

Dear Family and Friends,

December 2013

The past year's events included the birth of a grandchild and the wedding of a daughter. Shame on me if I do not take the time to write a holiday letter to share such joyous news.

Jaslyn and her husband Jim welcomed a healthy baby boy, Talus James Lahnista, on January 30, 2013. He arrived a few days early and weighed 6 lbs 1 oz. His last name is a combination of his grandmothers' maiden names: Lahner and Kubista. At the time of this writing, he is the only Talus Lahnista in the world. Although I see him through the lens of a grandmother, others have also commented that he is an incredibly happy, alert baby. Of course, now that his hair has grown and he is walking around furniture, he looks more like a little boy than a baby.

Dorissa married Aneel Gursahaney on July 6, 2013 in a grand, colorful Hindu ceremony at the Minneapolis Mill City Ruins. The event focused not only on the union of Dorissa and Aneel, but also on the union of their families. Aneel's parents live in Pennsylvania and many of their family and friends traveled from distant locations, including India, to attend the wedding. We are thrilled to embrace Aneel as our son-in-law! Dorissa has changed her name to Dorissa Lahner Gursahaney.

Three years ago I wrote a holiday missive that, I am embarrassed to say, was never mailed. I have included the 2010 letter with this greeting. This 2013 letter summarizes events of the past three years. You can decide whether you want to read chronologically or reverse chronologically (or at all). Also, I am posting the holiday letters, with additional pictures, on my holiday letter website:

RosalynPautzke.com Select the [Holiday Letters](#) link.

The password is "peace" without the quotes.

I apologize for the length of this letter, but a lot has happened in the past three years:

Tanya – Gary's oldest daughter Tanya and her husband Chad have six children: Hailey, Ivan, Nolan, Violet, Leo, and Sylvia. All the children, except Sylvia, who is almost three years old, are in school or pre-school as well as many church, community, and athletic activities. I am nearly overcome with exhaustion merely talking to Tanya about her family's schedule! Chad and Tanya are both teaching school in addition to coaching and overseeing Sunday school curriculum. Their remodeled turn-of-the-century convent is stunning ---- worth a trip to Springfield just to tour the house!

Crystal – Gary's youngest daughter Crystal and her husband Nick had their fourth beautiful daughter, Farrah, in October of 2012. She and her older blonde, blue-eyed sisters --- Skyla, Hazel, and Lydia --- keep their parents quite busy, especially now that Farrah is walking. They enjoy living in the country where the girls can spend lots of time outside playing and exploring. Crystal still finds time to exercise and recently won a local 5K race.

Nick – Gary’s son, Nick, recently announced his engagement to partner Andy. They are planning a June 2014 wedding in Minneapolis. Nick continues to work for Wells Fargo Bank and Andy is a fireman. They live in Maple Grove with their two dogs and enjoy boating in nearby lakes. They also enjoy excursions to Florida during the winter. I hope to help them with wedding tasks.

Jaslyn – Jaslyn took three months off following Talus’ birth, but is now back at work with the EPA where she has taken on additional responsibilities because of federal budget constraints. Jim is in his second year as a biology professor at University of Northern Colorado in Greeley. Of course, Talus has become the center of their world and, fortunately, they found a fantastic nanny to care for Talus when they are working. Their home has changed considerably during the past two years as they converted a large double garage to living space --- all the better to host doting grandparents travelling from the Midwest! Jim’s parents live in Wisconsin. Jaslyn and Talus have flown twice to visit us and I have been to Colorado several times this past year, both driving and flying. When Jaslyn told me she was going to the hospital to have her baby, I jumped in the vehicle and headed west. Unfortunately, Nebraska was showing an ugly side of its personality, blowing up a blizzard bad enough to close Interstate 80. After pacing the floor in a truck stop for a couple hours, I ventured out on the back roads to go around the closure and ultimately made it to the hospital in time!

Jaslyn and Jim rescued another goat and two more cats, but sadly lost a goat, Ichabod, to cancer last year. Talus enjoys his feline playmates and now that he is mobile, they receive a lot more “petting.” When Talus is outside, the large male goose Gargamel is Talus’ self-appointed guardian and always by his side. Fortunately, Jaslyn and Jim’s “ranch” is on relatively high ground near Longmont Colorado and they did not have flood damage this past summer. However, all the roads around them were flooded and closed so they felt the effects of the disaster by being stranded a few days.

Lesanna – Lesanna graduated from veterinary school (Madison Wisconsin) with both a DVM and MPH (Masters of Public Health) in spring 2011. After a temporary job on Palmyra (a Pacific Island) attempting to protect Bristle-thighed Curlews (birds) from the effects of a rat eradication project, she was hired by the Lincoln Park Zoo. However, the air quality and population density of Chicago did not agree with her, so she took a position as the staff veterinarian for the Seattle Aquarium in 2012. She also worked part time for a zoo in Tacoma. Some of Lesanna’s professional activities have been reported in the media, including polar bear surgery, sea star mortality investigation, and care of a sea otter that had been shot. (I will include links on the holiday letter website). Ironically, she ended up renting a home on Bainbridge Island about the same time my brother Ron and wife Kristen were moving from Bainbridge Island to Coeur d’Alene Idaho. For her veterinary work, Lesanna does a fair amount of travelling, which has included Africa, France, Hawaii, Canada, and far flung locations in the US. This and various treks taken by Jaslyn and Dorissa cause me many white knuckle moments as I track their flights. Lesanna lives with her two Dobermans (Miska and Tombo), cats, and a rescued goose.

Dorissa – Although veterinary school went well for Dorissa, she decided after her first year that she really wanted to become a doctor for humans. During the time that she applied for acceptance into U of Minnesota medical school she worked as a chemist and an instructor in the chemistry portion of the medical school entrance examination. She was accepted and is now well into her second year of the

program. For more than a decade Dorissa has been performing laboratory research primarily in the area of chemistry. This past summer she investigated thermal treatment for liver cancer and will be presenting her paper at a radiology conference this spring.

Three years ago she met Aneel who is a pediatrician at the Brooklyn Center Park Nicollet Clinic. They were married this past summer and live in a lovely neighborhood in south Minneapolis. Their two dogs, Juniper and Cayenne, are happy with the fenced-in yard and the gas heating stove. Dorissa and Aneel travel often to the Boundary Waters area for camping, canoeing, or kayaking. Before their wedding they made a trip to India with Aneel's parents to visit family and purchase authentic Indian clothes for the wedding. All of the beads and sequins of the dresses, saris, and other fabric were sewn in place by hand.

Gary – Next year is Gary's 40th year with Mathiowetz Construction. Recently, he has worked on projects in South Dakota and Minnesota. In addition to his job, Gary has been doing some custom work with his skid steer. "Odd Job Gary," the name of his company, will probably consume a lot of his time once he retires from Mathiowetz. Even now, I think his motorcycle is jealous of the skid steer because Gary spends more time with it than cycling. Recently he outfitted the skid steer with a wood splitter, which makes it easier for me to heat our home with wood using the split logs. In addition to giving the furnace a break, the wood fire really feels nice when temperatures outside are below zero, as they have been recently.

Gary and I both enjoy our eleven grandchildren. We don't see Crystal and Tanya's families as often as we did when they lived closer and now that the kids are older (Hailey will be 14 this March), they are consumed with activities and not all in one place for a visit. But, we do get together fairly often.

Over the years, Gary has always made sure the bird and deer feeders are well stocked. Apparently, the animals have spread the word, because we have hundreds of birds and dozens of deer eating in our yard. Last year we routinely had twenty deer in the vicinity of the house and on one occasion we counted thirty! It is interesting to watch the pheasants and deer jockey for position at the corn feeder.

Family – My brother Ron took a position as general counsel for a hospital in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho where he and Kristen now reside. Their son John graduated from law school, passed the bar, works in Denver, and is engaged to be married in August 2014. Daughter Janna enjoys living in the Caribbean, but plans on returning to the homeland sometime soon. My brother Jim and wife Traci are in the process of becoming empty nesters. Their oldest, Nicole, graduates from Northwestern this spring, Dylan just entered U of Minnesota Carlson School, and Ben plays the only child while still in high school.

Gary's folks had a rough year replete with cancer and other ailments, but they are on the mend. Fortunately, the cancer was a type which is curable if treated with chemotherapy. They are still living on the farm, driving, and active in the community.

Sadly, we lost Uncle Murray, my Mother's oldest brother, to a heart attack. The remaining eight of ten Harpole siblings are doing well other than the typical complaints of aging. Jaslyn lives a stone's throw from Uncle Brian (youngest of the ten) and they see each other occasionally.

Animals – Our collection of primarily rescue animals has not changed significantly since the previous holiday greeting. We did lose our eleven year old German Shepherd to a vascular cancer common to the breed. As fate would have it, a five pound white Chihuahua, Wobegon, lost his mistress to cancer and needed a home shortly after Kiefer died, so we continue to share our home with five dogs (Rupert, Callie, Wobegon, Daisy, and Iris). Daisy and Iris are now fourteen and other than Iris' profound deafness, they are not showing their age. Lesanna rescued another goat, Buster, an elderly male, who lives in the barn with the horses and cow. I often think, as I do chores, that we humans should take lessons about our outlook on life from goats. Rarely do I see one of our goats or Jaslyn's goats simply walking. They are always frolicking, jumping sideways as if to click together their little cloven feet, or springing in the air on all four legs. Always, they are exuberant --- happy to be alive and feel the sunshine on their backs. We collected one more stray cat, Squatter, who as an injured kitten took over the heated huts of the other cats last winter --- hence the name. After rehabilitation, he was relocated to the barn and is fast friends with Ozzie (old pony) and Buster.

It is worth mentioning that Kirby, the cockatiel Ron and Kristen gave to Mom, is now 25 years old. He and his elderly companion (a rescue cockatiel) are still chirping and Kirby still sings the songs that Mom taught him. They are now sharing their large Plexiglas cage with a toad I found in the kitchen a couple weeks ago. Presumably, the toad was hibernating underneath the bark of a log I brought in and was fortunate enough to fall off before the wood was put in the stove. That rounds out the changes in our collection of critters. Our nest is certainly not empty and this diverse crew brings us a lot of smiles and satisfaction. Pictures of our five horses, 5 dogs, 5 cats, 3 peacocks, and the goat and cow are on the holiday letter website.

Rosalyn – My big news is that I have retired and I love every minute of my retirement! Although I miss some the friends I used to see at work, I still see them --- just less often. I have been able tackle projects neglected for years or decades! I have stained, painted, spackled, sanded, resealed, rewired, and reorganized. I even found a way to make sparkles in the ceiling. I canned more than two hundred jars of food last summer. My sewing machine has been getting a work out, not only making table runners and other items for Dorissa's wedding, but quilts, crib sheets, dog coats, baby blankets, blouses, pants, and curtains. Probably more important and gratifying is the time and attention I am able to give to my family. I actually cook daily rather than weekly for Gary, which he appreciates. I have been able to help my children with routine tasks, big events, and crisis issues in their lives.

From time to time, I volunteer my experience and training (especially the law degree) to help people. I still dabble in technology for personal and family purposes (our websites, primarily). Projects such as digitizing all our photographic slides and negatives are not complete, but I continue to make progress. It has been exciting to find long lost negatives and is always nostalgic to look back into the past as I scan each image. But largely, I take care of our family, the animals, the house, the farm, and move through each day with a smile. I do move through the days more slowly than I used to because of arthritis, but the days seem to fly by faster than ever! Why is that??

Because I believe that a pervasive spirit of compassion --- whether the genesis is Christianity, Buddhism, or other value system --- will help avoid much of the violence that surrounds us today, I am sharing this short quote:

If you want others to be happy, practice compassion.
If you want to be happy, practice compassion.

Sometimes we think that to develop an open heart, to be truly loving and compassionate, means that we need to be passive, to allow others to abuse us, to smile and let anyone do what they want with us. Yet this is not what is meant by compassion. Quite the contrary. Compassion is not at all weak. It is the strength that arises out of seeing the true nature of suffering in the world. Compassion allows us to bear witness to that suffering, whether it is in ourselves or others, without fear; it allows us to name injustice without hesitation, and to act strongly, with all the skill at our disposal. To develop this mind state of compassion...is to learn to live, as the Buddha put it, with sympathy for all living beings, without exception.

*Quoted by Sharon Salzberg in **Compassion, the Supreme Emotion***

I wish you health and peace in the coming year.

