

Although holiday letters are becoming a thing of the past, I am not ready to abandon the effort, albeit shamefully tardy, to share our news with family and friends. The past two years included both joy and sadness. Gary and I welcomed more grandchildren, but we also said goodbye to Gary's father.

This letter provides a glimpse of our past year with some pictures. You may view more photos at [rosalynpautzke.com/open.htm](http://rosalynpautzke.com/open.htm). (Choose the Photo Highlights from 2015 – 2016 link)

Jaslyn, Jim, son Talus, and their animals remain in Longmont Colorado, although they did purchase a farm in Minnesota in 2015. Less than two miles down the road from our place, the property they bought had been in the seller's family since 1880 and this was the first time on the market. It has beautiful hills, woods, fields, a lake view, and a venerable old stone foundation barn. They have no plans to move in the near future, but spend time fixing and enjoying the new place. Last winter, I



Talus in Colorado, 3rd Birthday

visited Colorado to help celebrate Talus' third birthday. It was hard to imagine it had been three years since I drove through a blizzard to be there for his arrival. I flew this time, but when a young TSA agent told me I could keep my shoes on because I looked over 75, driving in a blizzard seemed pretty appealing. (I am 68). Now Talus' fourth birthday party is just around the corner (Jan 2017). Talus is a delight---curious, talkative, sometimes contrary, and always keeps his parents busy. He received an award from the local library for reading more than 1000 books before starting kindergarten. Jaslyn, Jim, and

Talus take care of several rescued animal companions including horses, goats, geese, and cats. They travel to Minnesota quite often now because of their farm here. Jaslyn and Talus visited shortly after my first foot surgery and Talus took very good care of Grandma. He liked my "crunches" (crutches).

Lesanna works with a non-profit organization, SR<sup>3</sup>, in the Seattle area that rehabilitates and releases marine animals in need of help. The



organization's website is [sealifer3.org](http://sealifer3.org). Lesanna also continues to serve as the veterinarian for the Sarvey Wildlife Center. Her long-held passion to help wild animals and their environment aligns perfectly with her job responsibilities --- an ideal situation. She moved from Bainbridge Island to a rural

area, northeast of Seattle, which can accommodate her two horses as well as her dogs, cat, and chickens. Her work is always interesting and sometimes

provides fodder for local and national news stories including sea turtle rescues, sea star disease, disentanglements, and unique surgeries. Lesanna found time to make a few trips home last year, which always include helping us with the animals and exploring our pastures and woods. She flew back



Lesanna

last month to help following my second surgery playing the role of the pain pill enforcer, as I tend to delay or omit timely medication.

In April of 2015, Dorissa and Aneel welcomed a son, Aarav Otis. For several months, I spent two days a week as his nanny and was able to be a part of all those exciting infant milestones before he started



Dorissa, Aneel, Aarav Nov 2016

daycare. He is almost 20 months old now and fortunately did not follow in his mother's "footsteps" of walking at 8 months and climbing out of the crib soon after. Aarav is a sweet, fun little guy who speaks Spanish (and English) and uses sign language that he has learned at his daycare.

Aarav loves looking at his books and recently received a new book about being a big brother! We are excited that Dorissa is expecting a girl in mid-February! Dorissa

finished medical school last spring and is half way through her first year of residency. She, Aneel, Aarav, and the new

baby will be moving to Colorado in June of 2017 where she will complete four years of residency in Radiology. They are buying a house in Boulder, as Aneel will be joining a pediatric group there. Sadly, they lost their wonderful Doberman, Juniper, to bone cancer in 2015. June was a sweet, happy girl with a big personality. She is sorely missed, but Aarav still has canine playmates: Cayenne Pepper and Clover, both Dobermans.

Tanya, Chad, and their six children are probably the most active family in Springfield, Minnesota. Tanya works multiple jobs, including preschool teacher, and Chad teaches at the secondary level and also coaches. Hailey, the oldest, turns 17 next spring and all the kids are in school. It is amazing to think that our grandchildren are old enough to start visiting colleges! Gary travels to Springfield quite often to visit his family there and take in the grandkids' events. Leo landed a part in the school's production of Lion King, which promises to be fun to see. Violet (age 12) participated in a dance competition in the Twin Cities, which we attended. She and her team did really well, but this grandma was not prepared for the auditory experience. The volume was so high that the music could be felt. I am sure that everyone in the gym lost some hearing acuity but it was fun seeing all of the sparkly uniforms and the great little athletes.

Nick and Andy win this year's prize for the earth-moves-under-my-feet news. They are adopting three children! Two of them, a girl age 4 and a boy age 2, will be moving in on Dec 17<sup>th</sup> and the baby will be joining them in a few months. The children are siblings. What an exciting time for them and their extended family! We are excited to meet the children. Last year, Nick and Andy moved to a lovely home in north Maple Grove (Minneapolis suburb) with a backyard that abuts a woods and pond. They see deer and an occasional coyote along with many birds and squirrels. Nick is starting a wedding piano playing business in addition to his bank job. Andy continues to work as both a professional and volunteer fireman. Andy always works on Thanksgiving putting out all those turkey fryer garage fires so we typically invite Nick to eat with us. Last year before we even started dinner, Gary asked Nick to

help remove our ancient cast iron bath tub that was held in place by layers of flooring and walls. Hours and much exertion later, the tub, which was almost too heavy for two strong men to carry, was relocated out in the snowy front yard. We feared that Nick would never accept another invitation to come down to the farm but we were pleasantly surprised when he joined us this year for Thanksgiving.

Crystal gave birth to a boy, Jace Duane, in late summer of 2015. He joins his four sisters on their farm outside of Springfield and is getting lots of attention. Following in a Pautzke family tradition, Jace played the part of baby Jesus in the outdoor Nativity Pageant in December. Like their cousins in town, Crystal's children are doing well in school and participating in lots of activities. . Nick is working as a welder in Springfield and Crystal spends her time as a homemaker and chauffeur. Skyla, the oldest, won an award for an essay she wrote about her father. Crystal and Nick hosted their second religious music festival at their farm. Nick plays the trumpet and is asked to play for funerals of those who have served in the military. He played as a part of the military honors for Gary's father.

Gary finished a two-year I-35 highway construction project and also completed his 43<sup>nd</sup> year working for Mathiowetz. He retired in late August this year to take care of me following foot surgery. Although his skid steer business, Odd Job Gary, will be a big part of his retirement activities, the farm is always a wellspring of projects such as horse bridge building, wood splitting, fence making, and general fixing. Gary's deer and bird feeders attract lots of wildlife, which we take pleasure in watching. Interestingly, our squirrel population diversified last summer with the birth of three albino babies. Gary had a couple scary health issues this past summer involving ambulances, hospitalization, and lots of tests. Fortunately, we now know that an antibiotic caused his anaphylaxis and he will never again use that type of medication.

Gary is not having any trouble keeping busy in his retirement. He is a lot like his father who was nearly 87 when he died (Jan 2016) and busy in his woodworking shop until he went to the hospital. Gary's dad was a wonderful man who is missed dearly. Ed was the type of person you meet once and never forget. He always had a twinkle in his eye and was ready with a witty remark. A lifelong farmer, he was dedicated to caring for his family and helping others. Unlike many of his generation, he embraced technology and was a wizard with sound systems. He carted his audio equipment throughout the region providing services for churches and other organizations. As a lay minister he preached to many area congregations and regularly visited inmates in nearby prisons. Ed was a special man. He did good, he saw the good in others, and he withheld judgment. The world sorely needs more compassionate, generous people like Ed. No one has better credentials for the afterlife than Gary's dad.

My brothers' families are doing well. Ron and Kristen love their beautiful Idaho location. With their youngest in college, Jim and Traci are adjusting to their empty nest in Minnesota. Sadly, we lost a lovely cousin last year when Karen Harpole Kirk (my Mom's brother's daughter) succumbed to the effects of her rheumatoid arthritis. I have fond childhood memories of playing with Karen and her sister Linda on their farm. We also lost a cousin this year to cancer. Stephen Beryl Lahner (my Dad's brother's son) was a successful entrepreneur and amazing adventurer. He climbed mountains, flew

airplanes, and until the day he died, he was planning his next quest. Both these cousins were kind, generous people who left us too early.

I continue to delight in my retirement. As I get older, I am slower at my chores and projects, but I love taking care of the animals, mowing, gardening, canning, heating with wood, sewing, and connecting with my far flung family. Gary and I still live on our farm in rural Northfield. We continue to take care of our rescue critters including dogs, cats, horses, a cow, and a goat. Those of you who remember my mother's bird, Kirby, may be interested to know that he is still alive (almost 29 years old) along with his cage mate, an elderly rescue cockatiel. Recently, I moved them to a new cage and can attest that these geriatric cockatiels still have great jaw strength as each one bit my hand hard enough to draw blood. Like Gary, I viewed the lights in the hospital hallways from the gurney point of view a couple times this past year when I had joint fusion surgery on both my feet. I am about four weeks out from the second surgery and hope my x-ray later in December is good enough to remove the boot. I lost six severely arthritic joints but gained some expensive plates and screws!

Farm life is demanding, dirty, and requires constant attention, but I see the stars, hear the wildlife, and smell the buds of a thousand trees in the spring. Gary calls me Forrest Gump because not only am I mowing our yard and pastures, but also Jaslyn's new place, which is like riding a roller coaster in slow motion on the hills. In spite of the noisy gas engine, there is something peaceful about watching the barn swallows and dragonflies swoop toward the freshly mowed grass.



Jim Haughian Soldering in remodeled bathroom

My family helped transform one of our bathrooms to include a washer and dryer to eliminate the risk of falling associated with carrying laundry baskets up and down our uneven, cement basement stairs. In the demolition process we took the room down to the original walnut wall studs and floor planks ---- with big, scary gaps in between them. It has been a fascinating project and the finished room is great! I like the first floor laundry even more than I anticipated and it was a heartwarming family effort.

I wish I had some pictures of Tanya, Crystal, and Nick's families to share. Next year I will have to allow time to collect some from them.



Jaslyn and Talus, Colorado

With warm wishes for happiness and health. Rosalyn and Gary and all the critters!