

Dear Family and Friends,

December 2016

We won!!! And it was against all odds. We live in a beautiful rural setting in Sonoma County in California. We found out a couple months ago that a land use ordinance was planned to allow commercial cultivation of marijuana in our neighborhood. We have over 2 acres, and the ordinance would allow a 2,500-foot hoop house. A group of about 12 neighbors convinced the county supervisors last night to not allow any commercial marijuana cultivation in rural residential neighborhoods forever. There are 22,000 parcels and 81,000 people that our neighborhood saved (this was mostly the same team that stopped Guy Fieri from building a huge event center in our rural neighborhood last year). We wrote letters to the newspaper and the county and spoke to the Planning Commission and Supervisors. Judy made posters. She developed the "No Commercial Cannabis in Rural Residential" sign. The new ordinance that just passed allows commercial marijuana to be grown in industrial and agricultural areas with controls.

In March, we traveled to the Far East (Vietnam, Cambodia & Thailand). There are masses of very pleasant, hardworking people mostly traveling on motor scooters with a cell phone in their ear or taking selfies. It was very hot and humid for us somewhat old folks. Hanoi has a French influence. We saw the prison (Hanoi Hilton) where John McCain spent 6 years. Also the Ho Chi Min memorial (the people revere his memory). We saw the war memorial in Saigon and how horrible the war was. We were in the building where the last helicopters air lifted out people and also saw the tunnels where the Viet Cong hid. The highlight for Joe and the main reason we traveled to the Far East was the temple of Angkor Watt in Cambodia. It is the largest religious building in the world. Joe climbed to the highest part of the temple and got a picture of the Buddha. Thailand is a land of many, many temples. One temple has a 90-foot reclining Buddha with gold plating. The Buddha religion is very respectful of all things from nature to humans.

In April, we traveled to Oregon to witness our grandson, Josiah Lorenz, lead his team of 8th graders in the Oregon Battle of the Books to first place in the whole state. Each team read 16 books. Contests were held and a series of questions were asked to determine which team wins (there were over a thousand teams). Next we traveled to Boise, Idaho to witness our granddaughter, Rachel Edmondson, confirmed in the Catholic Church. Then we spent 2 weeks in Maui, Hawaii with our daughter Mary and husband Frank Roller and grandsons Nate & Tyler. We got in the most snorkeling ever. We also taught our grandsons the card game called "Pedro" and they loved it. Then our extended family spent a week in Park City, Utah. Most of our grandchildren were there and Joe's brother Bill and Kathy's family and his brother Paul and brother Jim and Sheila. We all stayed in a giant house and we loved it. We spent a day at a theme park North of Salt Lake City and another day at the winter Olympics facilities.

Joe had a very good year growing and selling grapes and making wine. This was a bit challenging because of our extended traveling. He has hopes for his Chardonnay, Zinfandel and a blend of Zinfandel/Petite Sirah that is aging. Hope springs eternal. After many years of drought, this year is starting out great. We already have about 20" of rain and our reservoirs are over 90%. We get all our rain from November to April, so this is a very good start. Joe loves community participation. Every Sunday, he visits several assisted living places and shares the Eucharist. They appreciate a smiling face as every day is the same. From April to November he brings flowers from our many flower gardens. Joe's brother Paul gave him a book titled "The Four Agreements" by Dom Miguel Ruiz. They are: "Be impeccable with your word; Don't take anything personally; Don't make assumptions; and Always do your best. Profound and practical words of wisdom. Joe is planning on starting a very ambitious project this year... identifying, digitizing and cataloging his extended family history. He has collected our family slides, his parents slides, Super * movies, and a lot of history from his ancestors. Ideally, he will build an index and load the files on the "Cloud" and have our extended family history for future generations.

Judy's real excitement is our grandchildren. She loves texting our children and grandchildren. It is so instant. She is very involved in a fun, exciting group of professional photographers (she is the treasurer and Joe helps out). They had their annual Christmas party at our place last Sunday. The piano was playing, people were singing, kids were running around and everybody was enjoying each other. Judy makes a wonderful jam from our Petite Sirah grapes. It is a very dark purple. Twice a week she walks over to our local grade school and just loves helping the first-grade children learn to read.

We are basically optimists; we should say currently challenged optimists. Joe has some background in economics and finance. He can envision that a united executive and legislative branch could accomplish some meaningful infrastructure and regulation improvements. However, we have 8 grandchildren and "post truth" (a new word in the Oxford dictionary) is frightening. The inspirational values of our country for the past centuries are being challenged.

We are spending a week after Christmas in Boise with all our family and hopefully will be skiing (Joe is going to be a bit more careful than last year when he got going too fast on a diamond run – this is cross country skiing). We will be back in Santa Rosa for 2 days and then off to Cuba. We are traveling with a group from Joe’s college (St. John’s in Minnesota) and will be doing volunteer work. Then off to Cancun, Mexico for almost 2 weeks of snorkeling and sightseeing (we plan to visit Mayan ruins).

Our grandchildren are growing up so fast. Katie Tembrock [16] plays volleyball and sings at her church. She also drives. Rachel Edmondson [16] plays volleyball and just got 2 gold medals in a 30 school debate contest (maybe she takes after her dad or after Judy’s brother, John Brandl). Josiah Lorenz [14] plans to build a computer (he wants to maximize it for games). Anna Tembrock[13] played volleyball and soccer (her dad, Joey was coach). She also has cute glasses. Emily Edmondson [13] plays soccer and volleyball and is learning the base guitar. Nate [12] & Tyler [10] are swimmers. They swam in a multi-state competition in Oregon this fall. Jennay Edmondson [10] couldn’t play soccer this fall because of a knee injury. But she has joined ballet, which should help strengthen her legs, has a dress and shoes and will perform next May (we plan to attend).

We wish you all a year of peace and joy,

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Marijuana “Hoop House” in our neighborhood (now illegal)



No Commercial Cannabis
in Rural Residential

Judy’s poster



Joe in Ha Long Bay in North Vietnam