

Christmas Day, Dec.25, 2013

Even tho I hate the dark, short days and cold of winter, I truly love the Christmas season because I get to hear from and touch base with so many of my dear 'old' (longtime) friends. January cold and 10+ inches of snow the first half of Dec. still was not enough to inspire my muse. I thought I was late last year. I am impossibly late this year, writing my Xmas Letter on Christmas Day! I am **so** late you probably thought that something happened to me. I did not shuffle off this mortal coil, but I did have a year of health problems and events, doctors, fixes, PT & recovery. I also managed to 'get in' a few positive events, so I can't complain too much. After all, I am at *that age* and others of you that I have



It's been one of those days  
~~ALL WEEK LONG!~~  
Year

heard from have had as bad, some even worse. Maybe it was the year: **2013 !!** It all started with my Joey Votto knee in July 2012 & the dr. that refused to do the simple arthroscopic surgery because I was "too old" (82) & my A-fib. His radiologist even misread my MRI. So I got pumped full of steroids & cortisone that damaged my glaucoma or hobbled around on a cane in pain for 14 mos. before I finally (a year *older*) got the surgery Aug 9 from another excellent orthopedist, Dr. Colosimo. He played pro football for the NE Patriots *years ago* (c. 1970-80ish) before becoming a dr. & team doctor for Univ. Cin. & Bengals.

I didn't get my first Physical Therapy until Nov. 2012. It might have been good for 30-40 yr old sports people, but was too intense for elderly weak bones & I think ultimately did more harm than good. Mid Feb to mid March my bones began collapsing: lateral stress fracture in leg bone just below L. knee. (Now both knees were out) and then my lumbar back 'fell apart'. Mar. 8, getting an MRI on my L knee, it took 4 people (2 of them strong, trained PT men) to get me up with #10 pain off the MRI table. This was the Nadir of my pain & health problems.

I drove home. (Yes, I went thru all this alone) and yes, I could drive. I couldn't sit, stand, lie down, hardly walk, but I *could* drive! I was at the point of desperation, so at 4 pm Thurs. I called Sue Giles, Bill's daughter, in Fla.: "Sue, if I fly you to Cincinnati, could you come take care of me for a couple of weeks?" That beautiful angel said *yes* and I picked her up at the

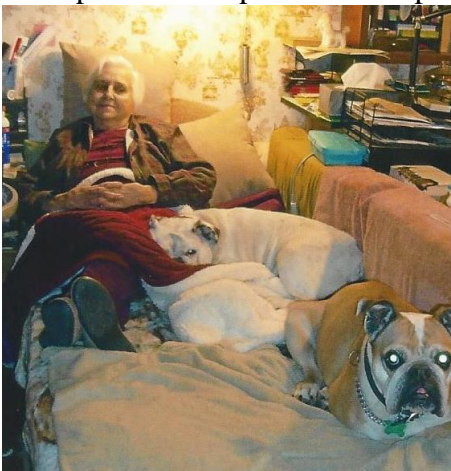
airport at 11 the next morning. She took over everything for me: I got Rolly, the rollator, to walk; she got me to new Dr. appts, MRI's; washed clothes & did stuff around the house. It was heaven~! In return, I was able, with the help of Rolly & Sue, to treat her to a symphony, a play, and a special piano-string concert. By the time Sue went home, I knew my lumbar spine was "Rice Krispies", I was set up for 2 epidurals, and PT with a wonderful, miracle, age appropriate PT program with Barb Holland at Blake & Assoc., and surgery on my knee for Aug. 9. (Had to cure the back before I could correct the knee) It was 7 mo. of PT with 2 goals: Back recovery so I could drive to Florida in June; then strengthen leg muscles before 8/9 knee surgery to make that recovery faster and easier, and so I could be off cane by Xmas. Sue also convinced me I needed a Council on Aging Aide. And so it is Christmas day, and I am happy to say I have achieved all my goals!!!

All the family history work and projects I had been doing came to a screeching halt during this challenging year, but I did drive to Brookville Ohio Historical Society in May, to take up some past work and a few items for the museum. Health concerns (heart) from surgery recovery cancelled my fall trip; & I was devastated I could not attend funeral of my cousin Cary Brown's wife, Lindsay; but I was able to drive up to the Razor Reunion near Greenville, Ohio and visit Betty and Gary Brown earlier in July.

Yes, it is a week later, and so it goes as I try to get "Projects", like Xmas cards, completed. Marianne Kruse Skinner called it a 'cock-a-mainey scheme' that I came up with, but a wonderful one. On June 12, she drove from her home in Rockton, Ill (near Wisc. line) to my house. We had a wonderful day visit, she helped me pack, then we went to Cincinnati Opera, Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, that nite. The next morning a neighbor helped pack my car, and we took off, with Willa, (Coco stayed home with much arranged care) for the south. We arrived at Marianne's brother's house in Atlanta that evening; she stayed in Atlanta, while the next day I drove south with Willa to Susan's home in High Springs, Fla (300 miles). After several days with Sue, she went with me on south to Tampa to visit the Munier family over the weekend. Then we reversed the process going home. Fred's "kids", both Joe and Suzanne's families, moved to just north of Tampa the previous year, so I got wonderful visits with the Muniers, Marianne and Susan all in one freeing, rejuvenating road trip.

Thru all this, the activities that keep me going are always attending many plays and musical events. I did, this past year, finally give up ushering for Playhouse in the Park after 45 years. In honor of my service, they gave me a free season pass to the Shelterhouse plays, so I still attend all their plays, as well as Drama Workshop and other community theaters. May Festival choral concerts, Cin Opera in the summer, Symphony and Chamber music concerts Sept thru April inspire my soul throughout the year. I am still managing to handle this big house--with the help, now, of Shante, my Council on Aging aide 2 hours every Monday to do laundry, lifting, carrying, etc. that is now hard for me to do. After my Aug. outpatient surgery, I spent 3 days in nursing home for care and therapy for walking. It was a wise choice, but truly made me deeply appreciative of being able to stay in my own home, along with Coco and Willa. They are funny, loving companions offering me much comfort and joy, not to mention, as our neighborhood changes, a feeling of protection & safety.

As I start the new year walking almost completely normally, I look forward to a happier year with more positive and productive experiences. I wish the same to same for you.



(Joe Munier, Joe Jr., Charlotte)(Suzanne, Rubin & R Jr.)

FYI for Family: With no kids, I have to “do it yourself”  
Designed and got my headstone set at Arlington Cemetery,  
3 miles N. of Brookville, OH. The Hunt Family Plot is in  
section south of old Rt. 40, to S. of road to the left.