



Photo by KaWan Powers

December 2017

Dear Friends and Family and Russian Hackers,

We are still around and so is the world (although there are no guarantees.) Another eventful year has whizzed by and we will try to remember the highlights... before they fade. We belong to several communities; our church (First Free Minneapolis), our co-op (Gramercy Lake Shore Drive) and our family. We are extremely blessed that our grandchildren all live nearby and 8 of the 10 are/were home schooled (one graduated). Ross takes 7 of them on an outing every Wednesday ("Papa Day") to some of the many first class attractions in the amazing Twin Cities area. Karin often joins us for lunch.

Old people should be allowed to bask in the glory of their descendants. Let's skip right to the grandchildren. Sorry, kids. We are enchanted watching their performances: **Laura (14)** and **Esther's (9)** "Let the Children Praise" choir performances and Laura's participation in "Tyndale: A Reformation Oratorio" with Angelica Cantanti and Deo Cantumus. Who knew that our family would be involved in truly high class music? **Esther** and **Clara (7)** dance as a mouse and an angel in "The Nutcracker" by Twin Cities Ballet. **Annika (11)** dances with Chinese American Dance Theater, performing at the O'Shaughnessy Auditorium and in outreach events including the State Fair. **Aizec (16)** bowls for the Forest Lake High School team with an average of 220 and a 300 game under his belt! He will have to focus on that or baseball. And who can forget **Christopher (21)**, Rubik's Cube legend, former world record holder and elder statesman in the speed cubing community, who came in second in the international tournament in Paris?! **Patrick (18)** has become a key employee at Family Pathways thrift store while also bowling with the high school. **Xavier (14)** is in football, wrestling and track and looks forward to Varsity football. **Avery (18)**, who is looking towards college in Oregon, is in basketball and track. **Helen (12)** does Karate. She and her sisters are in plays annually, most recently "The Hobbit." Our son, **Jeff**, took his kids and most of their cousins to the Boundary Waters this summer.

We continue to have the privilege of hosting Chinese students and scholars. However, more of them come with their furnished apartments already leased – on line! Most don't need much help but the ones we do get to help often become friends and join us for family activities. We have also entertained a group of Ross's former medical colleagues from Evangel Hospital. Another time, our Hong Kong Pastor, Ken Chan, came with a delegation of historians researching early mission work to China resulting in the formation of the Evangelical Free Church of China in 1888.

We have made use of our apartment and the party room in the building, celebrating events such as Valentines and Christmas parties for Agape Class – our "Community Group" at church. Karin has a Pizza Party for her Kindergarten Sunday School Class every year in May. In June we had a family reunion that included Falck relatives from Missouri. Gramercy is such a wonderful place that we often feel unworthy to live here until we accept it as a trust from God and a ministry.

What is new with the kids? **Jeff** is vice chair of the church council as well as resident tech advisor. He is still with Thomson Reuters and often works from home. His wife, **Rachel**, overseas the home schooling and arranging all the other amazing enrichment activities as well as serving as coordinator for a food co-op. **Susan** (Anderson) participates in a Bible Study and women's group at their church and cleans for us once a month. **Eric**, her husband, continues to upgrade their beautiful home in Somerset, Wisconsin, with its pool, which they use for groups including family gatherings. He drives 50 miles to work at Metrospec. **KaWan** (Powers) teaches with a Minneapolis Public School program for graduates with disabilities. **Brian**, her husband, does more music "gigs" and recording jobs because the teaching time has shrunk. They will be moving to a smaller place and putting his (in home) recording studio into a commercial building. **Tami** (Olson-Molitor) and her husband, **Chris** Molitor who drives for FedEx, continue to oversee the homeschooling and all the extra activities, glad that both **Patrick** and **Christopher** now drive. **Jason**, our son and the kids' dad, is apparently doing well according to people who see him and talk to him, but he has not spoken to or seen us or his kids for a long time. We love and miss him and pray for his return.

Again this summer we rented a cabin on Little Elk Lake near Zimmerman, Minnesota for two weeks. Lots of wonderful memories are being made, and recalled! It all began when Ross' parents rented it from Rollie Olson when our kids were young. Rollie died this year, but Mike and Lori Sandin, who bought the cabin and adjacent house, still make the cabin available and continue to improve it.

In our Senior Co-op, we are "the young ones," even though **Ross** turned 75 and **Karin** soon will be 70. **Karin** has been nominated for the Board of Directors and continues chairing the "Sunshine Committee" with the goal of promoting caring within the building. **Ross** serves on the Health and Wellness Committee and has given PowerPoint talks on "Seldom Seen Science," This year's topic was, "The Missing Key to Evolution: Information." Next year will be "Did Dinosaurs Walk with Humans?" (Probably NOT including: "Did The Humans Run?") We attend and enjoy the weekly potluck lunch every Friday noon with announcements, sharing of news and tidbits and monthly entertainment but mostly conversation around the tables. Every couple of months, on Saturday mornings, local professional entertainers such as Vocal Essence perform for Gramercy and the community. If we played bridge, 500 or dominoes, we could be busy every day. There are also other worthy social gatherings that we don't have time to attend. It is like a busy small town. **Ross** hikes around Wood Lake, right across the street, a 1 or 2 mile hike depending on the route, or Richfield Lake about two blocks away and 1 mile around, both with lots of waterfowl and wildlife in the warmer seasons. The exercise room is sometimes used in that other season of which we do not speak. **Karin** had to drop out of a senior exercise class because of a shoulder problem. We have gotten to know our neighbors here better in 3 years than the neighbors around the block at our house in 33 years.

We are experiencing the effects of aging, although there is always somebody in the building who has it worse. When **Ross** had said he was to have a shoulder repaired, a neighbor said, "I have had both replaced...twice!" Ross has small joint arthritis – hands, feet and spine, but controlled on medication and stretching. He had an unusual thyroiditis condition in which it went hyper, then hypo and finally back to normal, losing then regaining 15 pounds. He is being followed for prostate cancer, now apparently gone and for intermittent squamous and basal cell skin cancer, mostly on the scalp and face, due to sun damage going back to all those sunburns in childhood. Sunscreen was unknown and hats were not worn, and play was outdoors in those dim prehistoric days before videogames and internet.



**Karin** continues to deal with her type 1 diabetes of 49 years – she will receive a gold medal from the American Diabetes Association next year. The pump has made it easier but it is always complicated, yet she copes with this and her prosthetic leg with grace. Many people who see her do not know what she goes through to maintain that winning smile and pleasant disposition – in public, of course. Just kidding... don't throw that book, please, Karin. She has arthritis in her real foot and cannot tolerate most of the medicines that would help it. But she continues her creative activities through singing in the Gramercy choir, and on December 7, doing a dramatic reading for the whole co-op. Ongoing, she is the artistic director of the card making group and demonstrates her taste in seasonal decorating and advising her fashion-challenged husband on his appearance. She loves babies and children, volunteering in the church nursery – especially fun when she does it together with granddaughter **Annika** who is soon 12. **Karin** has taught Kindergarten Sunday school long enough to see her former students go off to college and loves kids at the Kindergarten age. Every Monday afternoon she volunteers as an advocate at inner city CES food shelf.

**Ross** has continued to teach Junior Church (4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders). He says it is because they are old enough to laugh at his jokes but in some cases, they are already too smart. (Karin says it is because **Ross** cannot sit still in “big church.”) He started doing children’s church when he was in high school when youth director Jim Forstrom decreed that every high schooler should have a ministry. He also leads the twice yearly wilderness hikes but was chastened by a fall when he broke his promise to **Karin** by attempting to hike a hillside trail and fell, hitting his head. There is no discernable permanent damage – but how can you tell with a brain already in a state of deterioration? The promise to Karin goes back to a 2001 fall written up on [www.rossolson.org](http://www.rossolson.org) . He stopped attending his retired pediatrician group when it became apparent that freedom of speech did not extend to conservatives, especially Christians. He continues to be a trouble-maker with intermittent letters to the editor and op-ed pieces, mostly unpublished but posted on the above mentioned politically-incorrect web site. This was the year for **Ross’s** 50 year Medical School Reunion. He is on the boards of Twin Cities Creation Science Association and Outpost Ministries.

We both got iPhones this year for the first time, trading in our dumb phones, with the encouragement of our children and grandchildren. We suspect now that it was so they could mock our incompetence. We have a little trouble with memory. **Karin** remembers people’s names but not appointments. **Ross** remembers important things like the punch lines of jokes, but not people’s names. Of course, he never has. If you never had a memory, you will not miss it when it’s gone.

We do remember what Christmas is all about and thank our Creator and Savior, Jesus Christ, for humbling Himself to become a human being, live the perfect life, suffer misunderstanding, hatred, humiliation, beating and death, willingly submitting to this so He could take the penalty for all the disgusting things we have done. All He asks is that we admit our sin and helplessness and accept the forgiveness He offers. We will then live in gratitude by the power of His Spirit for however many days we have left on this planet.

Wishing you a joyful Christmas and thanking God for what each of you mean to us.

Ross & Karin

(Written by Ross, edited by Karin)

