

# MMXXI in Review

## The Bird's Nest West

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At the beginning of 2021, of course, we, like most everyone else, were still basically living in pandemic isolation. On the one hand, because of COVID Richard and Jess were not able to be with us as planned for Christmas. We were also not able to see Marie and her daughters. On the other hand, Julia and Victor were teaching classes virtually, so their family was with us and with Victor's family in Rockford until late March. While she was in Monmouth, Dorothy had a number of piano lessons with Nancy St. Ledger, who had been the piano teacher for Marie, Julia and Richard, as well as Tom. Three generations!

By the end of January COVID vaccine was finally available and, by the end of February, Anne and Tom were both fully jabbed. We started emerging from isolation by inviting other vaccinated couples over for dessert. That was a nice way to ease back into society and the small gatherings actually proved to be better for conversation!

In late March Marie and the girls were finally able to visit Monmouth. A few days later Anne and Tom drove down to Virginia to celebrate Dorothy's 6<sup>th</sup> birthday and Easter with Julia and her family. We spent April and May back home in Monmouth, devoting much time to harvesting our bumper crop of strawberries. We were able to spend some time with Farid Freyha before he left Illinois to begin graduate school in Maryland. (We had been host parents for Farid's brother Jad while he was at Monmouth.) Marie came down again with Sylvia and Phoebe to help celebrate Tom's birthday at the end of April. In late May we drove up to St. Paul for a long-delayed visit with Richard and Jessica and helped Richard plant his vegetable garden.

At the beginning of June, we traveled up to Chicagoland to attend Phoebe's dance recital and spent some time with the girls in a hotel with a pool. In June Julia and Dorothy returned to Monmouth. Dorothy spent most of June and July taking more piano lessons from Nancy and taking swimming lessons at the new outdoor pool at the local Y. Most afternoons Tom and Julia took turns spending time at the pool with Dorothy. Needless to say, by the end of July Dorothy was quite a swimmer, even diving into 14 ft. deep water. Dorothy and Tom also picked many quarts of black raspberries in the garden—another bumper crop.

In early July we were able to arrange a cousin weekend at a hotel in Chicagoland for Dorothy, Phoebe and Sylvia to celebrate a belated 6<sup>th</sup> birthday for Phoebe. The cousins always get along so well! They always wish to have more time together!

Towards the end of July Julia and Dorothy traveled East with us by car to our cabin on Damariscotta Lake in Jefferson, Maine. It was a glorious summer: swimming in the lake every sunny afternoon; visits with friends like Linda Cunningham, Paul Sullivan and Don Sprague; and jaunts to beloved destinations like Pemaquid Light, Pemaquid Beach and the Midcoast Maine Botanical Gardens in Boothbay. Anne's brother Carl usually came for dinner and lingered most evenings to work on jigsaw puzzles with Dorothy and Julia. Anne also enjoyed a pleasant reunion with some members of the Waldoboro High School Class of 1968.



One special morning Anne's brother Jack and his wife Debbie met the North Haven ferry so Uncle Toots and his wife Aunt Mary could join us all at the lake for a festive lunch and lively conversation.

By late August Tom's garden was calling us back to Monmouth, where we found that our peach tree had collapsed under the weight of its crop. We were able to salvage many of the peaches, but the tree itself will sadly not see another season. However, it was a good tomato season. Anne picked and Tom canned about 75 qts of red gold, as we call it, and, thanks to a mild autumn, we were still eating fresh tomatoes and making sauce at the end of November.

By early October we headed East again. We spent several wonderful days with Tom's sister Toni in New Jersey, with trips to two of Toni's favorite haunts, Duke Farms and Grounds for Sculpture. We also saw Tom's parents' best friends, Lou and Gloria Parisi (one of the longest married couples in New Jersey—more than seventy years!) as well as Tom's Aunt Gloria, his cousin Laura and her daughter Sara. Brother Eddie also drove up from Atlantic City to join in some of the frolic.

From New Jersey we headed north to Maine, with a stop in Worcester to visit Tom's college roommate Ed Vodoklys at Holy Cross as well as a former Monmouth colleague, Anne Nelson. From there we drove into Boston to see the Titian Exhibit at the Gardner Museum—an incredible group of paintings all in one place! Then up to the camp in Maine, spectacular in its fall foliage, another visit to the Midcoast Botanical Gardens, and more good times spent with Anne's brothers Jack and Carl and Jack's wife, Debbie. On our way home we stopped in Stockbridge, Mass., to see the Norman Rockwell Museum—another must-see.

We got back to Illinois just in time to have an overnight with Dorothy at a hotel in Rockford—an indoor pool was, of course, de rigueur. Then at the end of October Marie, Sylvia and Phoebe joined us for a special day at the Brookfield Zoo, which Tom had won in a pre-pandemic raffle. It was a cold and rainy day, but the girls were able to pet a wallaby, to feed parakeets in a free-flight exhibit, and watch a dolphin show. Anne especially enjoyed watching the penguins being fed. We saw Marie and the girls again Thanksgiving Weekend to celebrate Sylvia's 11<sup>th</sup> (!) birthday. *Tempus fugit.*

Despite his retirement from the classroom, Tom remains active professionally. He is a trustee in the Archaeological Institute of America and serves on several committees in Eta Sigma Phi and the Classical Association of the Middle West and South. He also recently became a director for the Warren Co. History Museum. He saw his article entitled "Scenes from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* on Three Chinese Export Porcelains" appear (in Chinese no less!) in a volume published by Peking University Press. Just this fall, *Ovid in China*, a volume he is co-editing, was approved for publication by Brill. He also finds time to swim about 2 ½ miles every week at the local Y. Meanwhile, Anne spends a lot of her time writing letters to children and grandchildren, knitting, and producing delicious meals, made especially with produce from our garden. She also helped copyedit *Ovid in China*, which should be in print next year.

2022 promises to be a special year for us. We will mark our 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary in June. Our children are planning to celebrate with a Gathering at the Grange Hall (97 Washington Rd.) in Jefferson, Maine (near our cabin) on August 13<sup>th</sup>. We know Maine is a trek for many of you, but if you want to join us for this celebration, please send an email to

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where you are also invited to share a memory or two, and, perhaps, a photo.

**Best Wishes for a Happier  
(and Increasingly COVID-free) 2022  
from Anne and Tom Sienkewicz**

