

December 2013

Dear Friends,

Last year's letter ended with a happy note about "my new friend, Alice." So let me lead off this year by saying that we are still going strong. Alice is a custom bookbinder whose wonderful studio, filled with heavy mysterious tools, is a block away from my place. If asked for advice on romance, we say: find someone within a five-block radius. We have now met most of each other's siblings and children. We have traveled together and learned much about each other's foibles, and yet we are still together - it's a miracle!

One of the highlights of this year was a trip to England - Alice went first to connect with some friends from her many years there. Then we met up - and the sun shone for the first time in months, they told us - in order to attend the many festivities around the wedding of Dot & Roger's daughter (my niece) Sarah and her (now) husband Tim. It was a splendid ceremony and reception, with time as well for dinners at country pubs and walks in the rolling hills of the Midlands. The other siblings - Helen & Marv and David & Susan - were on hand, so we managed yet another "sibling reunion."

After the wedding weekend, Alice & I went down to London, where dear friends from my Philips days hosted us - we think there might be special significance in their initials being B & B. In London we wandered around, heard wonderful concerts, and introduced one another to more friends. At this point I think we have majority approval.



Speaking of travels, in September we traveled to western New York to visit the site of the Roycroft semi-utopian arts & crafts community in East Aurora. While there we also visited the architectural highlights of downtown Buffalo,

two Frank Lloyd Wright houses, Niagara Falls (no, we did not get married), the lovely Letchworth State Park, and - a major attraction in the area - the Jell-O museum in Le Roy, New York!



It's been a year of ups and downs for Colin. After several false starts, he embraced recovery. Released from rehab in February, he did well for several months, living on his own and working at the home improvement store Lowe's, where he advanced quickly. In the summer, unfortunately, he relapsed. To make a long story short, he went back to court and was sentenced to serve about 7 months in the county jail – he'll get out in March. Despite the setback, he seems committed to recovery. I have been enjoying our conversations on my weekly visits. When released, he intends to get away from familiar triggers and move to another part of the country, though it's unclear where exactly.



Another trip this year was to Phoenix in May for Sanford's graduation from Arizona State – somewhat to all of our amazement, including Sanford's. Colin came out with me, and Emma came from California. Wendy had already moved to Phoenix - later Emma moved there, too (she is now working for Saks), so all three are now in the same town, at least for now. In October, Sanford had a wedding to attend in Newburgh, so he came and stayed with me for a few days, which was great.



Others close to me have had some health challenges this year, including sister Helen and brother-in-law Roger, but both are doing well now.

Work continues to be varied and interesting. In the first half of the year I was traveling every other week to Sacramento to work on the health exchange ("Obamacare") for the state or California - on behalf of my Accenture colleagues, I'm proud to note that this one launched successfully enough to NOT make the news or the late-night comic routines! Since then, I've had projects for an energy utility based in Charlotte, pharma companies in New Jersey and PA, and a Canadian transportation authority. Some of that work I did in Chicago for several weeks, which afforded some dinners with Helen & Marv – and even Alice, who was in town for a family reunion or her own.



This month I was persuaded to include my condo on the Historical Society's annual house tour - I don't know what I was thinking, but it turned out to be fun, and it forced me to clean, organize, and decorate to the nines - well, maybe the sixes and sevens.