

Christmas 2008

Well, we missed our 2007 Christmas letter. There was a lot going on late in 2007. So we are getting this 2008 letter done - but maybe you should consider it a 2009 letter... just in case.

2007 started off pretty normal, Sally was busy with taxes and I was her helper. She does all the hard stuff and I do the paper work and mailing. In between returns, I continued my bike riding and skiing. I went to Winter Park, CO with my skiing buddy.

The first of three trips to Aliquippa happened in April. My parents have an apartment which my father built over our garage. It was then vacant and I was back there to get it fixed up and ready to rent.

In June, after tax season, Sally and I took a trip to visit her brother and sister in Washington and Oregon. This was the first time that I had been to the eastern part of Washington. Except for the snow and lack of an ocean, it looked a lot like San Diego - desert.

In August, the second trip to PA, Sally and I both went on this one. My mother was starting to lose weight and her general health was declining. We were in Aliquippa for a few days. Sally and I went to a model train convention in Altoona for a few days and then we were back in Aliquippa.

Over the next couple of months, my mother's health declined. My third trip to Aliquippa was in October when she became just too much work for my sister, Diane, to handle alone. By the time I got back there, she was hospitalized. The doctors did not hold out any hope so we brought her to her home where she died about a week later. She was 95 years old. Sally flew out for the funeral.

While that was going on, Sally's mom was also declining. Her mom had a form of Leukemia. She was diagnosed with it a couple of years ago. She lived in a retirement home and was getting along pretty well. By December, she had to be hospitalized. After we saw that everything had been done, we brought her home to her apartment at the retirement home where she died a few days later.

Both my mom and Sally's mom were fortunate in that they did not suffer in bed for years as I remember my grandmothers' last years.

So Christmas 2007 was pretty somber.

2008 started up with the usual tax season. Sally's business is still doing well but she is not taking on new clients. Since she works in Trusts and Estates, as the years go by, and clients also pass away, her business is slowly shrinking. The timing will probably work out such that in a couple of years she can join me in retirement.

After tax season, we took a trip to Utah to visit her daughter Kelly. Kelly was graduating with a Master's degree in School Administration. She is an Assistant Principal and hopes to become a

Principal someday.

Through 2007 and 2008, Sally has been teaching English as a Second Language and now she has taken on teaching a math GED class (in Spanish!). She does this volunteer work at Horton Elementary School.

In early July, I was back in Aliquippa to visit my dad and sister. They are doing pretty well on their own.

In late July, we had a visit from Sally's grandchildren, Alyssa and Ashlee, from Utah. They were in San Diego for two weeks were they stayed with us for a few days and with their aunt Kim for most of the time.

My cousins from Australia (from the Pantalone family) were in the US for a visit in August. During the time that they were in Los Angeles, they drove down to San Diego to visit us for a day. We gave them a city tour and then visited the Zoo.

Since I've gotten into this genealogy thing, cousins have been popping up all over. My close cousin Giuliano Colajanni and his wife Rosalba came to the US in late August. They live in Rome. Giuliano's grandfather lived in Dawson, New Mexico. We met Giuliano in Dawson where they hold a town reunion every two years. After the reunion, Giuliano and Rosalba went to the Grand Canyon and Las Vegas and then joined us at our home for a week of touring and visiting. See details of our trip at:

<http://www.silogic.com/genealogy/Dawson%20Reunion%202008.html>

Coming up in December, Sally and I are going on our first cruise, from San Diego, through the Panama Canal and on to Ft Lauderdale. On a stop in Aruba, we are going to meet some more cousins from my father's hometown. Watch my web site for all the details <http://www.silogic.com/>. After the cruise, we are going to Aliquippa for a few days then back to San Diego just in time for tax season!

We wish you a great Holiday Season

Mark and Sally DiVecchio