

Reelers-Rangers Reporter

#3 (1-10-21)

Mary and Paul Olsen: On December 16, our youngest son and his wife, Mark and Chrissy, had a baby boy, 7 pounds 8 ounces – Harold “Harry” Burgess Olsen. We are so happy for them, and everyone is doing well. We went to visit them recently in their new home in Park Slope, Brooklyn. He is just adorable. Couldn’t wait to cuddle him. Christmas and New Year’s were quiet, but nice, with a small family get-together. Paul is feeling better. Hopefully by the time we get through this covid lockdown, he’ll be able to get back to the dance floor. Blessings to all.

Nona and Ira Seid: Happy new year to all. Hanukkah was not the same, as it was just Nona and I at home. Our grandson is 16 months old and doing well, as we can see on Zoom. I am now in early retirement [as an emergency room physician] working only three shifts a month. Hope to one day rejoin square dancing as we really enjoyed it and have the time now with no conflicting shifts. Otherwise, we’re just hanging out waiting for this to end. Regards to all.

Trevor Johnson: This last year has been nuts. Just to highlight a few oddities: hybrid teaching, with almost no students in the building; having a student show up to class while on vacation in Ecuador, dressed in a bedsheet (that didn’t go over well); and the minor fact that I’m coaching this year. Specifically, I’m coaching team sports in the form of video games – Rocket League, among others.

Kathy Fetch: I shared Thanksgiving with Sig Eisele [Lakeland Squares]. She wasn’t able to be with her son in Pennsylvania or her daughter in New York, so she came over and we sat six feet apart. I made a chicken dinner set up as a buffet. I put my Christmas decorations up after Thanksgiving. Sig got to see her son on Christmas and I couldn’t visit the people where I usually go because of the situation, so I had a quiet day with my dog, Lizzie. I watched Mass on TV, enjoyed a good breakfast, opened presents from friends, baked cookies, and made stuffed shells for dinner.



Helen Jacobson: I have been swimming and doing aquatic exercise at the Y. I have also been playing my ukulele with some virtual groups such as the Suncoast Sandfleas (Sarasota) and the Philadelphia Mainline uke group. I am well ... but sick of Zoom! I watch too much “Law and Order” and eat too much ice cream. But I have discovered a yummy new low calorie ice cream, Halo. One pint has only 350 calories! I would love to hear about the New Year’s Eve dance from those who attended it. [Note from Lise: If anyone would like to give a report, please send it to me and I’ll pass it along.]

Ann and John Lovatt: John is at The Homestead in Branchville. They do not allow any visitors due to the virus, but cards are welcome. The address is 129 Morris Turnpike, Newton, NJ 07860 (room 212-D).

Helen and Bruce Haskell: We have to admit that as much as wearing these darned masks is a nuisance, we haven't had as much as a cold these past few months, so there is a silver lining. Unfortunately Helen broke her wrist shortly after Halloween; luckily, it was a hairline fracture that didn't slow her down at all. We kicked off last fall battling an infestation of spotted lanternflies in front of our house until they finally lost interest and disappeared. We found out that we have at least five of their favorite trees – sometimes called tree of heaven or weed trees (quite a difference, if you ask us). A few experts advised us to inject poison to kill both the tree and the roots, preventing the bugs from returning and multiplying even on a stump (which means we can't keep the wood chips). We wanted to just take them down as they are already damaged, but of course it's not that easy. Because it is a conservation area, we need special permission – so many ordinances that our heads are spinning. We have to attend a town meeting and meet with the shade tree commissioner, who insists that we replace each one with a “major” tree. Seems a bit too complicated, but we hope for the best. We spent the remainder of the fall with a little cleanup and planting daffodils to enjoy in the spring. Thanksgiving and Christmas were very enjoyable. When the weather cooperated, we saw family members outside; otherwise, FaceTime came in handy. A new grandbaby is expected in the summer. We look forward to square dancing in 2021 and will be a bit rusty – but look like experts compared to our newly learned round dancing, lol. Remember those lyrics from The Who: “Got a feeling '21 is going to be a good year.” Let's keep the faith! We wish everyone a very happy and HEALTHY new year.

Cathy Feenstra: I finished about 10 embroidery projects as Christmas presents, read about 10 books, played mahjong online, and cleaned up about six Russian olive trees from our yard – that almost killed me in all the heat. We quarantined at our house in the Adirondacks almost every weekend, where we built a 20-foot rock wall, filled in with three yards of topsoil, and planted it for spring 2021. I look forward to cleaning out the garage and basement soon. Happier new year.

Arlene and Tom Simansky: We want to say hello to everyone and hope you will have a healthy and happy new year. We flew down to Florida in November and were lucky to spend Thanksgiving and Christmas with our son and his family on the east coast of the state. It was great being able have this time with our grandson, Aiden, who will be 5 in February. Because of the virus, we decided not to return north for Christmas this year, and will stay in Florida until the end of May. The weather has been great and clubs have started square dancing again here, but we do not feel safe because we haven't been vaccinated yet. Well, everyone, please stay safe.



Jane Marchese: Hopefully everyone is well and had a good holiday. I'm trying to keep busy and focus on keeping peace in this world and loving one another. Hope you all are, too. Miss the dancing – it was fun – and looking forward to more fun times. God bless!

Jeanne and Inars Gruntals: Dear friends, there we were celebrating Christmas and New Year's in our home. We did Zoom over the holidays to visit with our families in Georgia and New Jersey. Our home is decorated inside and out, and probably will remain so until the end of February to keep our spirits up. We are so fortunate compared to many others. Stay safe and well!

Linda and Rick Murphy: Winter holidays were very quiet at the Murphy house. We spent the time at home staying safe and warm with fires in the fireplace. We managed to complete three holiday/winter puzzles over the month of December, did crossword puzzles, Sudoku, and word searches ... and read. Books were our primary gifts to each other – with two librarians in the house would you expect anything less? Linda’s birthday was celebrated with watching Pixar’s *Soul* on Disney+. We are all back in the office, library, and school – though we do wonder how long school will hold onto in-person this month.



Janet and Alan Gerber: Not much going on with the Gerbers. Janet had a great Nordic ski afternoon with Mark Bippes and is hoping for a LOT more snow.

Nancy Ihnen: Needless to say, looking forward to a better year, all around. I was invited to Thanksgiving dinner, but declined because I did not feel like driving two hours (each way). On Thanksgiving, lo and behold ... a week to 10 days after, three of the five people in that house got very sick and tested *positive* for covid. Thankfully, they are recovering nicely. (Kind of glad I did not go.) I’m now getting my exercise moving logs for the woodstove around and shoveling my 100-foot driveway when it snows.

Merrill Hodder: Amidst all the covid-19 news, I’d like to share this wonderful event. My amazing dad was honored by the mayor of Edison Township with a proclamation. Facebook ignited the event after I posted photos of my dad re-signing his notary public oath in September. Within the hour, the mayor’s assistant contacted me! I’m FB “friends” with the mayor’s page to keep up with Edison news, and I guess his assistant was checking the page that afternoon. I mentioned that my dad is a veteran and may be the oldest working notary public in New Jersey. The ceremony was supposed to be held on Veterans Day, but due to the pandemic, it was postponed. [This link](#) to Edison TV is the video of Mayor Lankey awarding my father, Stanley Gross, with the proclamation. I hope everyone is staying safe and healthy.

Karen Hartman: Happy new year to all our square dance friends! Although 2020 was very hard, I was blessed with good health and the ability to see my family frequently. I went line dancing with my daughter a few times, did several sewing projects, and took walks with a friend, which helped fight the isolation. I really hope we’ll be able to square dance together soon, although I’m sure I will be rusty! Thanks for doing this newsletter and keeping us connected!

Karen Condon: Janet Gerber and I each enjoyed an afternoon cross-country ski outing with Mark Bippes the week before Christmas. Glad that we got those days of skiing in, because a few days later, the rain washed away all the snow.

Av and Bear Brady: Like most, our holidays were quiet and spent with immediate family, including our two grandkiddies. After our beloved cat Oscar passed away suddenly in October, we adopted a new rescue, Sheldon, who keeps us on our toes while he wrecks the house. Thanks to Janet Gerber – who, in late summer, introduced me to pickleball (along with fellow Reelers Karen Condon and Cindy Whalen) – I got out quite a bit in the nicer weather, in addition to my 1-2 times per week hikes. Bear and I also walk daily, and both of us have been doing a lot of reading, cooking, gardening, and lots of home improvement projects. In December, we went on a road rally and received a trophy for Best Husband and Wife Team ... despite all the arguing during the 65 miles. We've also taken long car rides by ourselves just to get lost in the pretty northwest New Jersey scenery, and miss the outdoors during the long winter. Bear has resumed going to the gym; I am still doing real estate à la covid (very different and rather impersonal) and playing the organ for my church every week; and Becky is back to her regular schedule at Panera Bread. Stop in and say "hi" if you're in the Succasunna mall area, as she knows many of you. Daily chats with our neighbors keep us sane. I must admit to being pea green with envy when Donna Poyer announced, in the last newsletter, that she had the cleanest house in the county, because I *so* aspired to be the queen. Then I remembered that we're in different counties – so Donna, hold on to your crown and I'll hold on to mine! It was great seeing a few of you in person at the Reelers food donation site last month, where we collected 138 pounds of food items and more than \$195 in checks for the Interfaith Food Pantry! Let's hope we see more of your smiling faces in a square soon – miss you all!



Irene and Hal Stoller: Our holidays were enjoyable, though quieter than usual since we saw some family members only on Zoom rather than in person. I enjoyed baking lots of cookies, mailing packages of them to family and friends, and delivering some to neighbors and local friends. Our tap dance class (which has continued lessons on Zoom) did have an in-person holiday party – outside in a parking lot, all bundled up and wearing masks except when eating donuts and drinking hot chocolate – but still a party. After initially rejecting the idea of virtual square dancing since it pales in comparison to in-person dancing, we decided to give it a try after hearing that Karin and Greg's lessons are so good. We have been attending their virtual lessons for about the last seven weeks and find them very challenging – it is so difficult to see where those phantoms are! Karin and Greg make it a great deal of fun, with interesting "polling questions" during the breaks and good mental and physical exercise. We also enjoy Howard Richman's weekly videos, some with square dance calls. Others are unrelated to square dancing, but all showcase Howard's multiple talents including singing, acting, dancing, costuming, and theatrical staging (they are on YouTube under "Howard's Parlour Productions").

Connie and Ken Smith: Happy new year. We miss all of you and hope that you are safe and healthy. We're looking forward to dancing, of course – and also, as the weather gets nicer, to outdoor activities such as picnics, walking, etc. Ken and I are well and doing things around our home. Thank you to all who participate in our newsletter to keep us together through this. I know that our clubs will come out stronger and better on the other side. You are always welcome to call and talk. Hugs!

Cindy and Dave Whalen: We just bought Lise's e-book on Amazon and are very excited to read it soon. So proud of her! We rang in the new year in our pajamas with glasses of champagne. Christmas day was spent with our grandson Tanner, son, and daughter-in-law. Our latest home improvement project over the holidays was painting, tearing out carpet, and laying a hardwood floor in the office. We played lots of board games, watched too many movies, and cleaned out the basement and closets. We helped friends move, made a couple meals for families, and continued to hike. In fact, we hiked in more than 40 Pennsylvania state parks. Cindy works out virtually or at the gym five days a week, and Dave walks in the neighborhood or on the treadmill in the evenings. Cindy continues to learn piano via virtual classes. And we both have the joy of having our grandson over regularly, in addition to many video calls with family. We are healthy and happy, and hope you all are, too.



Bonnie and Charlie Van Stone: Not much happening around here! Between Charlie's back and covid, we are pretty much housebound. Charlie was scheduled for surgery on January 6, but it had to be postponed due to the doctor's involvement with a trauma case. He is rescheduled for January 28. The poor guy is in a lot of pain and we were almost counting the hours! Our best wishes to all for a healthy, happy new year!



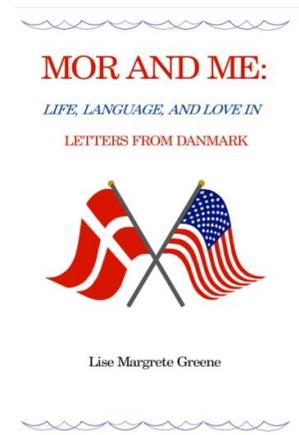
Beth Benson: Hi all Rangers and Reelers! I am fostering Alice, a Jack Russell Terrier, and Maggie, a Pomeranian, for the rescue group Cold Nose Warm Heart. It has given me such joy to provide them a home during this pandemic, and both dogs are forever fosters as they are seniors with health issues. They keep me on my toes caring for them and their special needs. This is a rare photo of the two sharing a bed, because Maggie does not take kindly to other dogs coming close – she is quite the queen! Miss everyone ... Yellow Rocks to all!

Donna Poyer and Mike Szekula: Donna continues to drive a school bus doing the hybrid mode. The routes change every few weeks, making it hard to remember where to go! We have gotten together with square dance friends to enjoy soup and cards, with family for Thanksgiving and Christmas, and with Donna's college roommate and bus driving colleague. We had unwelcome visits from a huge raccoon and hawks that killed some of our chickens. Donna spent a lot of time cleaning our house and others, splitting wood, preparing holiday food, shoveling snow, sending and receiving letters ... and welcoming a new rescue dog, Meg. She is a border collie and likes playing with our other rescue dog, Cody.

Lise Greene and Mark Bippes: (Mark) I was thrilled to get in six cross-country ski trips after the snowstorm in December. Thanks to Janet Gerber and Karen Condon for joining me on one outing each. I'm hoping for thicker ice on Lake Hopatcong so I can get out skating and ice fishing. Lise and I have enjoyed doing quite a few hikes in wildlife conservation areas and other parks. Against all odds, Morris Habitat was able to get a roof on the colonial house we are building in Lake Shawnee before the end of the year, which makes it easier to continue working now. (Lise) I discovered how to grow lettuce by cutting off the bottom two inches of a head of romaine and placing it in an inch of water in a cup. Who knew? Such fun! And in case you



missed the original announcement, my book was published by Amazon on New Year's Day. *Mor and Me* is based on letters that I wrote during two extended sojourns in Denmark totaling one and a half years, along with photos. My goal was to learn Danish in order to translate my mother's letters and diaries for the family, and I also spent short amounts of time in eight other countries. If you'd like to "travel" with me, you can check it out on [this link to Amazon](#) in three formats (e-book, black/white paperback, and color paperback).



***Thanks to all Kittatinny Rangers and Reelers who contributed to our newsletter.
It's wonderful keeping up like this until we can dance together again.
As Cathy wrote: Happier New Year!***