

Dear family and friends,

Christmas, 2014

Life is interesting and full of challenges and opportunities. As we get older (we are both 74), life seems to get busier. We are very blessed and try and find joy in everything. We started the year with our entire family celebrating Christmas at our house. Judy made it especially fun by giving each grandchild an outfit with the Doctor Zeus "Things" ranging from "Thing One" for the oldest to "Thing Eight" for the youngest.

Our biggest challenge is trying to stop Guy Fieri (Joe had never heard of him before May of this year) from building a winery, tasting room and event center at the entrance to our road, Royal Court. His proposed place is in a rural residential neighborhood with a horse stable next door and two driveways from an elementary school. We live in a quiet, peaceful neighborhood and Guy's national celebrity will ruin it. Our county has a record of approving all winery applications. We are members of a strategic committee to stop the application. It probably will be a long battle ending in court. We are forming a coalition of other neighborhoods in Sonoma County to improve the zoning process.

This summer 8 of our grandchildren and most of the adults went white water rafting on the Salmon River in Idaho. Our daughter Amy and husband Mike got 4 rafts and all the gear and we headed down the river. This is the first time our daughter Mary and son Joey had captained a raft. One rapid was a bit scary.

In June of this year we invited Marcela and her children, Junior (sophomore in high school) and Jonny 4th grade) to live with us for a while. Low income housing is very difficult to find. Marcela has been cleaning our house for over 10 years. The boys love soccer and are very good players. Joe is trying to mentor Junior in his studies and there is some success.

We still love growing things. Judy's flower garden was the best ever and our roses lasted until Thanksgiving. Joe's vineyard is doing well as he sold all his grapes except for 45 gallons of awesome Petite Sirah and 8 gallons of Chardonnay that he has aging. His 2013 Petite Sirah is already drinkable.

Joe is very active in our parish and diocese with social justice. Our parish, Our Lady of Guadalupe, is a pilot parish with Catholic Charities in areas of housing and immigration. We are very excited with Pope Francis and his leadership. Judy and I are facilitating a small faith sharing group and we are reading Francis' book "The Joy of the Gospels". We are finding his book both inspiring and challenging. We see Pope Francis trying to lead a clerical church back to the roots of Christianity where Jesus' followers were filled with joy.

Joe's biggest concerns for our grandchildren are global climate change for the Earth and income inequality in the United States. His main sources of information are: The Economist; National Public Radio and TV; and publications like "National Geographic" and "National Resource Development Council" (NRDC). He won't listen to talk shows when we are traveling even though the radio only has talk shows (opinion verses factual information).

We went to our beloved vacation spot in Kauai with Judy's brother Don & his wife Pat. Don turned out to be a fearless snorkeler and we all enjoyed the island breeze.

Judy is in a wheel chair!! The Monday before Thanksgiving, 12 of our family were at the mouth of the Russian River where it flows into the Pacific Ocean. Judy and I had just been kayaking in the quiet waters in the river before it meets the ocean. Some of our family was lined up by the swells by the ocean and Judy was trying to get the perfect picture when a "sleeper" wave knocked her over, twisted her knee badly and ruined the camera. We immediately went to the Emergency Room and found no bones broken. She has an MCL injury and the doctor said: "No more football". She is on the mend, but still lives in a wheelchair.

We are blessed that our extended family is doing well. Becky Dave and Josiah Lorenz live near Eugene, Oregon. Dave survived the fire season and Becky substitute teaches and is the chief volunteer in the community. Josiah is growing fast, reads books for the Oregon Battle of the Books and loves computers. Mary and Frank Roller live in Cupertino, CA where Apple is building a new office that will hold 12,000 employees. Frank is still working at Lockheed helping to send up satellites. Mary teaches 3rd grade and loves it. Nate and Tyler have become organized and focused as they excel in soccer and swimming. Amy and Mike Edmondson live in Boise, Idaho. Amy works for HP and is the organizer. Mike is in charge of fish for the state of Idaho. Rachel loves music, soccer and volleyball. Emily plays soccer and basketball and is learning the piano. Jannay plays soccer, piano and loves to dress up in exciting colors. We traveled to Boise in May for her First Communion. They finished their patio and yard landscaping and they have a beautiful home for entertainment where Mike's sister's wedding reception was held in October. Joey and Belinda live 10 minutes from us. Joey's construction business is doing well and Belinda teaches at an excellent

Christian school. Katie plays volley ball and guitar at her youth group and sings. Anna plays soccer (Joey was her coach) and is learning the guitar.

Comments about some of the following pictures: How many kids does it take to encircle a redwood tree? This tree grows 15 minutes from out house (it is 308 feet tall and over 1200 years old). The kids and Dave running from a wave at sunset (Pacific Ocean). The last picture Judy took before she got hit by a wave. See how far she was from the ocean? The picture wasn't worth it. Now she's wearing a brace. She took the card out of the camera. The camera was ruined, but the card was OK.

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