



All is calm, all is bright

To My Dear Family and Friends—

I have to admit I am finding it most difficult to accept the fact another year has flown by—but it has—and I am most grateful for having survived it and for all of the many blessings that have come my way. I pray that your year was equally as full of good things!

Certainly the biggest deal for me this year was the acceptance of my collection of short stories by a publisher. The working title of the collection is “Seven Sides Of Self”—each story having just a little bit of me in them—sometimes disguised—sometimes not—and the name of the publisher is SheWritesPress (<https://shewritespress.com/>). The publication date is November 05, 2019. For those few of you who have read it—or at least part of it—I thank you for all of the comments, suggestions, and corrections.

Because I have been writing for many years—and submitting manuscripts to publishers for years (with no luck)—I have more than a few stories gathering dust. So after the excitement of getting something finally (finally) accepted, I pulled a novella off the shelf, read it for the first time in a long time, cleaned it up a bit, and sent it off to my editor for her review—thank you, Rebecca! The story is titled “Get Off My Planet!” and is a self-help book cleverly disguised as an epic fantasy tale. I hope to be able to have it out to several beta readers in a few months—and submit it to the publisher at some point in Spring 2019. And I’m already at work on a third book—99 one-page short stories.

Okay—that’s all very nice and everything—but what about your music? Yep—I know—I had hoped to have my third CD (“Venus In The Trees”) out at some point during the year. But the acceptance of my short story collection, certain family obligations, travel, my ongoing battle with the evil depression bug, and a general lack of musical creativity kept me from wrapping things up. In an effort to keep things moving forward though, I enlisted the help of several of my musical friends—members of what I refer to as “LOOM”—that is to say the “Loose Organization of Original Musicians.” And I have so not been disappointed with my decision to reach out for help! I am so blessed that these talented folks are willing to devote their time, talent, and creativity to the project. I am hoping the CD will be out in early 2019. Watch for it!

And another really wonderful thing happened this year—my wish to perform with a band! Back in January I met up with some fellows working on all original music. I started playing bass guitar with them and they asked me to join. We performed at a house concert in March. Afterwards, two of the members departed for other projects, but Stephen and I have kept things going. We’re hoping to add another member soon and get back out there to perform. The name of the band is Sparrow’s Tale ... www.sparrowstale.net ... check it out!

Oh, yes—I have periodically played guitar at Salem United Methodist Church. And I played at the Greater Olney Multidenominational Thanksgiving Service. So much fun!

As always, pay a visit every now and then to my Website ... www.mindsights.net ... to see what is happening with the music, the writing, and the art.

One other highlight for me this year was a ten-day trip to North Carolina at the end of July. Four nights on High Rock Lake (with a day trip to Winston-Salem), two nights in Arden (including a house concert by Peter Kater), and three nights at the Light Center (south of Black Mountain). There was an amazing tour of Wake Forest University's new Biotech Center, paddling on the lake, a couple of hikes, some truly wonderful meals, lots of music—but the best part was connecting with some of my favorite folks in the whole wide world—Bill and Karen, Angela, Shaida, Jeff and Chris, Rachel and Lauren, Sally and Lora, Greg, Peter and Kathy, and Beth and Charlie! I am truly blessed to have so many amazing friends! Thanks to each of you for sharing some of your time with me!

And as with any year, there have been some lows mixed in with the highs. Several special individuals departed this life for the Great Beyond. The first one was Danny Fitz—the longtime significant other of my young niece, Samantha. He was only twenty-six years old. I was so very proud of Sami as she handled the loss with such strength and one eye on the future. Very tough stuff when one is young—

The second big loss started with word our family's longtime attorney—Chris Sega—was suffering from pancreatic cancer. By July he was in hospice care—and by the end of the month, he was gone. My folks had been using him for almost twenty years. He wrote all of the estate planning documents for my Dad and Mom. But more importantly, this amazing attorney helped me through the settlement of my Dad's estate—all three years of it. In the time since then, he helped me to update my mother's estate planning documents, manage the education trust set up by my Dad to pay for my nieces' education, and create my own will and trust. He was my go-to guy whenever I was dealing with family issues that needed a clear head and sound advice. In so many ways, he filled the void left by my Dad's passing. One other thing that was really quite ironic—he had two sisters. Their names were Laura and Carolyn. He will be sorely missed by all who knew him.

And there were a few other losses—one of my Dad's longtime bestest buds from the US Navy Dental Corp days—John Holmes. More recently, we got word that a former neighbor—Rosemary Harger, who lived across the street from my folks on Watchwater Way—passed away unexpectedly. And many of my family members and friends have lost a parent during the year. I think that the bottom line here is that we must cherish each and every day that the GOOD LORD gives us. You just never know when your number will be called.

Looking ahead to the New Year, the only big thing already booked is a week in Englewood, Florida (January 16–23, 2019) with neighbors, hiking companions, and friends Myron and Kim. Will take the AutoTrain down and make a long drive back up north—stopping to visit folks along the way. And there will likely be the usual number of trips to Bethany Beach—and a trip to North Carolina at some point.

So—that's it! It's a wrap! Another year gone—and another one waiting patiently in the wings. Wishing each and everyone of you who reads this letter the very best of everything in the New Year! May the GOOD LORD grant you much happiness and health!