

Happy Holidays



cousin Bret, Uncle Ward, Aunt Evelyn, Uncle George, Susan, Aunt Marian

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An aunt of Dennis' reminded me when we saw her in October that I'd better get started on my holiday letter right away, since I have such a bad habit of not getting around to it. Good advice. So I began writing on Thanksgiving afternoon, in the hopes of finishing before everyone arrives for Chanukah and Christmas. It's a fitting time. We have much to be thankful for this year.

A new grandchild, for one: Alexis Noé Nuñez was born May 15. I spent a few weeks in D.C. with them in July, in their new big house – Sarah and Debbie and their dad had just recently bought a house for all of them and their families to share. It's in a terrific location at the very northern tip of DC, in easy walking distance from Silver Spring with its restaurants and farmer's market, and there's a great creek just across the street from the house.



Jack, Parker, Nicolai, Susan



Nicolai with new baby brother Alexis

In April, Sarah brought Parker, Nicolai, and Jack here for a week while the others prepared for the house move. We spent a great time at both the Indy children's museum and the local Wonderlab, walked to the playground, and did a lot of reading, playing, and cooking. The Easter Bunny even made an appearance at Gigi(my mother)'s apartment complex.



Parker, Nicolai, Susan, Jack

After being retired for three years, I can finally say that Dennis has joined me. He's not positive he's going to love it as I do, but he's giving it a good shot. This October, we took a week-long cruise down the Upper Mississippi (from St. Paul to St. Louis) aboard a paddleboat. It was marvelous. Besides relaxing on the water and enjoying wonderful meals, we got to see Dennis' aunts and uncles who live in and near Davenport, Iowa. It had been a number of years since we'd been there. We also took a couple terrific short trips to southern Indiana towns on the Ohio River – Madison and Jeffersonville, the latter as part of the 100th-birthday celebration of the paddleboat *The Belle of Louisville*. I could certainly get used to having Dennis around so we can go do fun things whenever we want!



In May, I had the chance to work on the Habitat Women's Build again. The last time I'd done that had been several years ago. This time, I ended up cutting in primer and paint at the ceilings in many rooms of one of the houses; I kept thinking how much my dad and granddad would have liked that.



Liya, Laura, Delilah, Dennis

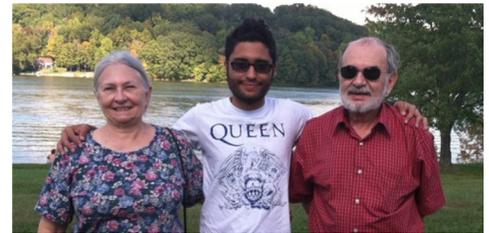
Dennis' daughter Laura, her husband Paul, and their daughters were here in August, so we got to meet one-year old Delilah for the first time.



Dennis' mother died in March after an extended illness and stay in a nursing home in Arlington, Texas, near where his sister Carol lives. When Dennis went for the funeral, he got to spend some time with Carol and their brother Jerry.

We still see my mother several times a week, and I've continue to sub a little bit and to see some of my teacher friends when our faculty book club meets during the school year. And, of course, I love my yoga class a couple times a week as well as plenty of time for reading.

We've joined a local group, Bloomington Worldwide Friendship, which pairs local residents with IU international students. We're the "host family" for a student from Brazil, and also got to meet briefly a Fullbright scholar from India. As a bonus, the fall picnic included a boat ride on nearby Lake Lemon, something I'd never had a chance to do before.



Susan, Gean, Dennis

In October, we had to say goodbye to Capuccina, one of the two kittens we'd adopted the month we got married. She'd been sick for several years, but it was still hard to let go of her. Nocturne, the remaining cat, is if anything more affectionate and sociable than ever.

Sarah and Mary continue at their same jobs as pediatrician and social worker, respectively. Parker started 3rd grade this fall; Jackson just turned 3 in November, and is in pre-school a few days a week at Mt. Sinai. Debbie continues at Gallaudet, and Dre at Oyster-Adams. This fall Nicolai was accepted there for kindergarten, which means he gets to join Parker in the wonderful bilingual Spanish-English program they have there.

Our holiday schedule will be a bit staggered, but at one time or another, we'll host Debbie & her family, Sarah & her family, my sister Kathy and daughter Hannah, my brother David, wife Carol and son Andrew, and Andrew's college roommate Justin Kanga.

I'm realizing after the first of the year that, once again, I didn't get this finished and sent in time. But if I edit it again to correct the dates, it may never get finished. Hope you had a joyous holiday season with friends and family, and that the coming year will be good for all of you.

Love,

Susan and Dennis