

If you cannot see the pictures, please copy and paste this line into your browser:

http://www.fried-cas.com/Family_and_Friends/family_letters/fcfamltr09/

A Letter from the Fried-Cassorla's -- Lookin' back on '09

Dear friends,

How are you? Yes, inquiring Fried-Cassorla's really want to know! so do tell.

On our side, we had another great year! What defines great? We're basically healthy, and by and large enjoying life. So that's what its about, if we may wax philosophical. In fact, I'm selling philosophical candle wax for just .99 a stick.



Emma and Stanley Fried at Cadbury, Cherry Hill, NJ

So Stanley, Martha's dad, is doing relatively OK though he's less responsive than he used to be. This 91 year-old still asks informed questions of us and cares... compassion and a great sense of justice and responsibility have always been among his cardinal virtues. Ditto Martha (if she will allow me to say so!). We miss Elsie, too.

My Mom, Betty, is doing well. She has her aches and pains, but what can we expect at 87? Of course she and her sons still miss my Dad, Lou, and I think about him daily. What a large soul he had! Here's a story from my Mom, recorded on video. It's called "The Mrs. Sarcoli story"



<http://sharing.theflip.com/session/f0abaafc981e1f07a7e46694256ee44d/video/7062256>

This photo was removed.

My, those folks look similar! In fact, there we were in aught-7, but we still look the same! Honest! Left to right are Emma, Benjamin Hesse (her husband), Martha, me, Benjamin, and Priya

Westward, Ho-o! (Does anyone remember that line from Firesign Theater's first album?)

In June we had a great journey westward! We also saw great friend Mark Zakarin and his beautiful family. I still appreciate Mark's frenzied barbecuing for us -- and the tasty results, along with camaraderie.

**Cousins' Reunion in Bellmore... Mineola H.S.
Reunion in Philly!**

In August, Marshall had a cousin's reunion. Marshall and my Mom got together many members of our Camhi and Cassorla tribes. Marsh cooked up a storm. We all got reacquainted... I tortured people briefly with my singing and guitar playing. How great it was to be with so many beautiful people in one place and one time!

Martha's high school buddies had their reunion in our historic town this past August. I must say, they're a great bunch of people (and characters!)

Our November saw Thanksgiving at our house, with 15 people! Sorry, no photos. But the amazing thing was stuffing 15 people into our living room. That meant upending our dining room table and moving it in about 97 moves, sideways, upside-down etc. into the vestibule and then the dining room.

Martha

As usual, Martha is continuing her private psychology practice! She also enjoys taking courses. This year's academic scenario included History of U.S. Immigration and she has just finished up a History of Christianity course. Now, she and our friend Mike Bomstein are preparing to take a course in the Greek language in preparation for our trip in June.

Focusing on family, friends and learning are what my sweet wife enjoys.

Emma and her Ben in San Francisco this past summer

Emma's ventures and adventures

Emma is still working at a bio lab at University of Pennsylvania. She expects to quit or reduce her hours in March and begin work on her Masters dissertation, also at Penn. She and her husband Benjamin Hesse enjoyed a summer-long excursion to Montana, California and many other places. She also saw her great friend Marcia in Portland, Oregon. Emma also loves climbing, which she does lately in a gym with her friend Kaitlin.



Above: Emma on Thanksgiving at the home of Bob and Ellen Hesse

Ben Hesse is teaching at Benjamin Rush High School, where he also runs a folk music club. Emma and Ben just acquired a gigantic map of the USA (maybe 8' x 6'), backed by foamcore. They plan to suspend it over their bed to plot their past travels and, I think, to chart the course of future journeys.

Albert, a.k.a me, now loving teaching!

I am in my fourth year of teaching and my second year at Edison - Fareira High School. And now I'm really loving it! I hope it continues this way. My students have vibrant personalities, meaning they're

colorful, talented and generally return positive attention with good work and attitudes.

My subject is called Creating Theater. I can structure the course in the ways that seem most sensible and creative. My specialty is encouraging the children to write their own plays and act them out. They and I also enjoy many kinds of improvs. Yes, I do have some trying days and some difficult students. But by and large, teaching what I'm teaching is tremendous fun. More important, the students are acquiring new skills, developing more confidence about their creativity, and more. My vice principal and team leader have been very helpful and supportive -- which has been invaluable. I've written quite a bit more about teaching, but I don't want to overwhelm some of you. So if you want more, just click [HERE!](#)

Melrose Park Neighbors Association - still going!

This organization that Andy Rudin, I and several involved neighbors founded about ten years ago, continues to help the neighborhood, though in different ways now. Andy writes and mails a great e-newsletter that keeps us all informed. This past summer we had a general meeting at our home, which included a helpful visit by state representative Larry Curry and his wife. Some of our accomplishments in years past include: getting SEPTA to build a \$2.5 million new train station, building a protective fence around the railroad, flower garden planting, creating a neighbors' web site (visit <http://www.melroseparkneighbors.org/>) stream pollution reduction, clean-ups and more.

The Unexamined Life?

Not at the Melrose Park Philosophy Club,

which continues to ponder the universe!

I also enjoy my Melrose Park Philosophy Club meetings and readings. Our regular attendees include Tom Steigerwald, a very talented painter (visit <http://www.tomsteigerwald.com>); Tom Petersen, my brother-in-law and a skilled environmental engineer (visit www.eessolutions.com); Yoshio Matsumoto, a bio scientist who may have discovered a cancer-curing drug cocktail, Ray Haupt, a former Unisys engineer who now explores science and busts myths; and li'l ole me. Plus, my old college buddy, the inestimable Larry Wilt, occasionally joins us by phone.

This year, we have explored, among other topics:

- Free will vs. determinism (twice)
- Esthetic theory
- Philosophy of Food (at least we had good treats)
- ***Chance and Necessity*** by biologist Jacques Monod
- ***The Philosophy of Spinoza***

Maybe the greatest thing about our group -- maybe 5 years old now? - is that we greatly enjoy each other's company. Once every 6 weeks or so, we each extract our frontal lobe, and give it some exercise. Our laughter is copious and contagious, too!

Making movies is a relatively new and entertaining passion too!

By which I mean amateur movies, which I've had a ball producing. Please see some links below. I welcome comments.

This is the link to my Youtube page:

http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=fried-cassorla&search_type=&aq=f

I have 15 videos there. If you only have time for a few, I recommend:

Obama Health Care Forum

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YvA-GN3WiSY>



...and the longer but more rewarding....

Clown Retirement Home, parts 1, 2 and 3

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ALuazNs47g>



* * *

We're also hoping to go to Greece this coming June. Martha and Mike B. have been working hard on planning. If we should be so fortunate, we hope to be spend two days in Athens, and about 5 days on the islands of Mykonos, Santorni and Siros. Thoughts of Greece keep me going as I'm trying not to slip on ice when walking Bailey at 6:30 in the morning most days....

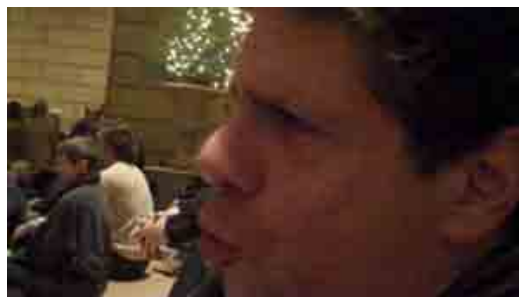


I continue to run with my great and attentive friend Dick Goldberg, though not as often as I'd like. If you'd like to hear Dick G speak about the joys of grandparenting, check out this video...

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EM9EzX064po>

So there we are... Thanks for caring enough to have read or skimmed this far.

OK, so this letter has been far too serious!! Let me lighten things up with a scene from my new career as a jazz singer! Martha recorded me "enhancing" a concert by saxophonist Tim Warfield and trumpeter Terrell Stafford at the Philadelphia museum of Art. Offers of recording contracts have been pouring in!



<http://sharing.theflip.com/session/4df8f2f958005a8d76376aae32ed090d/video/8307465>

I could easily say more, but why risk being even *more* boring? Anyway, what've you been up to?

Have a wonderful New Year!



Love,

Albert, Martha, and family!

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