

CHRISTMAS & New Year Greetings from Pennsylvania!

This year has been almost too memorable and it isn't over yet! On a positive note, Paul returned safely from a year-long tour in Afghanistan, the house finally sold, Gretchen's temp job morphed into a permanent position, I witnessed the March and October marriages of nieces Elizabeth and Rachel in St. Cloud, MN, and I visited Scottsdale, AZ and Las Vegas, NV for the first time. However, more sobering notes included a car crash, fractured foot, moving, divorce, brother Peter's death, Hurricane Sandy, and Obama's reelection.

In January Paul (27) returned safely with a mechanized cavalry unit from the 1st Infantry Division to Ft. Riley, KS after a year in Kandahar Province, Afghanistan. In February he surprised us by showing up on our doorstep and ringing the doorbell. He camped out in the guest bedroom for 3 weeks. On Feb. 16th he flew back to his base and the house was put back on the market. On Feb. 21st a car going 50 mph. ran a red light and crashed into the front of my car, airbags exploded and the car was spun 180 degrees. Five police cars, 3 fire trucks, 2 ambulances, and 2 wreckers showed up. My 2002 Ford Taurus and the other car were totaled. My passenger and I walked away from the wreck but the 3 people in the other car went to the emergency room. However, in the following days and weeks we discovered a variety of pains and injuries including fractures in my left foot. From March to July I wore a cam boot while the fractures healed. I'm thankful that nobody was killed or maimed. I now drive a silver 2005 Ford Focus hatchback.

Three days after the car crash we received a solid offer for our house. After 4 different types of home inspections and an

appraisal, 11 different contractors worked on fixing problems. I rented a 2-bedroom condominium in



3919 Smoke Rd.



301 Sassafraas Ct.

Warrington, 10 miles south of

Doylestown. Still wearing the cam boot, but with help, I cleared everything out of the 2-story house, basement, garage, garage attic, and outdoor areas. The moving company placed items in Jean's apartment, the condo, and Uncle Bob's Self-Storage. A great family from New Jersey with 3 kids took ownership on April 27th. Then Gretchen, Otis, and I moved into the condo.

Paul decided to leave active duty after his 3-year hitch was over (his total obligation is 8 years). The army paid off all his college loans. He moved to Ft. Worth, TX where he now shares a 3-bedroom apartment with Jane, his birthmother, a half-sister (20), and a half-brother (16). He is looking forward to starting work as a civilian.

The temporary job that Gretchen (26) started in late 2011 with the Bucks County Water & Sewer Commission has turned into a permanent position. She began in customer service and reception but now works in the executive offices as the payables clerk. She still produces YouTube videos but not as many as last year. In June she flew to Anaheim, CA to attend the Vidcon convention and to make contact with her video-blogging friends and groupies.

Jean and I were officially divorced on September 5th after 37 years of marriage. Jean (62) lives in an apartment on an estate 5 miles north of Doylestown. Her full-time position with the Bucks County Free Library was eliminated but she continues to work there half-time without benefits. She is searching for a more substantial job. We are still friends and see each other at least once a week when she comes to the condo to do stuff with Gretchen.

This is my 6th year teaching adult classroom and online classes for Strayer University. I also work as a part-time data systems consultant for Waters Heating & Cooling and the Bucks County Choral Society. This is my 16th year with the choir. I sing baritone.

In September my brother Peter (61) died in Scottsdale, AZ. He left behind his wife, Dianne, and college-age sons, Nathan and AJ. There was a funeral service in Scottsdale and then Peter's body was flown to South Dakota

for a 2nd funeral in Milbank followed by burial in the old St. John's Lutheran country graveyard, reception at the home farm, and (per Peter's request) a party at brother Stephen's farm in the evening.



Peter at peace



Big family



Gretchen



Otis



Hurricane Sandy

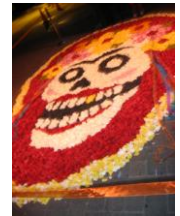
Hurricane Sandy arrived on Oct. 29th. We were without power for 6 hours, but worse, we were without internet services for 20 hours! We got off easy compared to other

people in the region. When I left the condo early on Nov. 1st

to drive to the airport, Jean was sleeping on the couch; her power was off for 5 days. I flew to DFW and visited Paul in Ft. Worth for a few hours before flying to Scottsdale to visit Dianne and the boys for 2 days. Despite the circumstances, Dianne was a great host. We visited Sedona on the "Day of the Dead".



Sedona



Day of the dead

After Scottsdale I flew to Las Vegas to spend 4 days at the Society of Exploration Geophysicists' convention. I had not been to the convention in 9 years. A lot of Chinese were there this time. Las Vegas is a crazy, mind-boggling place. While there I spent a day on a Hoover Dam bus tour, saw 2 shows, gambled (broke even), visited some bars, tried



AZ-NV Bridge



Hoover Dam



Las Vegas Convention

to walk The Strip, and attended 4 receptions plus a luncheon. Oh—and I spent some time at the convention too.

Now it's on to 2013 and ??????????!!!!!!!

**Blessings to you this holiday season!
Peace & joy in 2013.**

Michael