



May the good Lord take a likin' to you, but not too soon!



Happy Ryan New Year! May we wish all of you the warmest greetings possible on this the first day of the sixteenth year of our children 2008 BC (*before college \$\$\$*) which so generously commemorates Saint Patrick, who himself wished he had said: "Pionta Guinness, le do thoil" (*a pint of Guinness please*). So before the effects of that delectable elixir take hold of your spirit, custom and courtesy compel me to note with satisfaction all those who sent Christmas wishes via email, snail mail and hail Mary full of grace....! We do so delight in catching up on your activities and accomplishments that we feel it our moral obligation to return the favor in this our Annual Wee Epistle (AWE); a copious compendium of comedic comings and goings commemorating the calamitous, colossal and too often less than colorful contributions of that wee band of Amer-Irish known as the Ryans (so it is hoped). This edition of the Ryan Hysterical Chronicles (Volume 16) closes Ryan Year 2007 (RY07) and opens RY08 in a traditionally optimistic fashion by saying that we do hope to see you and yours at some point in the coming year! So, without further ado (whatever that is) we launch merrily and mercifully into AWE 08 lest 09 be upon us afore we go.

 The family, as you can see at right, is healthy, wealthy and more wise than last year at this time. The Volvo +4 holidays continued, abated as they were by the high school activities schedule, taking us to the dikes of Amsterdam ("Kids don't inhale in this coffee shop!" and "Don't look at that red light in the window...too late, he'd already been mooned") the battlefields of Ypres and Bastogne ("nuts" said the kids about Dad's enthusiasm as both parents continued to fight the bulge at meal times).



The UK and Paris rounded out our "local" excursions as we wee four did not stray as a group into heretofore unRyan'ed destinations. Two-ships and three-ships did sally forth to Italy (girls), to Switzerland (boys), and to Abuelita's (grandma's sans Dad), whilst (an English contraction of 'when illness strikes') Dad went to Washington DC (you have to be sick to go there), Philadelphia (to visit Godparents and cousins...Why? Cuz!) and Florida for a dear niece's wedding and to be arrested for drinking beer on the beach (well, almost...). Christmas at the Ryans was again a magical event as always (and some of the gifts are actually still in use) and, for the first time, we had Oktoberfest at home! Beer, brezn', wurst and liter "mass" (short 'a') plus music, mayhem and more greeted our honorary mayor of Oktoberfest, Rowdy visiting us from the US (www.fighterpilotuniversity.com for more Rowdy).



 Now for 'da good stuff (warning – proud parents parading forth): Classy Carissa continues the Celtic conquering of the continent with her whirlwind presence and her magical powers. A mere listing of her year would take the wind out of the Irish Rugby team, so hold on – here goes... In school, she maxed her Advanced Placement German test (Gott sei Dank) and is now attempting the same with AP English and AP Chem. She serves on the Student Council and works in SIPs - the School Improvement Program - joined the Math sect "Mu



Alpha Theta" to retain her cranial credibility, was a leading scorer in the "Knowledge Bowl" Academic Games in Germany, and retained her "Scholar-Athlete" moniker. For ESPN she went to the European Championships in Tennis and Track running on the girls 400m relay team (the team was denied a medal on a bad interpretation of the rules don't'cha know) and completed a third year as a wrestling manager (I'm starting to think she might like boys?). In her spare time, she's on the Prom Committee (picking the best castle for the dance! And to ensure she gets to go...), just designed hoodies for the track team, which was a labor of love as her love of drawing and art remains strong, and played both piano and guitar in the talent show (another rocker babe bonanza). In the Parish she assists the Irish priests as a Lector and as a Lay Eucharistic Minister (LEM) and in her free time, Guitar Hero (if you don't know, don't ask), movies, the TV show "Supernatural," her girlfriends Giorgia, Allysen, Megan and on and on... her web-based activities (My Face Book Space or something like that...maybe My Book Space Face?) and occasional rock concerts like Rock Werchter to see Metallica (just to say she saw them once). Two trips to London, a practice penance with Dad before a return engagement with Megan et al both of which involved seeing "Wicked" and going to Harrod's for Krispy Kreme. Dad's trip was better as we got caught in a pouring rain / flooded streets – great fun! Carissa's drug problem continued as Mom drug her to Italy and Venice. Lest we leave you wanting, on your Sacred Family scorecard Johnny Depp is still the honorary chieftan thanks to a riveting performance in Sweeney Todd (but "Not While I'm Around" Dad said hopefully), Squirelly was runner-up, don't forget Stripes the cat, and oh yes, there's the boy friend still...Dziugas. Well, I'm tired just thinking about it all & all.





Mystical Michael mesmerizes merrymakers mirthfully mindful mind you of millions of microscopic manipulations mandated to master multilevel mazes of mind-numbing monstrosities...in other words, he and his friends play video games! In addition to the rotating binge-Mountain-Dew inspired all-nighters to support the aforementioned affliction, our other son John Rogers visited twice from the UK to, you guessed it, play video games. Sadly, thanks to Dad-inspired work (perish the thought) both aggravated wrist injuries, but did that stop them? NO! As John's right and Michael's left hands were still available, they teamed up (see photo at left). In the meantime, it's amazing how much he does (parental pride warning still applies): National Junior Honor Society and Scholar-Athlete tell the academic tale describing classes he tolerates so he can get to CAD (Computer-Assisted Design, which is emblazoned on his lettermen jacket no less) a passion evidenced by his 3rd place in Animation at the European Tech Fair. As a Dreamworks shareholder (singular) he's on his way to designing his own video games (and why not, he knows them so well!). Check out his rollercoaster on YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XQ5zn1EDi3k> and search there for his other projects under "Doombuddy." Off the computer(s) and console(s) he too ran track (100m & long jump with an emphasis on "long" – Wow!). Wee Michael ran Cross Country (personal best 20:30) helping the team to win the Div IV European Championship! (So Dad bought him a car (see photo) – not!) An injury-plagued shorter wrestling season improved at 10 & 8, including a 4th at Sectionals and he was on the giving end of a Quick Pin in 34 seconds! – an admirable turnabout in his 2nd year. In Boy Scouts, as the Senior Patrol Leader (SPL) he is well on his way to Eagle Scout having earned the rank of Life this year. For school he was one of two chosen to go to Germany for a week in the Student-2-Student program. Their task is to build a program in their school to help new kids transition more quickly and easily. He too is a Guitar Hero, LEM, and space/face web aficionado along with John, Paul, George (aka Scott) and Ringo (he's Ringo!). A highlight for Dad was going as the extra adult to Scout summer camp in Kandersteg, Switzerland where Michael was the acting SPL.



Gloria is a kept woman! Kept busy by so many delightful distractions that when I told someone that she did "light housekeeping" she immediately objected by insisting that she does no housekeeping at all ('n all). The "NATO Ladies Who Lunch" club benefits from her mastery at compiling their cookbook, the Boy Scouts benefit from her financial wizardry as Treasurer, her Flemish cooking class (in Flemish) benefits from her culinary artistry (3rd year with the same group), the Thrift Shop benefits from her selling my stuff (heh?), Egyptians benefit from her belly dancing boondoggles, the French economy benefits from her taking ladies to see fashion consultant Josie Mermet in Paris, her French class benefits from her taking strong issue with their anti-American bias (you go girl!), I benefit from her Aikido class as she doesn't bring the weapons home, I really benefit from her working with Big Will the trainer at the gym (her new bedroom furniture doesn't benefit at all...because I haven't put it together yet – shame on you for what you were thinkin') and finally, Cornelia, Joanne, and Carmencita don't benefit because sadly they all moved. WE benefit most of all because without her none of this would be possible at all (say it with me now: "at all 'n all")! Almost done now, so...



Alert and long-time readers (as well as sleepy and occasional ones too) will immediately know what Mike has been doing: pretty much the same things as always but this year occasionally with friends like Sureshot, Rowdy, Giorgio (who took him for an F-16 ride), Gianni, C2, Lazer, Matic, and Bob "NTCS" (No Tactical Call Sign) Ranck, which is to say: golf, antiques, wine, piano, also working with Big Will, French lessons, lector (not Hannibal), and volleyball (#1 again!). New this year is the completed man space, which includes a foosball table and a flat screen TV, a picture book of the Bercuit golf course, production (albeit small) of the KZ DVD and many opportunities to read Ikea instructions.



This year was the last chance to take a picture like the one on the right, but Mike still works for the government (US in case anyone was wondering) and with the EU. At left he's trying to explain the European Union to a friend who can't get it... Mike's sister Peg did visit this year and there was great rejoicing but on the downside our "incontinent" cat Gato lost his tail to the demon auto (which helps him greatly as Gloria can't slam it in the door anymore). So, that's it. Come lookin' for us why don't'cha? We'll be here or there or somewhere...Finally, as we are blessed please



join us in inviting our Lord to watch over our coalition troops as they go into battle today! God bless and keep you

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