

A Letter from the Fried-Cassorla's - 2014

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/fcamltr14/



Dear family and friends,

This was a busy and happy year -- hope you had one too!

Trip to Ireland in July!

Martha and I enjoyed a wonderful trip to Ireland. We visited Dublin, and made excursions to the Wicklow Mountains and to the Cliffs of Moher. Here's a shot of Martha with a statue of James Joyce in a Dublin Park....



..... Highlights included the library at Trinity College, which houses famously illustrated the Book of Kells; the Du Museum, which had a great exhibit on the poet W.B. Yeats; a tour of the Guinness Distillery, and much more. The were delightful, helpful, good-natured and more.

Here is a cool statue of Oscar Wilde that we and the crowds adored.... Many of his witticisms are inscribed and on there too, and it just adds to the sense of the talent (and tragedy) of his life.





Here we are at the western end of Ireland, at the fabulous Cliffs of Moher!

Emma's still sailing along in her career at the Port!

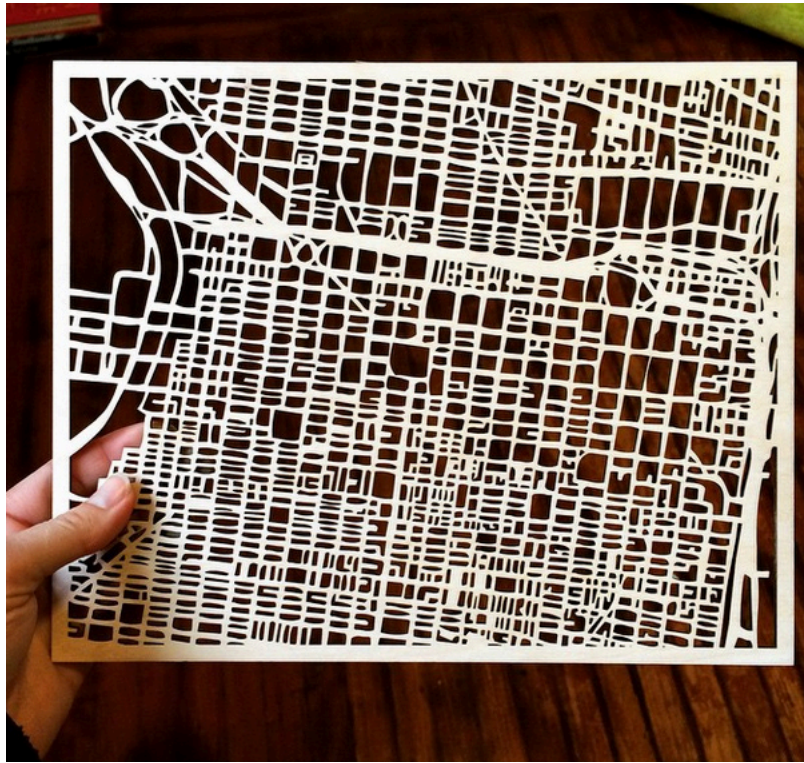
Emma is still enjoying her job at with the [Delaware River Waterfront Corporation](#). There, she remains communicat manager. Right now, she's in the midst of WinterFest, which is a great ongoing party with special features and attr:



Here is Emma on one of her train journeys out west.

And Emma still finds time to not only maintain her extensive blog, phillylovenotes.com, but also to host a related party each year, the locale has not yet been determined. She regularly puts together a huge list of sponsors, has live music, food, and beer and more.

One big activity for Emma this year is her expansion into saleable paper-cut street maps!



These are highly artistic and have garnered interest, praise, and sales commissions for her.

We're so proud of our Ems!

Mini-Vacations at Thurmont and Long Beach Island

We had delightful times with the extended Fried-Cassorlas, the Whelans, the Fried-Petersons and others at Harvey NJ, where we rented a big house. Spent much time on the beach, did reading and swimming and generally had a great time. At Thurmont, we enjoyed visits to a country cemetery (actually quite interesting), and the great food and company thanks to our superb hosts, Peggy and Fred Whelan!

Betty keeps on keepin' on at 92 -- almost 93!

Betty Cassorla will be 93 on Valentine's Day, 2014! My Mom continues to live at our home where she has lived since 1957 in Bellmore, Long Island, NY. We talk almost every morning. And while her mind is not as sharp as it used to be we still have good conversations. My brother Marshall regularly has Mormon volunteers visit, do household work and sing to her. Yes, this is unusual for an elderly Jewish lady -- but it's a good thing!

Despite all of this my Mom is in reasonably good health, with aches and pains of course. My brother Marsh still sends me two and three-way Skype sessions for my Mom and brothers. We have been singing to: "*How do you do my partner, Were a Rich Man,*" and "*Port Said*" recently. If you want to hear my mom tell some of her stories, search on YouTube for Betty Cassorla, and you will find 9 or so.

Betty welcomes visitors and phone calls from all who care about her, and these are legion. In fact, give her a ring if you why don'tcha at 1-516-781-3590.

Martha loves singing -- now in two choirs!

In recent years, Martha has developed her singing skills and found plenty of ways to learn and perform. Martha has singing regularly now with Singing City. She comes home hoarse in voice but happy after Tuesday night rehearsal.

Her former voice teacher, Cailin Matson, moved to New England, but she found a good instructor in Eleanor Macc. She takes lessons with her every week. Also, Martha sings with Germantown Concert Choir.

This year, she has again performed at varied locations, including the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts, St. Luke's Cathedral and elsewhere.

Martha continues to enjoy providing psychotherapy to patients in Jenkintown, where she maintains a private office in Center City (downtown).

I, Albert, am still enjoying teaching and writing!

When things are going well, teaching can be wonderful. The students I teach have colorful and interesting personalities. Almost all are willing to learn.... I learn from them, they from me, and all of us benefit from our often-fascinating conversations (sincerely said).

This year, 2014-2015, has so far been very good. It is my 9th year of teaching overall and my 7th at Edison-Fareiss School, in a Latino area of Philly. This year, I am teaching Literature as part of English 1 to 9th graders and English 10th graders. Even though I have taught *Julius Caesar* and *A Christmas Carol* before, I am building on prior years. In the Spring, I will again teach Drama, including: improvisation, acting, playwriting, famous works such as *History of Theatre*, *Everyman*, *Pygmalion* and *My Fair Lady*. Dance, History of Movies, a bit of Opera, and more.

We interrupt this letter for a brief rant about our social and economic system...

As to the politics of education in disadvantaged neighborhoods such as ours, let me say that we need well-funded public schools with a full array of services. We need smaller classes, more books and computers, more food for our hungry students, more police and safety aides, and a vibrant, well-stocked library (our librarian position was cut due to Pennsylvania budget cutbacks). Meanwhile, there is an open spigot of the funds for charter schools, which drains our school funding base. They are free to reject problematic students; we (public schools) are not. Yet we have an ever-increasing disparity of wealth in the country. The top 1% control 40% of the wealth. Do you think something is wrong?



We were fortunate to find time to visit Martha's lifelong friend, Ginny Gong, in Maryland

Staging plays and making movies

During the summer, I had a performance of my plays, *Eiffel Trifle* and *Appreciation*. I had wonderful previews and commentaries in the press. More importantly, the audience visibly enjoyed them both!



A scene from *Eiffel Trifle*, starring (l. to r.) John Cameron, Vinny Ali and Cyndie Romer. This was staged at White Pines, Elkins Park on August 15, 2014

On December 6th, we had a very professional performance of my my 3-part comedic saga about the Midthassel-Kazarnowicz family, *Life in a Washing Machine*. It was done at Casa de Adoracion, a church in North Philadelph where I teach. Adam Levinthal directed. A videotape of the performance is on a private web site. If you would lil it, please email me.

Our **Melrose Park Philosophy Club** continues to ponder concepts such as chaos theory, philosophy of science and more. We have a wonderful group of folks gathering every two months or so for great conversation and camaraderie. Interested in attending or getting on our e-mail list? Do drop me a line!

And the work of our **Melrose Park Neighbors Association** has been rewarding. Since 1990, we have been providing a good way to build the neighborhood, fight over-development, beautify the hood and more. Our new leader is the remarkably energetic and bright spirit, Caryl Levin. Over the years, we have: increased the sense of neighborliness, helped get a \$2.6 million train station built, kept teens off railroad tracks with fences; reduced water pollution in our stream Mill Run; planted flowers and much more.

For the full story, visit here: <http://www.melroseparkneighbors.org> Again, I recommend building or joining a neighborhood association as a great way to connect and accomplish much.

I continue to talk, lunch and occasionally work off calories by running with my great and attentive friend Dick Goldberg!



Well, that's it for now! Stay good and be as happy as you can possibly be!



Love,



Albert, Martha, and family!

7408 Woodlawn Avenue, Melrose Park PA 19027

e-mail: albert@fried-cas.com

Poems, movie reviews, biographies, photography, plays and more are at:

<http://www.fried-cas.com/creative>

On youtube.com search for "Fried-Cassola" or "playwrightguy"

phone: 215-635-5189

