

Merry Christmas

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Dear Family and Friends,

We wish you a blessed Christmas, a happy holiday season, and a healthy and happy New Year! Health-wise Pat is getting stronger. The two of us walk 3 mornings a week—timing it so that we run into Pat's walking group of many years. Mel organizes and plays tennis twice a week with his long-time tennis buddies.

Pat enjoys being a docent at the LBJ Library each week. She writes a column for the church newsletter each month. She continues to visit and look after her Aunt Doris who celebrated her 97th birthday in June of this year. Sisters Pat, Nancy, and Sandy now do a conference call almost every evening.

Right after Christmas last year we headed for San Francisco to see Mardie and Durham and to meet Beth and her family to attend the beautiful memorial service for Eugene's remarkable mother. Then, in March, Mardie and Durham came for a spring break visit. We were delighted that cousin Jessamy Brown came down for a 2-day visit. In May, we went to D.C. to visit Sarah and Joe. A high point of the trip was going to the Museum of African-American History and Culture—an uplifting, inspiring, and emotionally draining experience. In June, Mel and Pat were lucky enough to be able to house-sit for John and Susan Richmond for 18 days while they were in France. It was a wonderful opportunity to spend time with Mardie and Durham, to walk in and explore Golden Gate Park almost every day, to become more familiar with this beautiful city, and to see on brief visits Pat's cousin Teresa Meikle and brother Robert Winter. Do take a few minutes to look at his magnum opus—look for information about MITA (Music In The Air) on Facebook.

In August, all ten of us were able to meet in Massachusetts for an 8-day trip down memory lane with Gramma. As children we Winter kids went to visit relatives every summer. We loved it there—being spoiled by our paternal grandparents, playing with numerous cousins and visiting lots of aunts and uncles. Sarah did a wonderful job of organizing everything. Being able to show our children and grandchildren Wrentham, Hanson, Scituate, and Newport was such a great joy for Pat. We attended a service at the Original Congregational Church of Wrentham, MA—established 1692—followed by a lovely lunch at the home of cousin Joanne and Paul Cummings. It was beyond wonderful to see so many cousins. One day we visited the Hanson Historical Society, the same building where Pat's mom attended 1st and 2nd grade. We visited family plots in several cemeteries. We enjoyed wonderful seafood and family time together. We were joined by Nancy and Doug for the 1st 4 of the 8 days. It was hot, so one day we retreated to an indoor rock climbing gym where the younger set showed their amazing skill at ascending great heights. Sarah and Joe were fabulous belayers. In addition to seeing relatives, we enjoyed special visits with Beth's best friend Pria Sarma and her family and with physics/tennis friends Chieze Ibeneche and Andy Nnewihe.

In early October, the Oakes/Buck family came to Austin for a week-long visit. A highlight of the trip was driving in our rented van to Houston so that Emily (with us) and Gyaan (with Pria) could look at Rice. Both Gyaan and Emily were suitably impressed. A visit to the LBJ library was enjoyed by everyone.

Beth, Eugene, and family, have had another busy year. Emily (a high school senior) has been looking at a number of colleges, mostly in the northeast. She loves music (especially the bassoon), writing, and history. Ethan (a sophomore) is becoming a versatile jazz saxophonist and is enjoying his computer class. Both Emily and Ethan made the All-State Orchestra! Beth and Eugene continue to find meaning in their positions at the University of Iowa. Beth has become actively involved in racial justice work and has been joined by Emily in this endeavor.

Sarah and Joe are still in Arlington, VA; they are almost through with a kitchen renovation after a successful bathroom re-model last year. While we were in San Francisco, Sarah came to Austin for a week's visit with plenty of time to catch up with old friends. Joe is still enjoying singing in The New Dominion Chorale. They both enjoy indoor rock-climbing at least twice a week.

Mardie continues to enjoy her work with Hello Housing, heading into her 14th year. Her team has grown to 16 people and they have added an office in Oakland. They continue to pilot new ways to create and protect affordable housing in the Bay Area. Durham shares time with Mardie and Tony and is getting settled into first grade. Highlights of his year included rock climbing with Aunt Sarah, Uncle Joe and his beloved cousins Emily and Ethan in Boston and flying a friend's Peregrine falcon in Monterrey with his grandparents. Mardie was especially thrilled to pretend her parents lived in San Francisco for three lovely weeks over the summer. (Thanks, Aunt Susan!)

Mel spends much of his time on his UT Physics History Web site and with Pat, a history of the Congregational Church of Austin Web site. He regularly e-mails or talks on the phone with many people associated in some way with these groups. His book club provides much insight and pleasure.

A distant cousin of Pat's, Priscilla Perkins Grew posted this 1877 Thanksgiving in the State of Michigan from her great-grandfather James Croswell. It seems pertinent for our times.

“To the end that we may ... walk in the ways of peace, understanding and benevolence, assisting the poor and unfortunate, protecting all citizens in their just rights, knitting ourselves together as brethren of one great family, with pure lives to secure ourselves and our posterity the blessings of peace, of learning, of temperance, of righteousness, and of good government for all time to come.”

Happy Holidays,

Pat and Mel

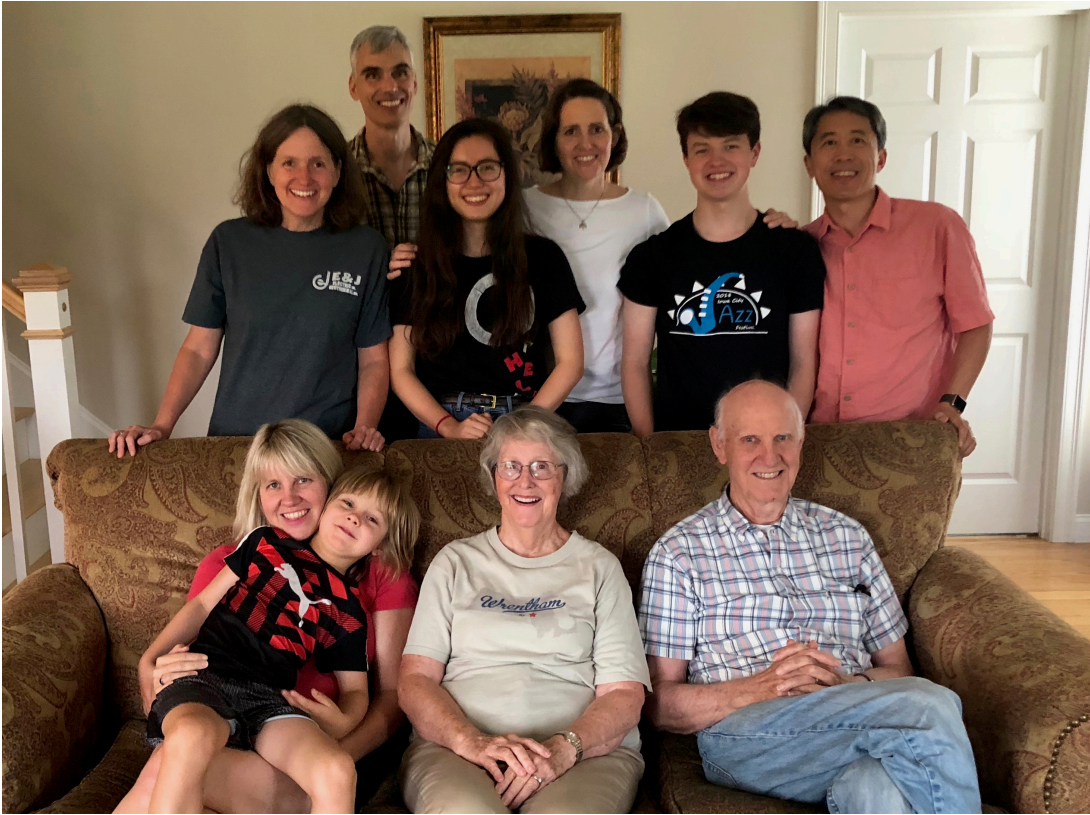
Photo Gallery Below:



12/29/17 Emily, 17, and Ethan Buck, almost 15, grandparents Pat and Mel Oakes, and Durham Oakes Deifell, 5 1/2, on the campus of Stanford University in Palo Alto, CA



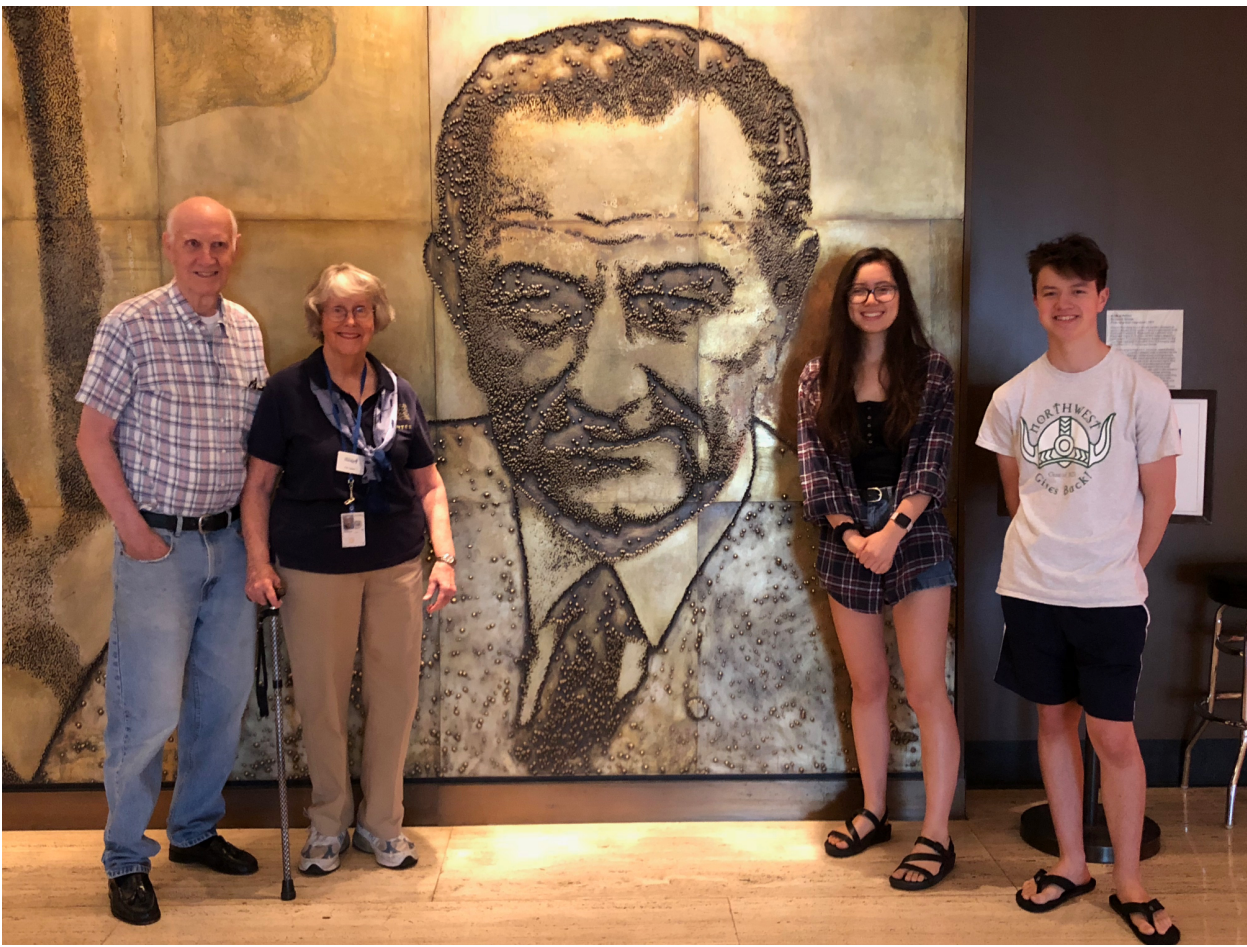
8-9-18 Mel and Pat with their grandchildren—Ethan, Durham, and Emily--at The Breakers, Newport, RI



8-11-18 back--All 10 of us--Beth, Joe, Emily, Sarah, Ethan, Eugene--front--Mardie and Durham, Pat and Mel (1).jpg



8/5/18 After the Sunday service at the Original Congregational Church of Wrentham, MA--front--Nancy Ronan Morrison , Emily Buck, Martha Brown Koziol. Nancy Winter Hatch, Sarah Oakes, Joe Pierce, Doug Hatch; back Pat Winter Oakes, Ethan Buck, Mel Oakes, Robert Hanson, Eugene Buck, Barbara Thomson, Eugene Buck, Beth Oakes, Phil and Kathy Brown--Grampa Winter made the cross from some of the wood left from the steeple which went down in 1938 after the hurricane.



10/4/18 Mel and Pat with Emily and Ethan--Pat's day to be a docent at the LBJ Library



6/27/18 Pat and brother Robert in Golden Gate Park



11/29/18 Mardie and Durham looking for their Christmas tree--note Durham's big boy haircut



5/13/2018 Joe and Sarah with Mel and Pat on our Potomac River cruise



Emily Buck's senior picture—
graduating from West High
in Iowa City



8/18 Ethan Buck in Wrentham, MA



Durham Oakes Deifell