

GARVAN-LEYMAN-JUSTICE CHRISTMAS MISSIVE 2016 (WITH POEM)

Dear Family and Friends,

2016 was really too much. Today I heard that a watch list is being put together with the names of “liberal professors” and that Trump refuses to believe proof from the CIA that Russia interfered with the American election so that Trump would win. Every morning NPR starts with “President Elect-Trump blah blah blah – something pretty awful” and throughout the day the news of the awfulness keeps growing. But, that’s all I have to say about that (except for the ‘How Trump Stole Christmas’ poem below). I did buy the Calm app for my phone (\$39.99 a year – a great investment), I limit how much news I consume and the sources (NY Times, The Atlantic, Washington Post, and Sydney Morning Herald), and I am also attending meetings of my local Democratic Party – heck I may join the Republican Party too! Americans are basically a good bunch of people. Just occasionally complacent, greedy, and hubristic. I will contribute small efforts to help counter the insanity where I can. And as always, the voices of the past are here for us:

“When we face the worst that can happen in any situation, we grow. When circumstances are at their worst, we can find our best.” —Elisabeth Kübler-Ross (1926-2004)

“Although the world is full of suffering, it's full also of the overcoming it.” —Helen Keller (1880-1968)

“Hardships often prepare ordinary people for an extraordinary destiny.” —C.S. Lewis (1898-1963)

“Caring about the happiness of others, we find our own.” —Plato (428-348)

And, the quote which humbles me most:

“It's really a wonder that I haven't dropped all my ideals, because they seem so absurd and impossible to carry out. Yet I keep them, because in spite of everything, I still believe that people are really good at heart.” —Anne Frank (1929-1945)

Other bad things happened. Half of Gatlinburg, a place we love in the Smoky Mountains, burned down and 13 or so people died. Florence Henderson, David Bowie, Alan Rickman, and Gene Wilder died. And our dear, dear friend Jon Borwein died. Jon was only 65 years old. We spent an amazing week with Jon and Judi in Florida last May and celebrated his birthday with him. All in all, too many really good people died.

And now for the normal part of the Christmas letter. We are all well and thriving. There is a constant whimsy in the Garvan household for which I am very grateful. Like Frank turning our bedroom closet into a coffee bar or Mike inviting traveling Mormon’s inside for hot chocolate. And the perpetual improv theatre that Gerard provides for us and our lovely circle of friends. We are very much a part of the Community of People living with mental illness and disorders. Some come over to eat once a week because they don’t have enough food. Or some come over for a hug. There is much love here, much of the time.

Cyndi is now President of the Board of Directors of the GOC (Gainesville Opportunity Center – a Clubhouse for people with mental illness). She is going to be featured in a prison magazine because of a photo taken of her with our local congressman and one of the Clubhouse members who is an ex-con. She has also been asked to be a reviewer for the British Medical Journal. It is just never dull.

Our darling Maggie is expecting a baby on Jan 13, 2017. We are ecstatic about this. This year, Jeff and Brittany & Maggie and Devin built houses in Knoxville and Marietta, respectively. Now they are building homes. Sydney (age 9) and Claire (age 2) are the cutest, most loving, and of course most intelligent granddaughters in the World. Sydney is very popular and a super fun kid. Sydney is wishing fervently for a professional Kitchen Maid mixer from Santa this year so she can make cupcakes from scratch. She adores the Kid's Baking Championship show hosted by Valerie Bertinelli and Duff Goldman. Claire is perhaps more serious. Her complete focus at the moment is teaching herself to read. She is accomplishing this through her YouTube surfing skills. She is a whiz at finding Elmo videos. She has a suitcase of Elmo letters and seldom tires of watching Elmo or practicing letter sounds. And she LOVES Mommy, Daddy, and Sissy.

I am so proud of my outrageous, gorgeous, and accomplished family. They are all very successful professionally and more importantly, as loving friends, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, children, siblings, cousins, uncles, aunts, or parents. Lots of hats we all wear these days. There are photos below. One shows Maggie and Sydney – they look like twins! One is of Claire at her birthday party. When she is asked to smile she exerts a real effort (a lesson for us all).

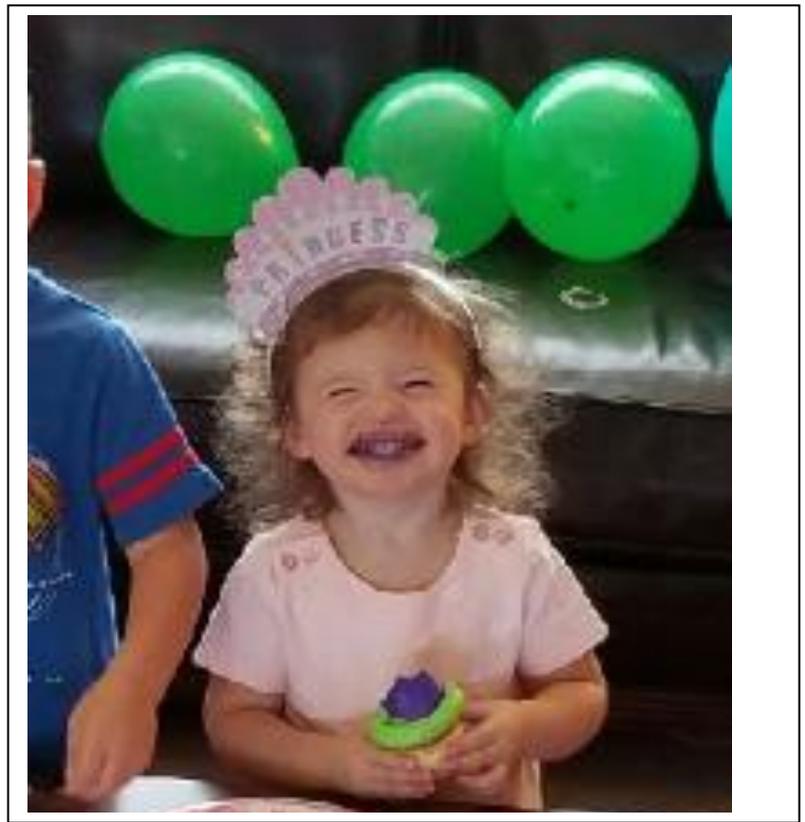
We wish for you the endearing classics for 2017: Health, Prosperity, Joy, Peace, and Love. We are grateful for your presence in our lives.

Merry and Happy Christmas!

Love,
Cyndi and Frank







How Trump Stole Christmas
by Dr. Suess and Dr. C. Garvan

Every Who Down in Whoville Liked Christmas a lot...
But the Trump ,Who lived just north of Whoville, Did NOT!
The Trump hated Christmas, billions of people all over the world, science, logic, facts, democratic intuitions,
and social safeguards; plus The whole Christmas season!
Now, please don't ask why. No one quite knows the reason.
It could be his head wasn't screwed on just right.
It could be, perhaps, that his shoes were too tight.
But I think that the most likely reason of all,
May have been that his heart and his brain are at least two sizes too small
(and the Narcissistic Personality Disorder doesn't help).

Whatever the reason, His heart or his shoes,
He stood there on Christmas Eve, hating the Whos,
(The Whos by the way are all Americans: Democrats, Republicans, Independents, Legal, Illegal, Etc., Etc.)
Staring down from his Trump Tower with a sour, Grinchy frown,
At the warm lighted windows below in their town.
"Pooh Pooh to the Whos!" he was grinchishly humming.
"They're finding out now that no Christmas is coming!"
"They'll also find out that I am a puppet of Russia, a corrupt and greedy moron, pathological liar, and I am
unable to make a critical analysis because I refuse to believe anything I don't agree with."
"They're just waking up! I know just what they'll do!"
"Their mouths will hang open a minute or two,
Then the Whos down in Whoville will all cry Boo Hoo!"
"That's a noise," grinned the Trump, "That I simply MUST hear!"
So he paused. And the Trump put his hand to his ear.
And he did hear a sound rising over the snow.
It started in low. Then it started to grow.
But the sound wasn't sad! Why, this sound sounded merry!
It couldn't be so! But it WAS merry! VERY!
He stared down at Whoville! The Trump popped his eyes!
Then he shook! What he saw was a shocking surprise!

Every Who down in Whoville, the tall and the small,
Was singing! Without any presents at all!
He HADN'T stopped Christmas or the goodness of humanity from coming! IT CAME!
Somehow or other, it came just the same!
And the Trump, with his grinch-feet ice-cold in the snow,
Stood tweeting and tweeting: "How could it be so?"
"It came without ribbons! It came without tags!"
"It came without packages, boxes or bags!"
And although the Trump wouldn't consider puzzling for any length of time, I did - until my puzzler was sore.
Then I thought of something I hadn't before!
"Maybe Christmas and the Goodness of Humanity," I thought, "doesn't come from the government or a store."
"Maybe Christmas...perhaps...means a little bit more!"