

**Greetings!** I hope this tardy update finds you well as you kick off the New Year. Gary and I had a wonderful 2014. Our children are all doing well and our grandchildren are growing up quickly. We are still living in rural Northfield enjoying the wildlife, animal companionship, and the demands of farm life.

**Gary's** road construction job on Interstate 35 at Owatonna this year involved bridges, railroad crossings, and several ramps. He worked long hours, but was able to commute from home rather than staying on site. In spite of some challenges, the job finished on time, but it is actually only half finished. The northbound bridges and ramps are slated for next year. When he is not building roads, Gary is usually tackling a project around home or doing skid steer work. Some of our projects are on-going such as making firewood and hauling manure, while others are one-time, such as adding stalls in the barn.

**Tanya,** Gary's oldest daughter, and husband Chad continue to renovate their hundred-year old, convent home in Springfield, Minnesota, and are incredibly busy with their six children, several jobs, and church and community activities. With their oldest child turning 15 this spring and the youngest almost 4 years old, it seems that one of the children always has an evening or weekend event of some sort. There is a lot of energy and love at the Hovland household! Chad teaches full time in the public schools and Tanya has several part time jobs including teaching.

**Nick,** Gary's son, had a really big year, as Ed Sullivan used to say. He married Andy, his partner of 15 years in a lovely outdoor ceremony in Maple Grove, Minnesota, near where they live. I enjoyed helping with the invitations and programs for the wedding, but they did all the planning. It turned out to be the happiest wedding imaginable! Interestingly, their wedding was featured on the Today show: <http://www.today.com/style/marriage-equality-minnesota-makes-couples-dream-wedding-come-true-1D80110534>. Recently, Nick switched jobs within the bank. Andy continues his work as a firefighter.

**Crystal,** Gary's younger daughter, and husband Nick are kept busy by their four beautiful daughters, two of which are already in school. They live on an acreage outside of Springfield with great outbuildings and a grove for the kids to play in. Crystal is active in her church and a few months ago, she hosted a large Christian music concert at their farm. Nick continues to work in his father's welding shop.

**Jaslyn,** Rosalyn's oldest daughter, and husband James, spent their first full year as a family of three and have enjoyed the many changes a child brings. Their yard in Longmont, Colorado now sports a fantastic play center with swings, slide, and "look out" platform as well as the longstanding garden, pasture, and native plant landscaping. Talus "helps" Mom and Dad with chores in the barn and loves to play with the cats, geese, and goats. Lesanna, Dorissa, and I attended Talus' first birthday party in January. Jaslyn and Talus flew to Minnesota several times, which is always a treat for us and Talus enjoys our animals and the heavy equipment on Grandpa's job site. Jaslyn has been with the EPA almost 12 years now and began working in the Air Quality division this past year. Jim continues his job as a Biology professor. Their horses, goats, geese, and cats are rescued or stray animals that got lucky to live with Jaz and Jim.

**Lesanna,** Rosalyn's middle daughter, serves as the veterinarian for the Seattle Aquarium as well as doing some equine, wildlife rehabilitation, and veterinary relief work. Lesanna is involved in researching starfish wasting disease and was interviewed by Ira Flatow on Science Friday (public radio) <http://www.sciencefriday.com/guests/lesanna-lahner.html> . Not only is her professional schedule demanding, but her commute is demanding also as she bicycles 15 miles a day to and from the ferry. She

lives in an enchanted, straw-bale cottage in the woods of Bainbridge Island with her dogs, cats, and ducks. Her two horses are pastured nearby. Sadly, Lesanna lost her wonderful, little red Doberman, Miska, this summer. Miska was one of those “almost human” dogs with a special spirit. She had been a great companion to Lesanna for nearly nine years. Although she succumbed to a combination of Doberman-typical ailments, Miska displayed her spark until the end. Lesanna’s current canine critters are Miska’s brother and a rescued blue Doberman puppy.

**Dorissa**, Rosalyn’s youngest daughter, is expecting a baby boy with her husband Aneel in early April. Fortunately, the pregnancy has not interfered with the demanding clinical rotation schedule of a third year medical student. In preparing the nursery, Dorissa and Aneel are using some furniture from my childhood as well as items that are not “antiques.” They have two nice Dobermans to help welcome the little newcomer. Of course, Gary and I are really excited. Not only will this be our 12<sup>th</sup> grandchild, but this one will be geographically close! In addition to her work in clinical settings, Dorissa has done research on a possible thermal chemical treatment for liver cancer and was asked to present her findings at a conference this spring. She and Aneel are adventurers and have made several camping trips to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area. Aneel and friends took a winter camping trip in -30° weather last year during one of our polar vortex cold spells. Aneel is a pediatrician with Park Nicollet.

**Rosalyn** – I love retirement! I am able to do so much more for our family than I could when working. I have visited and hosted my children’s families several times this year. My most ambitious trip was driving to Seattle after packing our truck and small trailer to the gills with items Lesanna had been storing here including two pottery wheels and hundreds of pounds of books. Our old Doberman, Callie, came with me for the 3500 mile jaunt and was a great traveling companion. Gary and I went to Colorado for John’s wedding (brother Ron and Kristen’s son) and although we were only away overnight, it was our first vacation together in more than a dozen years. It is tough to get away from the farm. In addition to all the great activities with children and grandchildren, I have been able to tackle lots of projects that desperately needed attention after being ignored in past decades. I stay active with mowing, gardening, snow shoveling, wood heating, and the routine work of caring for our horses, cow, goat, dogs, cats, peacocks, and cockatiels. Yes, Kirby (Mom’s bird) is still chirping after 26 years. I continue to make slow progress in digitizing the thousands of photographic negatives my parents and our family generated over the years. My parents’ slides and pictures bring alive the “days gone by” for me and my children. I want to capture these images in a format that will not deteriorate in decades to come so our grandchildren can enjoy (and laugh at) the old times. I put together some photographs of this year’s highlights, which can be viewed at <http://rosalyn.smugmug.com/Rosalyns-Pages/Holiday-Greetings-2014> .

In other family news, my brothers’ families are doing well. Ron and Kristen enjoy their condominium in Coeur d’Alene, Idaho. Jim and Traci will soon become empty nesters in Eden Prairie, Minnesota. We celebrated Gary’s parents’ 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary this fall and they are doing well.

I hope for more compassion in the world this coming year and will try to live my life to contribute to and move toward that goal. May the coming year be a healthy and happy one for you.

Warmly, Rosalyn and Gary and the critters