

December 2008

### *Christmas Is*

... “going over the hills and through the woods to grandmother’s house . . . except she’s moved to an apartment.” (This quote, from Charles Schultz’s book *Christmas Is Together Time*, was brought to my attention by a very astute granddaughter.)

... the cards, letters and photos that arrive in my mailbox and keep me in touch with the special people in my life – you!

... decorating the tree with my grandchildren – and each unique ornament has a story to tell.

... seeing our family continue to grow, as Sean married Sarah and together they blessed us with another sweet baby to love.

... the joy of watching children as they peek under the tree in search of package bearing their name; even better, observing their excitement as they present gifts they have made or selected especially for another person!

... cheerfully sharing with those in need.

... attending church for the children’s musicals and pageants that tell the story of Jesus’s birth.

... the young carolers at my door, smiling and singing no matter the weather and giving me a plate of homemade cookies.

... candlelight service on Christmas Eve, with scripture from St. Luke, Holy Communion, and singing beautiful carols together.

... being thankful for family time with fun, food and fellowship, served up with lots of love.

... being tired and happy at day’s end, and thankful for God’s amazing gift of our Saviour, Jesus. May His great love fill your hearts with peace and joy.

*“Christmas-living is the best kind of Christmas-giving.”*

– Henry Van Dyke

***“The older I get, the better I was.”*** – The Red Hat Ladies

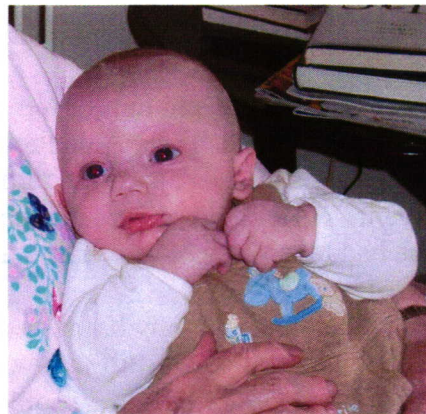
I truly appreciate your being in touch, especially since I haven't been reciprocating as I should. As many of you know, life is different and more challenging when our spouse precedes us to their eternal home. I will always miss my sweetheart and friend, his touch, his companionship, his wisdom, his sense of humor, and the fact that he could fix just about anything! His spirit seems to permeate our home and my life, and I'm so grateful for that. I often wish he could see how the grandchildren are growing and changing and learning life's lessons along the way . . . maybe he does?

Five of our grandchildren are out of college now and have their own apartments or condos, two are currently attending universities, and one is hoping to resume her studies soon at the community college. Three other grandchildren are married – two with homes of their own and the third looking forward to that possibility. The five younger grandchildren (ages 3 to 13, and in preschool through grade 7) are doing well academically and enjoy both sports and music.



*Sarah and Sean*

We've had another wedding in our family. Grandson Sean – the eldest – married the lovely Sarah in a beautiful ceremony officiated by Ron and Cindy.

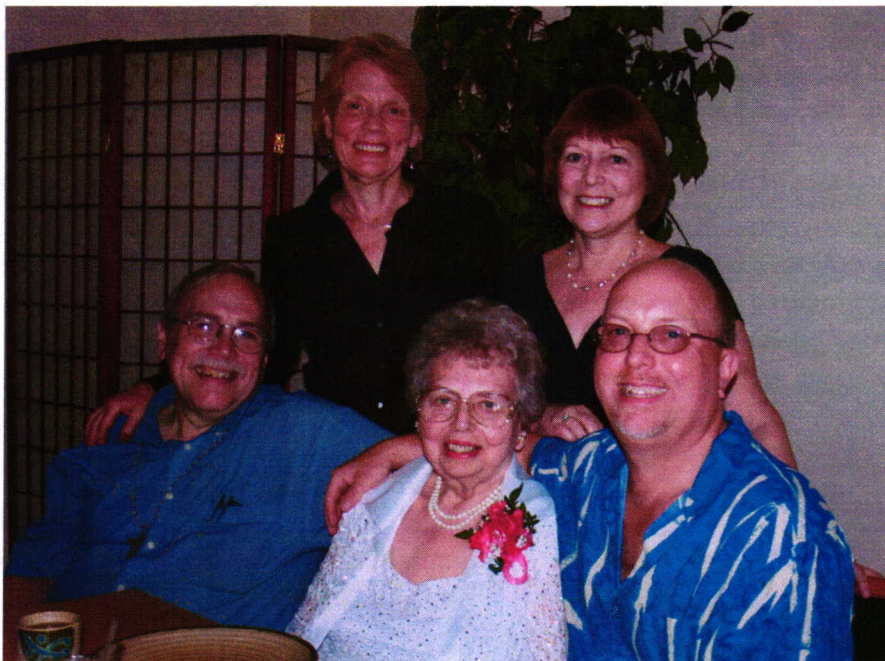


*Remi Carl*

Sean and Sarah have a precious son, Remi Carl (above), who turned a year old this month. Remi is a happy, adorable and friendly baby with big blue eyes. He is a most welcome addition to our family, making me the proud great-grandma of THREE handsome great-grandsons!

The toughest part of life for me now is the losses. Carl's brother, George, died in November 2007, and we lost my sister, Barbara, in April 2008. It's hard to believe they are gone, and we miss them a lot. We've also lost too many extended family members and dear friends in the past few years.

On a happier note, our kids and their spouses put on an awesome two-day celebration for my 80<sup>th</sup> birthday in July. Leigh and Karen treated me to a manicure and pedicure at a spa, followed by a ladies' luncheon at the Rose Garden Tea Room with daughters-in-law Cindy and Susan. That evening, the kids and their spouses took me to dinner at our favorite Japanese restaurant, Kampai, for an intimate family celebration.



*Celebrating my 80<sup>th</sup> birthday with my kids (Ron, Karen, Leigh and Don)*

The next afternoon, friends and family were invited to a lovely Open House to help me through this milestone transition. A plethora of cards and letters arrived for weeks from around the US, England and Japan – and I have a book of letters and photos and a box of cards to prove it! As a bonus, a very talented granddaughter created a one-of-a-kind album of photos she had taken of the festivities – a most welcome surprise!

I am pleased to announce that my brand-new right knee joint is seven weeks old and now “glides on cobalt chrome”! I’m still in physical therapy and have more healing to do but look forward to being pain free – and soon!

That’s about it . . . I’m doing quite well for an old lady. I’m abundantly loved, cared for and spoiled, and I wish the same for all my sensational senior friends!

God bless you for continuing to be a part of my life. I’ll always love you!

*Dottie*