



At the Anniversary Mass

The Year 2012 in Review

The Bird's Nest West
1103 E. 2nd Avenue
Monmouth, Illinois 61462
(309) 734-3543

awsienkewicz@gmail.com
tjsienkewicz@gmail.com



The whole family gathered for the anniversary celebration: in front, l. to r., Kyle, Marie, Sylvia, Anne, Tom; rear, Victor, Julia, Richard

The highlight of the year was certainly our 40th anniversary celebration on June 9th, a great joy and success all around. We were delighted that so many family and friends could join us, including all our children and granddaughter Sylvia, as well as Tom's Aunt Doris (on her first and hopefully not her last visit to Monmouth), his sisters MaryBeth and Toni, and MaryBeth's children Tracy and Roy. Tom's cousin Barbara Esposito flew in from Arizona. Our witness, Joel Gagnon drove from upper New York State with his wife Sally. Tom's college friend, Paul Sullivan S.J., came out from Massachusetts to officiate at the anniversary Mass. We had a ball. The only thing that could have improved it was to have more of you with us, but you can be sure that we thought of you and thank you all for all your cards and kind wishes. We self catered the party with finger food with recipes from both families. Our theme song is "Still Crazy After All These Years."



Anne and Toni in NJ for the big post-wedding celebration

Anne is enjoying the freedom of retirement. One major project is the transcription of letters between her father and his family during World War II. Gramma Kath kept the letters safe under the eaves for 50 years.

They give a real idea of 1940's Island life as well as war time Army life. Anne has been reading the letters to her father over the phone. He remembers people and events in detail and corrects her guesses. Moreover, he has started writing down more stories from his past —so far almost 400 pages of Waterman scrawl. Anne flew to Maine for a family Thanksgiving with her father, brothers Carl and Jack and his wife Debbie, and nephews Tim and Nick. Dear friend Linda Cunningham met her flight, and started her off on ten solid days talking. Uncle Toots and Aunt Mary stopped by, and there was mild weather for Maine in November too, a lovely visit all round!

Marie and her husband Kyle seem totally absorbed in raising their two-year-old, Sylvia Marie. Doting grandparents could brag about Sylvia's beauty, lovable traits and amazing accomplishments, but it would take a book! As Great Grampa Poppi Dick says, "She is a filly-loo bird!" Marie continues her veterinary work and Kyle writes his computer code in time snatched from parenting and caring for 6 cats and 2 dogs. Julia is teaching art history at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, which seems to suit her well, and is giving professional papers right and left (even one at one of Tom's classical meetings!) . Her husband Victor is now in a two-year post-doctoral position at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, so he is staying with Tom's sister MaryBeth in Durham and commuting. Meanwhile lawyer Richard is still living in Milwaukee, a city which he seems to enjoy.



Tom and his siblings at the post-wedding celebration: l. to r., Tom, Eddie, Toni, MaryBeth

Would it surprise anyone that 2012 was, in fact, marked by travel from beginning to end? The year began with Tom preparing for a trip to Roman Spain with a pod of students. They visited Barcelona, Tarragona, Granada, Cordoba, Merida, Segovia, and Madrid in an eight-day tour. All of those cities, except Granada, have significant Roman ruins or archaeological museums which Tom can highly recommend.

Shortly after this trip, Tom and Anne made a whirlwind weekend visit to New Jersey for a party in honor of niece Theresa and her husband Chris Sevilis, married in California while we were in Italy last year. Toni entertained family and friends in her home.



Marie and Sylvia in Monmouth for the Anniversary Celebration

She recreated the wedding colors, decorations and even the cake so that those who were unable to attend the wedding could get a taste of the affair as well as watch a video of the event.

Thanks to her retirement, Anne was able to drive East this summer for our annual sojourn in Maine. On the way, we visited Tom's niece Christina in Baltimore and his brother Eddie on the Jersey shore and his sister Toni near Princeton. Eddie has since sold his house and moved into an apartment only a block from the ocean. He was evacuated during the hurricane but suffered no major loss. All Tom's other N.J. relatives were without power for days and weeks.

Other special events of the year included a celebration for Janet Smith, who ran the ACM Program in Florence for many years, in Ripon, Wisconsin. (Tom was the co-editor of a *Festschrift* in her honor). We were delighted that Janet was also able to visit us in Monmouth. In June, our goddaughter Becky Tyler was married in Davenport, in a very well orchestrated and pretty wedding. Julia, Victor and Richard came, too. What fun!

Less pleasant was the fact that Anne's gall bladder went bad and she had it removed in February. Fortunately, surgery did the trick, and she is feeling much better now. Tom suffered for much of the year with a heel spur which even sent his left leg into a cast for a few weeks in May. He nevertheless planted a lushly overachieving garden which defied the drought (Mulch! Mulch! Mulch!) and produced mounds of cucumbers, peppers, tomatoes, beets and eggplant for Anne to wrestle into submission. Even our sulky peach tree fruited heavily this year!

Tom returned to Spain in November for a closer look at Merida, where he had too little time in January. This time sister Toni accompanied him—her first trip to Spain—and under her influence he also visited El Escorial, La Valle de Los Caidos (where Franco is buried along with many of the fallen in the Spanish Civil War) and Toledo, which, much to Tom's surprise, also had some interesting Roman remains. He has now sworn to return to Spain with students at least once more before he retires.



Tom and Anne on the top of the world in Yosemite

her Aunt Bernie and husband George and a tour of Yosemite, which is certainly spectacular—those rocks! those trees! those waterfalls!—but the drive through the lush farmland in California's Central Valley was unforgettable as well. Tom was excited to see an almond orchard with the nuts still green on the bough. Las Vegas was another story. From the sublime to the ridiculous! It's a fascinating conglomerate of cultural icons. Venice and St. Mark's Square – but no St Mark's! Paris without Notre Dame! Nero would feel right at home there, but Tom and Anne were not 100% comfortable. Tom bore the strain (and the +100° temps) better and was very amused at Anne's strongly-negative reactions, though she tried to be good. One very positive side to Vegas was a reunion with Tom's cousin Gusty, whom he had not seen for many years. It was great to catch up on lost time.

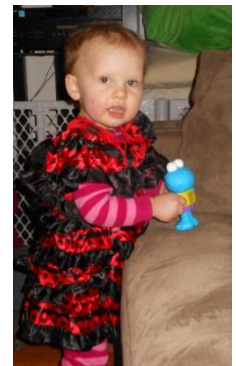
Following all these travels and excitements, we are looking to spending a quiet Christmas here in Monmouth. We wish all of you the very best holiday season.



Tom and his students at the Roman theatre in Merida, Spain

Not that retirement is imminent! He still teaches full time and serves as Secretary-Treasurer of a major Classical organization which required some significant traveling, to Baton Rouge, Williamsburg and Tallahassee, in 2012. Thanks to her retirement, Anne was able to accompany him to Baton Rouge, a fun city. Tom also gives presentations at various Classical meetings, where he speaks on a range of topics, from Latin teaching standards to guiding students through Roman Florence, rather than the purely Renaissance city.

The Florence talk took him in late June to Las Vegas, a city he had long avoided. He actually managed to talk Anne into coming along, with the lure of a side trip to San Francisco to visit



Sylvia Celebrating her 2nd (!) Birthday in the Flamenco Dress her Aunt Toni bought her in Madrid