

The Little Littlefield Newsletter

Being an abbreviated account of the continuing adventures of Aleda, Jim, Leanne and Mark in 2018

In order to fit into the smaller card and envelope this year in one sheet, this is a shortened post. Yet, more news and stories await you at Jim's new Website/Blog: Jameslandreth.com. Just type this into your web browser's URL space. Note: you will need the a password in order to access the page(s): password is my nickname plus the year of the D-day landings in Normandy.

Aleda

Besides the activities mentioned elsewhere, travel-grandkid-garden, she continues with the "Sisters of the Skillet", (described in previous letters) a.k.a., the Church Service League in our church. This involves attending the weekly Tuesday luncheon and various activities associated with such. It also involves having Jim present PowerPoint shows once or twice a year primarily related to our recent trips. She was involved in the annual Christmas luncheon and bazaar this year. Because we have had extensive experience over the years of making our own Christmas cards (see attached) she volunteered Jim to make a card for the CSL and to sell them to make money for the charities that the CSL supports. This turned out well though some cards still remain and can be purchased from her. She continues with her primary means of enjoyment/relaxation: reading and music.

Musical events this year:

Die Fledermaus (J. Strauss, Jr. comic opera)
Winter Opera Dinner-Musical (three events)
Evita (Repertory Theater, St. Louis)
Fleadh Nua (Music Festival), Ennis, R.I.
HMS Pinafore (Union Ave. Opera)
Maria Callas, in her own words (movie)
The Pearl Fishers (Bizet, Winter Opera)
The Elixir of Love (Donizetti, Winter Opera)
A Mother's Heart Divided (folk duo, Penn Alps, Md.)
Appalachian music, Adaland Mansion, W.V.
Gandy Dancer Dinner Theater, Elkins, W.V.

Aleda Recommends:

Aunt Dimity books (Nancy Atherton)
Books by Georgette Heyer (ex. Faroe's Daughter)
The Crows of Berea (Julie Johnson)
Fever at Dawn (Peter Gardas)
Father Timothy books (Jan Karon)
Educated (Tara Westover)
Big Stone Gap (Adriana Trigiani)

Leanne – Kurt – Benjamin

Leanne continues with her work at Caleres Shoe here in town. Their motto: "*Caleres inspires people to feel good...feet first.*" However, she did have a change of divisions going from Dr. Scholls to Famous Brand Footware. She enjoys her job as a sales analyst very much. Her primary occupation is her son Ben and her husband and household. Ben is a-going and a-growing. He turned three in July and we went to the Transportation Museum for a themed birthday party with friends and family. We are sad to report the passing of their two long-time pets, the dogs Kaia and Zoe who lived long and pleasant lives but succumbed to that old druid, Time.

Mark

He made a big move at the end of this year, leaving his law firm and going solo in his practice of the law. He's a real estate lawyer specializing in landlord-tenant and condominium association issues. He's still in Chicago, still keeping up his house in Downers Grove, still travelling (e.g. Spain, L.A., Mexico) and rooting for the Cardinals and PSU.

Jim

People often ask, "Jim, what do you do now that you are retired?" And Jim's standard come-back is "Whatever Aleda tells me to do". So, avoiding the description of the mundane and domestic chores which often border upon those of the distaff variety I will briefly mention a few: Garden: due to circumstances solely under my control I planted about 30+ tomatoes plants and about 12 + (butternut) squash plants. The yield was fruitful and we put up (our method is freezing) about 15 pints of tomatoes but the squash was donated to either our stomachs or to friends. Viking talks: We belong to the Swedish Council of St. Louis, a group of Swedenophiles. Part of this is a monthly meeting called the **Viking Seminar**. This is similar to a ROMEO (Retired Old Men Eating Out) club, except we eat cookies and discuss topics related to the Vikings. For example, Jim presented two topics: *The Influence of the Vikings on Ireland*, and *Rise and Fall of the Viking Age*. These are available on the [website](#).

Loretto Perfectus Walsh: Another project Jim has embarked upon is to edit a biography written by his uncle, James J. Walsh, (JJW) the father of Margaret, Tori and Mary Walsh. This work was completed by JJW sometime before his death but was never published. In the opinion of several it could use a little editing in order to make the work more readable to its potential audience, mostly his grandchildren and future generations. Because this work was languishing in its current form, Jim took up the challenge and is currently editing it. But who is Loretto Perfectus Walsh (LPW) you ask? LPW was JJW's aunt, also aunt to Jim's mother (Kathleen) and the sister of James J Walsh, M.D, Jim and Kathleen's father. She was the first enlisted woman in the Navy and hence in the armed services (in 1917), the first Chief Petty Officer in the Navy. She is recognized as such and there are several references to this:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Loretta_Perfectus_Walsh

Teddy Bear

Our sole pet is Teddy Bear cat. We adopted him about two years ago from friends (**Jason** "the mason" and **Brittany Frye**). His (the cat's) primary occupations are eating and guarding the estate from small varmints but with only minor success in catching the prey. He seems to have had a major success in eating. He's much like Ogden Nash described a dog, "A door is what a dog is perpetually on the wrong side of." When Teddy's in, he wants to go out and when he's out, he wants to come in. Either way, he's hungry.

Travels: Ireland in the spring

In May we gathered together a group of friends and relatives and took the Ireland bus. The participants:

Aleda & Jim, planners and movers
Barbara & Pat Fillette, our friends from Philly and oft' companions in travel
Shelley & Linda Partlon, friends from prior excursions, also Phillyites
Rich & Trudy Foster from Penna. And good travelling companions, too
Mary Anne Osborn from Seattle, from our Seattle days, in the 1970's
Dot McCain & Kathy Gowan, friends of Mary Anne's, and Dot and Kathy are sisters, from the Seattle area
Mary Discenza, Jim's cousin from San Diego and his confidant and editor
Ruth & Jim Nepute, St. Louisians. Jim N. is a radiologist and was Jim's boss at West County Radiology
Beanie & Roman Widolff, Portlanders, the liberal one in Oregon, our friends from the Peace Corps days in Jamaica
Carolyn Dieckmann & Bertie* Schmidt, Bertie is Beanie's sister and Carolyn is a friend of hers from southern Indiana
Alice Robb, Beanie's super nice cousin from Michigan
Rudy & Bill Fasbinder from Vancouver, WA, Rudy is Beanie's sister.
Tom Quinn from the Shannon, Eire, our leader, guide, shepherd, lector, docent, companion, emcee, limerick reciter and raconteur extraordinaire.
*Do you remember the story of when we went to visit Bertie at the bakery in Batesville to get bagels?

Well, we flew from loci all over the States to Dublin and then took the bus from there to points all over the south of the Emerald Isle. I will relate one anecdote. Others (examples: *The Miracle of Clonmacnoise* and *The Losing of Pat*) you will have to find on the website. Tom Quinn, our guide, took us to Blarney Castle where some of us got to kiss the Blarney stone. It was obvious that Tom Quinn, being the quintessential Irishman (get it??) had kissed it many times before as evidenced by his stories and his elocution. One day while he was waxing on some topic of forgotten lore he talked about one of the Irish poets or authors, I forget which, and how he is now considered a misogynistic writer in today's climate of feminist criticism. Tom used that peculiar adjective several times in his description. Soon after, as we all descended from the bus to visit a quaint or historic or holy place, one of the group took me aside and asked me, "What was he talking about when he said someone was 'massaging the stick'?" Well, I had to think for a minute, not being able to immediately to make the connection but it slowly came to me. Ah, yes, he was talking about someone being "misogynistic". So I explained this to her and we both had a good chuckle. However, in thinking about it, it dawned on me that perhaps these two homophonic (not that other word!!) words had similarities might actually have an association apparent only to one with a prurient interest. That is, someone who is misogynistic would likely also be someone who is "massaging the stick". That, I thought, was worthy of a guffaw, not merely a chortle.

As noted, further anecdotes about Ireland and numerous pictures are available at **Jameslandreth.com**

Travels: West Virginia in the fall

In October we drove back east, first to Reading, PA to visit with Jim's cousin Margaret and her husband Sal at their lovely home in Shillington. We had a very nice reunion and enjoyed telling stories about the family from long, long ago. Margaret was so kind as to give me two family heirlooms: the series of autobiographical works written by her father and the headless doll that belonged to my mother. See next story.

We then drove to Pittsburg and joined up with a bus tour of West Virginia, the highlight of which was a drive past the statue of Don Knotts (a.k.a. Barney Fife and Ralph Furley) in Morgantown, WV. Unfortunately we couldn't alight to take a picture with him. We were travelling with our friends from Billings, MT, **Rene & Tom Richmond**, whom we met on the Queen Mary II on the trip to England last summer, previously described. On this trip we had a tour of a coal mine, of the radiotelescopes at Green Bank, four different railroad excursions, a tour of the bunker at the Greenbriar, a jet boat ride on the New River* and a trolley car museum in Washington, PA. As an aside, some of the cars looked like ones Jim had ridden growing up back in Philly when he would take the Red Arrow Line and SEPTA trolleys on visits to his cousins Margaret and Tory and Mary. There were three musical events also, see box above. A highlight of the trip was that we got to reunite with our dear old friend **Dana Olsen**, he from when we were resident-fellows together back in Nuclear Medicine in Seattle. It's always a joy to see Dana and the discussion is always wide ranging and full of humor. On the drive home from West Virginia we stopped in Erie, PA to visit for a few days with Aleda's family, i.e. her brothers **Harold & John Litzel** and her cousin **Karen**. Lastly, we stopped in Columbus, OH to visit with Jim's two college roommates from Penn State, **Fred Kinsinger & Beal Traister**. Although the hour was late and the visit short, a chance to reconnect with these two old friends from collegiate days is always one full of humor and reminiscence.

*The New River is claimed to be the oldest river in the world. An interesting nomenclature paradox.

In Memoriam

If you remember from last year's letter, I spoke of the passing of Jim's aunt Maura Hughes Walsh. My observation was that she was the last of the previous or elder generation (our parents, aunts, uncles, etc) and that we are now the elder generation and soon we too shall pass into the great beyond, far across the shining river. Well, now this is *-happening to us. I am sad to report the passing of my cousin Margaret Regina Walsh Albert in October in Reading. Margaret was one of the three Walsh sisters, Margaret, Tori and Mary. It is said that they are/were equivalent to sisters to Jim/Lan and he was "the brother they never had". She developed pancreatic cancer about five years ago and fought a valiant fight against that old tyrant. As mentioned above, we got to see her in early October and had an enjoyable visit. She leaves behind her devoted husband, Sal and six children and many grandchildren. The obit is available at the Jameslandreth.com website. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from Jim and Aleda