

The ALL-PURPOSE HOLIDAY LETTER

(We all receive them, and they're mostly fun, but there are usually a heck of a lot of people mentioned in them that you neither know nor [frankly] care about. Not to be outdone, I have created the following which contains references to individuals NO ONE knows or cares about, so you can just copy and send it as your own come holiday time. No one will be any the wiser!)

Greetings from our house to yours during this lovely time of year! For reasons best known to ourselves, we figured you'd just be crazy to know what our little extended family has been up to the past year, so here goes...

Great grandma Thelma (age 92) - known as a hot groupie for the Aughrim Slopes Ceili Band sixty-five years ago and still as feisty as ever - somehow became convinced that an appendix transplant (the original equipment had been removed sometime in the early 1930's) was the reason for her recent uneven sex life, so she arranged to get a transplant...donor is a living healthy 24-year old car park attendant named Julio, and Great-Grandma says she feels better already! Way to go, girl!

Cousin Charlene's adorable twins Zachary and Josh are celebrating their fourth birthday in the Coconino County maximum-security prison...Charlene won't say why the boys are in custody ("honestly I'd love to tell you, but the legal team doesn't want me to say anything") but she did e-mail us their adorable little mug-shots, and sends thanks to Cousin Benny for the lovely matched hunting knives he sent the boys last Christmas (apparently thinking in his usual drunken haze that the twins were eighteen, not four, years old)...by the way, Charlene's band "Respect Frumpy Matrons" - an attempted clone of "Cherish the Ladies" without the talent, charm, or any other positive quality - has been ignored by the Eastern Oklahoma Celtic Festival for the eighth year in a row, a new Festival record...

Uncle Phil's Irish brother-in-law Patrick has recorded his very own CD "Bodhran The Way You Like It", but Phil says that most of the CD's sold have been returned - people don't seem to realize that the 58 minutes of silence is exactly what Patrick intended (wish we had that dry Irish wit!)

Grandpa Bert's excessive drink of choice is now something he calls a "Flag Waver", consisting of three shots of bourbon, a splash of cranberry juice, a double shot of tabasco sauce, and a pulverized Viagra pill..."Four or five

The ALL-PURPOSE HOLIDAY LETTER

of these a day will keep your spirits up!" he cackles from his wheelchair...

Aunt Jeannie's stepson Jimmy (by her third husband Lance) has unfortunately been committed to a mental hospital after being arrested naked on a street corner in Suffern NY (!!) babbling incoherently about C#/D accordions...

Hot news from Babs and Mickey: they have broken off the wedding plans, *again* - Babs says the bridal shower presents can be picked up in the usual place...seems the constant argument about Coleman's use of upward rolls in his jigs became violent, and Mickey wound up in the emergency room for removal of a rather expensive bow from an unexpected bodily orifice...Babs says that in spite of everything, they're still in love, and they might try again next year if Mickey's therapy is far enough along (AND if he admits she's right)...

Myrtle Bortnick reports with subdued pride that youngest son Todd has returned to school to complete his graduate ethnomusicology degree, hoping against hope that the additional time and expense will finally help him distinguish between a reel and a hornpipe ... Myrtle sends love to all and asks especially that Cousin Imogene not forget the two cups of vodka in the Slovenian Radish Pie recipe.

Doris and Ed Queezle have finally brought their trusty RV to a halt in Treeless, Texas - "a great little town", Doris gushes insincerely - and have started a weekly trad session at the local mortuary ("the only place in town where the air conditioning is pretty reliable", says Ed)...so far their efforts have not been a resounding success as Doris hasn't figured out a way to keep the blowing sand out of her piano accordion...the two other musicians in town, known only as El Sombrero and Toothless Pete, have learned all their traditional music from gritty Bothy Band LP's..."they play the first ten notes of The Butterfly twenty-six times - I guess they never realized there was a scratch on the record," reports Doris sadly...

Larry and Helen Theshpeffle are in big trouble - their toy poodle Fifi has been accused of playing an as-yet-unspecified "key role" in the derailment of a 75-car freight train last August...Larry tells us that due to the legal complications involved, he's had to quit his job as lead vocalist with the "Irish Roamers", his cheesy group that specialized in poor imitations of the

The ALL-PURPOSE HOLIDAY LETTER

Irish Rovers (but charged short money and were consequently much loved by all the pub owners in Eastern Ohio)...

Happy to report that Jeff Klemster's mom-in-law is recovering very nicely from the frontal lobotomy, thank you, and what the family all thought was prolonged change-of-life turned out to be good old-fashioned viciousness after all. She'll be fine if she stays on her medication, says Jeff, who is anxiously awaiting the doctor's approval for the old bat to move back to her own home and out of that little space over the garage that Jeff wanted to use for his Weird Stringed Instrument collection...

Well, that's it from us. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all!

