

Christmas Letter 2007

With people camped out on the front lawn waiting for the first release of this Christmas letter, I am really feeling the pressure to get it done. Some of these people I don't even know. I think they sell the letters on e-Bay. Now why didn't I ever think of that?



As you may recall, last December, we headed down to Florida on Pat's 60th birthday and stayed there with our friends, the Dershimers, into the New Year. They even met us enroute to surprise Pat with a birthday dinner. You might say we started out 2007 finishing up 2006. We have been out of sync ever since. Actually, I think that comes with age. Everything takes longer so you are always a bit behind. Speaking of behind, Pat and I lost a lot of weight this last week. Then I replaced the batteries in the scale – guess what? It was nice while it lasted.

In an effort to get ahead or at least catch up with the rest of the world, I decided to do some creative calendaring. Businesses and government have been doing it for years. I proposed we go with a physical year and not start it until spring. Spring is a time of new beginnings, why not start our year then. Whose idea was it to start the year in winter anyway? I think it was the Gregory brothers. We should have listened to the astrologers and started in late March. I didn't know how prophetic this nomenclature was. I don't know if my ever escalating age and waist line were the cause but this year was certainly fiscal. While the fiscal work becomes more of a challenge each year, I am just thankful my mind is still as sharp as an old butter knife and I can still write a coagulated sentence. I just wish my hearing was as good. Some times I am just barely coherent. Enough about me and my idiot synchronies, the rest of the family is surprisingly well adjusted considering the gene pool they had to work with. . . . Quick, throw a rope to that dangling preposition!

For Krystal, the year started adjusting to a change of management at the Oh home. Joshua, our first grandchild started taking control even before his birth and by the first of the year had the family revolving around his schedule. I don't know if Josh will be writing their family Christmas Letter but I'll leave the rest of the Oh Family narrative up to them. I will mention for those who might not get their letter; she is still teaching High School English in Plainfield Illinois up by Chicago and is working toward her Masters in Fine Art. She has her second residency session out in the Boston



area after the New Year.



Kimberly decided that changing schools each semester was not the best way to get her degree, so 2007 found her still at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale. She started the school year as a senior after only two previous years in college. While she didn't change schools, she did change majors. Psychology is now her new choice. It

was not just out of the blue; I remember her talking about going into Psychology back before high school. Since the change, her grades have been straight A's. It seems to be a good match for her. She, too, has a way with words and usually posts her own Christmas Letter so I'll let her sail her own story and won't steal her wind.

Mom is still alive and kicking, sometimes literally, when she is not in agreement with a nurse who needs to give her medications. Some days, she will take her insulin some days not. We always hope our visits land on the good days.

That brings us to Pat and me. The year started in the car in Florida and we have been in it ever since. Pat is still working for the Secretary of State and I am still fixen' houses so we get out of the car just long enough



to go to work during the week, but as Friday nears, there is always talk of where we should go for our weekend outing. Sometimes the outings are just for the day and other times we are out for a long weekend.

Two notable vacations were to Wisconsin and Northern Indiana. Our trip to Wisconsin was to visit with Pat's deceased brother Jim's first family. Did you follow that? It was an informal memorial. We had a wonderful time catching up with our niece Brett and our nephew Tony. I don't think we ever did catch up with their mother Dar. She runs on a different frequency. She might even live in another world but she sure is fun! Tony and his mom posed here to reflect back on Jim. If you knew Jim, you knew he was seldom seen without his shades. We can all remember a lot of good times with him. He was quite the beatnik when he and Dar were married.

We also took the opportunity to visit with an old high school friend, Nancy and her husband Hans. The "old" denotation here is not to imply a direct description of age. It is, rather a description of how long ago we began our friendship. If you follow that same thought thread, you might deduce the facts regarding age but that was not my intention as she is probably less age challenged than I am! We saw some beautiful sights along Lake Michigan and up into Door County. We saw more than our share of lighthouses during our short stay up there and we will definitely be going back. They also introduced us to our first squeaky fresh cheese curds. How delightful! Almost makes us want to move to be closer.





Our second most memorable trip included my sister Carol as we went on a quest to find our roots in northern Indiana. We visited a cemetery where my quadruple great grandfather was buried. I liked the simplicity of his stone. It read, "Peter Schrinier Died" I think we can assume that about all the permanent residents here, right? (Actually, the stone had been broken and a portion was now below grade.) Apparently, he was the last one who could spell our name, Schrinier. (Prior to that it was Schreiner) All these years, I thought I was special and not related to the Shriners, but

that was not the case. Schrinier was changed to Shriner and a few generations back someone decided it was best to just get the "H" out of there and we became Srinier. I'm beginning to see where my spelling abilities originated. We even went out and got paper and soft crayons so we could make impressions of the tombstones. That must have been quite a site. You would have thought we were aspiring Forensic Anthropologists like "Bones". Now what the heck are we going to do with a roll of tombstone impressions, take it to the Smithsonian?

This two night trip brought new meaning to sibling rivalry. My sister discovered that all the stories Kim tells about our snoring are excessively underestimated. And I discovered that my sister has anxiety attacks at night if she doesn't have the TV on while she sleeps. I woke up to the obnoxious sound of Bill O'Reilly talking over someone and I turned it off. Carol woke up to the sound of my snoring concert and turned on the TV to drown it out. None of us got much sleep that night. It would have been funny watching she and I

jockey for position the next day to see which one of us would suggest that sharing a room was not going to be a viable arrangement in the future. The next night we got separate rooms. Some how Pat and I have learned to tolerate each other's nightly symphony but to anyone else, even family, it resembles the sound of giant earth movers digging a new Grand Canyon. It has been described as a new dimension of sound that you don't hear just through your ears. It resonates with the entire room. There are rumors that guests in neighboring rooms have lost fillings just from the vibrations. If the writers' strike continues, TV reality shows might move into the bedroom with the new show "Sleep or no sleep" or the spin-off "Are you louder than The Sriners?" Both might appear in the TV guide next year.



This same trip also took us to The Limberlost of Gene Stratton Porter. She was a prolific writer during the time of my great grandfather Professor Robert Rowley. According to letters she wrote to him, his help with scientific information and general editorial expertise was extensive. However, to our surprise, he was never acknowledged in her books.

We wanted to set the record straight and share those letters Gene had written to him regarding his input. The curator said this was one of the most enlightening finds he had encountered since he started work there. It felt good to get my Great-Grandfather Rowley the credit he deserved. He certainly deserved it. Many of these butterflies in Gene's bedroom pictured on the previous page were probably sent in chrysalis form to her from Great Grandfather Rowley. He shipped specimens all over the world.

Around Thanksgiving time, I awakened one morning on top of Pikes Peak and couldn't get my breath. Actually, I was not really on Pikes Peak but it seemed like it as I could not get my breath. This lasted for about 3 and a half hours and then went away. I have spent the last two weeks trying to discover the cause. The first tests ruled out lung problems. The second battery ruled out heart problems. So, what was left, we didn't know. It wasn't until Pat got me a pair of loosely fitting sweats that I discovered the problem. My pants were too tight. It is amazing what an extra 4 inches at the center fold will do for breathing. So, I go on record. Next year I will take off enough weight to be able to give a urine sample without the aid of a mirror.

That brings us to the close of another fleeting year and the end to this yearly narrative. We plan to end this year just like we started it, in Florida visiting friends and taking pictures of the beauty in this semi-tropical location.

2008 promises to bring new beginnings. May those new beginnings bring you peace, good health and prosperity.

From our house to yours we wish you a Merry Christmas, or the seasonal greeting of your faith and a Happy New Year 2008.



**Love and Light,
Dulany and Pat**