

A Letter from the Fried-Cassorla's - 2011

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http://www.fried-cas.com/Family_and_Friends/family_letters/fcfamltr11/

Dear family and friends,

Life is good! And what does that mean? Only that if we do not have too much sadness going on, we are free to enjoy the bounty around us. Hope you're doing the same or better!

I was very fortunate to have written most of this from beautiful St. John in the US Virgin Islands. This was our second trip here, though the first time we actually stayed here. We stayed at a lovely flower-strewn place called Estate Lindholm.

We hope you are having a beautiful end of 2011 and are launching yourself into a even better 2012.

Martha's singing...among other things!

She continues to enjoy her psychology practice. People return, and she gets many referrals. But what's NEW this year for Martha is that she's enjoying singing lessons! She is being tutored privately by Cailin, who is enthusiastic and knowledgeable. They had a kind of house concert the other day at his studio in the Mt. Airy section of Philly. I loved hearing her sing a song by the British composer of the 1700's, Henry Purcell, entitled: "I Expect from Love's Sickness."

Hearing the eight or so other singers was enjoyable too, with selections as varied as spirituals and gospel, to full-tilt opera arias -- all in a living room sized space! Not content with individual singing lessons, M has added singing with a choir to her weekly doings. They had a huge concert at an Episcopalian church in the Germantown section that was quite impressive, and complete with a visit by their lady archbishop.



Our July visit to Ben and Priya in LA

This past July three of us -- Martha, Emma and I -- visited our son Benjamin and his long-time girlfriend. We all had great fun with each other.... including Ben and I attending a Dodger game where some of the shenanigans were as interesting as the game -- including dancing Hasidic rabbis on the field, and a guy doing a crazy dance in front of us, an entertaining ad stunt. Then we headed up the coast to the Hearst Castle at San Simeon. They obliged us even though they'd been there just a few weeks earlier.

My favorite part is the Grecian pool - even more amazing looking than during our last visit some 30 years earlier. Yes, Hearst was a rapacious plutocrat. And I believe he helped launch the Spanish-American War. And he did just about destroy Orson Welles' career and did his best to suppress Citizen Kane. But at least we have something of beauty remaining, Like a small version of Versailles.



At the Hearst Castle, giving the discuss thrower some pointers on form



Emma's busy life

As she has for many year, Emma continues to work in bioscience at the University of Pennsylvania. Now she is getting even more dedicated to her studies as well, as she pursues a Masters in Environmental Studies. She recently visited the Port of Philadelphia and got to see aspects of food unloading at the marine terminal, a sight usually hidden from the public.

In fact, Emma has just been approved to do a Masters thesis on the polluting effects of port traffic -- both from boats and trucks.

Emma loves traipsing all around Center City and South Philly, discovering new restaurants on Yelp and doing everything from attending midnight markets to eastern European dancing.

She moved into a great apartment in South Philly near 13th and Federal, just blocks from the Italian Market. Ems bikes to her West Philly job daily, and in fact bikes just about everywhere. She and her roommate Isabel have a "pet plant" called Wally, which is also a kind of wall hanging.

What more can we say about Emma? She's a joy!



Betty keeps going!

My mom, Betty, is still going and very much in touch with friends and family at nearly 90! In fact, the three brothers are planning a party for her to celebrate her 90th this February. We're going to squeeze about 40 friends and family into her little Marine Place split-level.

Betty's big news is that she has 24/7 Medicaid-provided nursing assistant care. That is a hard thing to have achieved for her, and much credit goes to brother Marshall who suffered through innumerable forms, lawyer visits, FedExes and a bazillion phone calls to get it done.

Once again, you might want to check out some of my Mom's beautiful memories and tales preserved on Youtube My favorites of the 7 are:

Shipwreck - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IymZVbs0KC4>

Steeplechase Park - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kr0wNuzNk68>

Check out her intriguing stories by searching on that site for "Betty Cassorla."

Martha and I both miss our dear departed parents, Stanley and Elsie Fried, and Louis Cassorla. We were so lucky to have had such people raising us.

Albert (who dat guy?)

I'm still enjoying teaching in this, my sixth year. In fact, I think I'm enjoying it more than ever. This year, I am teaching English to students in 10th and 11th grade at Edison-Fareira High School in North Philadelphia. I find that I have to invent my lesson afresh each year. This is mainly because I am teaching English 2 and 3, as opposed to English 2A. Or maybe because I just don't like doing things the way I did last year.

I have to learn the new material and figure out the best ways of teaching it. It is no small thing, if I may say so, to teach 400 unique lessons in a year. These kids are smart and deserve a teacher who does his best to bring the material to life. I'm not saying I do a

great job, just that I try, as do most of my colleagues. Three cheers for the many wonderful teachers reading this!

Some special school projects for this year including giving a dried and lacquered redbud leaf to students as part of a poetry assignment, and producing a *Literary Journal* for the first time in three years.

It is a privilege to be doing such meaningful work... even if it seems I have hardly a moment to breathe. Yes, I'm grading papers and planning lessons on this vacation, but not really complaining,

Martha and I continue to enjoy going to the movies and plays. Some of our faves of the past year are the play, *Sylvia* by AR Gurney, and *Phantom of the Opera* (we're the last people on the planet to see it!): We also love watching *Madmen* episodes on DVD. This year, we're also attending the Philadelphia Orchestra with brother-in-law Tom and Martha's sister, Amy. We've also been making many Friday night trips to our art museum for Art After 5, a great live music series. In April, we're looking forward to seeing the new Van Gogh show with friends.



Tom Steigerwald, a great friend whom we will miss

Philosophy Club – Our little club suffered a great loss, as we all mourn the death of our beloved friend, bright spirit and talented painter, Tom Steigerwald. We all miss his cheerful voice and his kind, considerate and civilized company. What a shame to have lost him! Also, our knowledgeable and sweet friend Yoshi has moved away, and we are trying to include him via Skype.

The Melrose Park Neighbors Association continues to amble along. We have Spring plantings and cleanups, and our president, Andy Rudin, keeps us informed.



In *Florals and Nudes* with director and actress Christen Mandracchia, who made it possible!

Playwriting... This past summer, I wrote a full-length comedy-drama called *Florals and Nudes*. It's about a man torn between the urgings of his girlfriend, who would like him to paint just nudes of her, and the lure of a wealthy patron who wants him to create models for huge monumental floral sculptures. We had a very well-received script-in-hand reading in a local synagogue, Keneseth Israel. If you'd like to read the play it's at:

A video of most of the play is available at:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5t78_NfNB0M and

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J3Lg_NIgBgI

Also this year, I was fortunate to have a script in hand reading of my short play, *Nails of Love*, at the Shubin Theatre Philly Primary Stages festival. For me, it was a great event, especially because Martha, Emma and Brian were able to



Nails of Love actors Trick Williams, left, as Marvin, and Jackie Read as Alice & Eloise, at the Shubin Theatre

Maggie and Drew Whelan's wedding



My niece, Maggie Whelan, married Drew Fine (above) this past August in a wonderful wedding in Pittsburgh that many wonderful people. Some of those were my nephew Jesse and Hannah Fried-Petersen, shown below with ba



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

The World at Large - When writing these end of year letters, I do feel that something important has been left out - by me. Namely, the entire rest of the world. Here are a few thoughts: I am inspired by the Arab Spring and regret that it has taken so much loss of life to acquire basic democratic rights. Domestically, I feel that the imbalance in wealth creates harmful distortions in the way our society is organized. We, most of the people, pay for this imbalance. I personally am fortunate to have most of the basics of life taken care of... but many are not so lucky. Simply put -- and therefore not helpfully -- we need to find a better way.

Once again, we hope all is well with you, and that we get to see you this year. Do let us know, in whatever way, how you're doing and what's up!



Love,

***Albert, Martha, and
family!***

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