

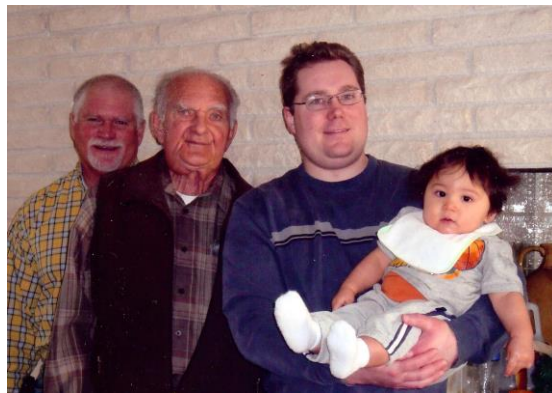


Christmas, 2012

I send you holiday greetings of the season, hoping you are enjoying your special traditions of this festive season. Last year, I intentionally broke my traditions since it would be the first Christmas in 20 years without Glenn Coven to share our traditional activities. (He passed away Feb. 14, 2011.)

Last year, my calendar, my Xmas letter, and many of my cards were completed and already sent by now in preparation for spending Christmas with my cousin Fred's family in Las Vegas; this year none of that is done so I am way behind. My 2013 calendar of Bill Giles and my road trip to Alaska in 1986 won't be done til next week, almost a month late. For my "Xmas picture" this year, like the sheep at the manger scene, I picked a photo from that memorable Alaska road trip adventure of wild "Stone Sheep" grazing at milepost #450 along the Al-Can Highway near Muncho Lake, Yukon, Canada.

I could write a whole chapter or SNL skit on my flights to & from Vegas with wheelchair assisted flight changes. When Fred, Suzanne and Rubin picked me up, I got very confused when we did not turn at the usual place to get to their house. They had fun with me for a while, before we turned into a gated community and pulled up in front of what seemed a 'mansion' to me. My cousin Fred and Robin had taken advantage of the tanked Vegas housing crisis to get this beautiful, large 5 bedroom, 4 bath, home with gigantic indoor rec. room & separate pool room & separate maids apt, as well as a huge refrigerated closet. Daughter Suzanne, her husband Rubin and 2 dogs joined them to help care for Fred as he recovered from the jaw cancer operation and facial reconstruction he had 2 years ago. Then they turned their 2 former houses into rentals. Fred's operation was fantastically successful. He looks beautiful !! – just like always—you never would know he had one whole side of his lower face removed. Oh, except for the teeth. They are still working on that. He had an implant fitting just last week, so hopefully he soon will have permanent teeth, too. Below: CRH & Fred before-2008; in 2011, son Freddie, Fred after, son Joe & his son, "JJ" (for Joe, Jr.)



I enjoyed my 10 day visit basking in the SW sun each day. A sumptuous home cooked Xmas Day dinner and presents afterward with extended family was enjoyed by all. Fred's son "Little Freddie" (who is over 50 and anything but 'little') came from Texas to be with his dad as did I from Cincy; son Joseph was there from Seattle, Wash. with wife Marietta, her daughter, Lauren (10), their son "JJ" (for Joe, Jr.-10 mos.); plus Suzanne, Rubin, Robin & Fred. Now, a year later, Joe has added daughter, Charlotte (7 mo.) and moved to Tampa, Florida for a Wells Fargo Dist. Manager promotion; Suzanne and Rubin have had a new son in Sept. and, I just learned last night, they moved to Texas as Rubin starts a new job. I find it hard to keep up.

Several family members had colds, and I caught the infection the night I left for home. They all quickly shook off the infection, but I was very sick the entire month of January, including 2 doctor and 2 emergency room visits. Feb 1st it all magically went away. Then a freak dislocated left jaw incident put

me on Prednisone April 1st. Oh my goodness, how wonderful. For 6 weeks I felt and acted 15 years younger. No wonder athletes go on steroids. Sadly, the effect does not last and I now feel OK, but back to the slow movement and limited stamina of “elderly”. Since July, I have been dealing with what I call my “Joey Votto Knee”. For those of you who don’t know, Joey Votto is a star Cin. Reds Baseball player who, in July got 2 tears in the miniscus of his knee; went back to playing too soon in Milwaukee and got a piece of cartilage lodged in his miniscus, sliding into base. They immediately flew him back to Cincy on a charter flight, operated on it right away, and he was back playing at the end of Sept. I had exactly the same injuries in July and on Aug 4, but I was not important enough to get that royal treatment. Could not get to Dr. for 3 days, and he would only give me a cortisone shot 2 days later. I spent 3 months thru Oct healing, and finally started therapy in Nov. I am now walking much more normally without pain and beginning to feel at least back to my ‘new (slow) normal’.

My normal activities continue to be attending Cin. Symphony, Chamber Players, Opera in summer, plays for Playhouse in the Park (I still usher at the smaller Shelterhouse Theater), season performances for several community theaters, May Festival Choral concerts, etc. etc. If I don’t have the stamina to actively perform and do work in the arts, I can at least actively support them with my attendance. And I still stay active in Phi Beta Fraternity; besides attending, I do the Yearbook and the Newsletter, tho I am trying to phase out of the Newsletter job. At home I am working to reorganize and archive the *thousands* of photos I have taken over the years. Some of this includes migrating the media format from slides or prints to digital; not always an easy task when I am not facile in computer use beyond straight typing. Finally, my biggest project is working on Family History and genealogy. I got a new computer program suggested by third (Razor) cousin Bonnie Horstman called “Brother’s Keeper”. I am working to get the entire Norman L. Brown (maternal grandfather) family genealogy recorded 1800 thru the present day including family stories and photographs. Brother’s Keeper is a great program, but it is tedious work entering what is now hundreds of individuals, each with their own page.

I made several trips to Brookville, Ohio to Brookville Historical Society for family history and, sadly to attend funeral of Bruce Shue, the oldest at 96 of the Norman Brown cousins. That dubious honor now defaults to me. With no one else to do it, I got my act together this summer to design and purchase my gravestone, which is now set at Arlington Cemetery on Rt. 40 north of Brookville. It is, I think, very unique: a teardrop shape in black marble. At the end of August I had to buy a new car –a Subaru Forester. They stopped making Saturns 4 years ago and will stop making replacement parts in about 2 years, so I had to turn it in while it had at least a little trade in value. I **loved** that car; drove it like a Ferrari sports car, so it’s probably a good thing to slow down my driving style to something safer. I like my new car, but am still trying to adjust to driving this higher profile, different vehicle.

Finally, in June, Annette and I took a 2 day trip to Parkersburg, W. Va. and eastern Ohio counties north of Marietta where she has an interest in family property involved in the big oil and gas shale boom. I drove by the house my parents lived in for 10 years in Parkersburg in the 1950’s, and what a shock! Our white clapboard house was gone and on its footprint was a cement block one story house & garage – painted garish bright vivid (redundancy intentional) blue!!! While I did not take a picture, I cannot get the image of this UGLY house out of my mind. We left Coco at home, but took Willa. She was such a good dog. We stayed at Mariott Inn Hotel in Marietta with a room at the end of a long hall, 2nd floor. I went down for breakfast, and brought it back up on the elevator. When the door opened, standing there, calmly waiting to board the elevator,were 4 or 6 people – and **Willa!** “Willa? What are you doing here? Is that your dog? Yes.” As her back end gently wiggled in happiness at having found me, I said: Come on Willa, lets go home; and we sauntered back down the hall to the room. Annette had cracked the door while she took a shower in case I did not have my room key – and you just never do that with Willa. She is too smart.

I am already enjoying the notes, letters and cards received from many of you. Hope your holiday season and the coming new year is filled with joy, love, kindness and good health.