census Bureau as things pick up for that important count.

KT and Tara are enjoying their girls. Seven year old Ella loves being in parochial school and is good st it. (I shake my head at how that shows up again in the family.) Issa is a very happy kid and quite the flirt at 1 1/2 years old. Tara has changed jobs for an easier commute and less co-ordination of multiple entities to work at Tesla handling security for the plant. Nathaniel is working there too but much further down the ladder as he waits to start school again.

Jake and Kelly found that building a house was more trouble than buying one so they quickly sold their's and picked up one in the Willow Glen neighborhood of San Jose, still close to KT and Mary. It is much bigger with 4 bedrooms, and fruit trees out back. Shopping and restaurants are an easy walk. Their siblings find it a very convenient layover..

John and Molly are waiting to see what lies ahead in their future schooling. Molly has five jobs including one in the morgue so doesn't really have time to think about it until the acceptance letters arrive. John's way of filling his spare time is surfing and his new interest in photography. Luckily with digital cameras, he isn't going broke on buying film.

As always, I hope your year has been filled with the best of things and that 2020 will be even better. It is a pleasure to think of you and yours at this time each year.

Tallulah Bankhead said, "**I wanna live a life I'm gonna remember even if I didn't write it down.**" I'm trying to follow that advice and seem to getting it done though my old Christmas letters will keep a lot of it fresh or, at least, recoverable.

That leads me to something Ralph Waldo Emerson said: "**It is one of the blessings of old friends that you can afford to be stupid with them.**" No problema there, huh? Thank you for allowing that.

So as Roy and Dale would sing, "happy trails to you until we meet again!"