

# Merry Christmas!

FROM THE KLINE FAMILY

**2025** has been another busy year. Highlights include a West Virginia bike camp in June, Phil & Joseph's 2nd trip to Mt. St. Helens in July (pg 6) and Phil & Tama's 3-in-one European vacation in September (pg. 7).

While we made wonderful memories, 2025 will always be overshadowed by the loss of Phil's parents, Paul & Joyce. Phil shares that story on pg. 5. The big story at the Resort was a March 30th wind storm that took out 200 trees and damaged a number of buildings. That story is on pg. 4.

But the best story is an unchanging one:

*"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." (Isaiah 9:6)*

**Sending our love at Christmas and best wishes for the New Year!**

*Phil, Tama and Joseph*



*Bentonville AR with Emil Eminov & his mom last December.  
Emil is now a graduate student in Tulsa*



# 2025

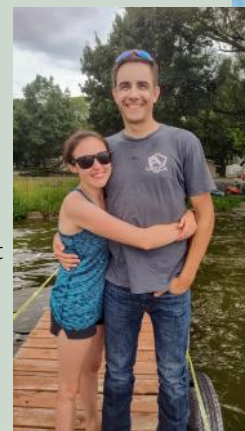


## We're Praying for...



Casey Clement, Johnny Kline's fiancé, for a full recovery after recent cancer surgery. (left with Connor, Keith & Virginia.)

- Christopher Kline, for a full recovery after his intestinal surgery at U of M last December. (right: Chris & Jen)
- Biking buddies Scott and Joe, who also lost parents this year. And for Bruce, whose dad is now in assisted living.



- Uncle Joe & Aunt Betty Taylor's family, whose son Jeff died while hiking in Colorado this summer.
- Gregg Garn & family, following the passing of Gregg's wife, Desarae, on Aug. 31 after a three year battle with breast cancer. (left with Gregg & Des last Jan)
- Families of other friends & neighbors we lost this year: Ron Weinberg, Todd Weddon, Larry Farmer, Jim Hamrick, Vera Bippus, Bob Peters...









## 2025 in Selfies (cont.):

*L-R from top right:*

*At Mom's funeral in May*

*Pont du Gard aqueduct*

*Austin & Emma's wedding*

*Sophia visits in August*

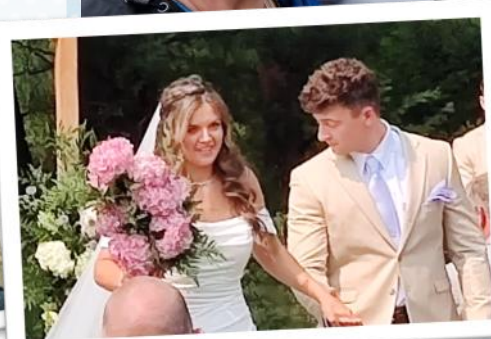
*Sleeping on train to Paris*

*@ Max's wedding party*

*Annual Kline swim across*

*Portage Lake in August*

*Tobacco Trail NC w/ Kelly C.*  
*Bald Head Island w/ Scot C.*  
*Garrett Collins visit in Sept.*  
*Praise @ Brandon Lake concert at Van Andel Arena*  
*Joe's Star-Trek 60<sup>th</sup> b-day party*  
*Carving 92# of turkey for Resort Thanksgiving party*  
*Alex, Josh & Joe at Dragonsteel Salt Lake City in Dec.*  
*A wet Seine River boat ride*





## Spring Storm Damage leads to major cleanup

The tornado siren sounded at 5:30 pm on Sunday, March 30th. By the time I arrived at the clubhouse, volunteers were already guiding traffic, and the new pet shelter was receiving its first guests. Heavy downpours drenched those arriving after me.

The storm was over in minutes. A blast of wind had torn a path from NE Three Rivers (where 18 trees blocked my friend Bruce's driveway) directly to our barn at Silver St and thru the park. The old red barn was torn open, metal hanging from the power lines in the field. We lost over 200 trees.

Most of the damage was away from homes; thankfully no one was injured. Chris Yoder had the biggest scare when a tree fell on her roof and a limb broke through into her dining room.

Help arrived almost as quickly as the storm. Within an hour, Mark & Lisa - who had lost power at their home in town - were here to assess the damage. Friends jumped in to help Chris clean up, and her insurance agent came that

same evening. Mark began clearing roadways the next day, supported by our great crew. Henckel's Tree Service brought a crane to lift trees off several service buildings. Kip Martin's crew from H&K Excavating brought in the big equipment Wednesday morning, and began the heavy work along the resort entry road, where both tree lines were ravaged.

Within days, Scott Smoker had repaired damage to our service buildings. Bill the Postman had his crew here to fix the storage area fence as soon as we had the trees lifted off of it. We planted a hundred trees on the day of Dad's memorial. It was late summer before the barn came down.

We are so blessed and thankful for all the help and support we received. It could have been so much worse!

Most of the trees lost were planted by Dad. While I don't know what Dad would have said, I know exactly what he would have done: put on his coveralls and gone to work. What a great example for us all!



Above: barn demo

Right: Joseph & Tama clear debris from roadway

Below: Phil, Mark & Joe at AWWA meeting in Lansing



*Resort Crew Party at the Barn Theatre in August. This was Joseph's 5th year, Marks 15th year, Tama & Phil's 30th year, and the Resort's 60th year!*



**The Call** came at 5:30 am Christmas morning, December 25, 2024. Dad was failing. I needed to come.

I dressed and made the familiar drive to Birch Meadows. Dad lay in his hospital bed; a rattling sound accompanied each breath. Mom was asleep in the twin beside him. She was startled by my presence so early in the morning. *What was happening? Why was I there?*

I took her hands and said, *"It's time to say goodbye to Dad,"* as delicately as I could, my voice calm and falsely brave.

I watched as Mom tried – and failed – to grasp the idea we were losing Dad. This amazing woman, who had been his advocate for so long, whose mission these past few years had been to keep Dad moving, eating, ALIVE... could not accept what I was saying. Her goal was getting Dad over the 100-year line. He was almost there; 97 going on 98. I listened as the questions came, and explained what had been explained to me. Dad was in the *"transition."* I immediately disliked the word. *"No,"* I thought, *"he's dying. It's the process of dying."*

The family gathered as they heard the news. *How long would "it" take?* No one knew. Days... at most two weeks. I spent that night on the day bed. Others took turns as days grew to a week and more. We didn't want them to be alone. We didn't want Mom to be alone when Dad left us.

We played cards. We chatted about the weather and the holiday. Soon there were games and puzzles... and food, of course. Others came to say goodbye and offer their love. Wayne brought family photo albums by the suitcase full, and spent hours taking pictures of pictures. Mom drew strength from the activity around her. We drew strength from each other.

Dad would take no more food, and when he could no longer sip water, we moistened his lips. We thought he was aware of our presence. There was no pain; little need for the pain killers we feared would take him away sooner than necessary. On New Years Day he breathed his last. Mom was so brave. She rallied her strength to greet everyone who came a few days later to the funeral.



Paul Cassel Kline  
April 20, 1927 - Jan. 1, 2025

Joyce Rose (Taylor) Kline  
Oct. 1, 1932 - May 5, 2025

She rose from her pew to turn, raise her arms and mouth *"Thank you"* to everyone there. We sang *"Heaven Came Down"* and shared ice cream in Dad's memory.

Then – much too soon – it was Mom's turn. The night of Dad's funeral she collapsed, exhausted. The hospital said pneumonia. A few days later she returned home, weak and frail. The next morning, another phone call. A stroke. We struggled to make a decision. When Mom said *"No"* to the hospital, the only option was to call hospice. But we weren't ready to accept that. What if? She finally agreed to go to the hospital. She struggled to rally to our expectations that she would recover. Gradually she learned to walk with a walker... a few steps, then half way to the dining room. The therapists worked with her. We cheered. We hoped.

Then she fell, shattering her arm and pelvis. The bones refused to heal. There was so much pain. The therapists working with her all came to the same conclusion. It was time to call hospice. And so, we surrounded her again... with our presence and our love, this time because she was alone, so alone, without Dad. Somehow, we all muddled through a memorial celebration for Dad on May 3rd. Mom listened from her bed via Zoom. Two days later she left us.

Losing Dad and Mom, we all became better *"acquainted"* with grief. This is the word used in the prophecy of the

suffering servant. From Isaiah 53:

*"He was despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief."* (NKJV).

I think *acquainted* is the right word. Grief is not our friend. Given the choice, most would avoid it. But we have no choice; all of us will meet grief on some level.

The next verse of Isaiah 53 reminds us of this: *"Surely He has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows."*

And He has. He carried us, through the compassionate care of the staff at Birch Meadows and hospice, from the support of Pastor Troy and others who ministered to us, and through countless expressions of kindness and sympathy. To all who have carried us in words, deeds, thoughts and prayers, we say *"Thank you."*

And He carries us in our hope in the One who has made a Way:

***He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied.***

***By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, For He shall bear their iniquities.***

***Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, And He shall divide the spoil with the strong,***

***Because He poured out His soul unto death,***

***And He was numbered with the transgressors,***

***And He bore the sin of many, And made intercession for the transgressors.***

*Isaiah 53: 11-12*

## Ninety-Seven

Will they say that I was good? Will they say that I was kind?  
Will they say I never left a single friend behind?  
Will they say that I had honor? Thru hell or high water?  
That I was loyal as a husband and a father?  
Will they say that I was brave? That I stood my ground?  
That I had compassion for the ones the world threw down?  
I really wanna be that now, I really wanna be that now.

All that other stuff is fine, it's okay  
'Cause really in the big grand scheme of things  
When you start staring down the decades,  
Where I'm bound to end up someday,  
Really makes me ask some different questions.  
What'll they say about me, if I live to be  
Even half the man at the roots of this family tree?  
What they gonna say 'bout me? Hope there's no question  
When I'm Ninety-seven

***"97" by Max McNown: Follow link here to listen: [YouTube](#)***





### From Top

- Campsite: see porta potty in background!
- Lake swim: Huge logs still float from the 1980 blast
- Keith & Virginia
- Joe explores lava tube
- Camp breakfast
- Phil & Alison haul water
- End of a hard day



## Return to Mt. St. Helens

by Joseph

In July, Dad & I flew west, for science! Since 1980, Virginia Dale, married to Uncle Keith, has been running a study of plant succession on the debris avalanche field of Mt. St. Helens National Monument; that is, looking at what plants come back, and how they do so, in this area where the volcano buried everything.

Virginia was among the first scientists on the ground after the eruption, flown in via helicopter to land on what then looked like a moonscape. In the 45 years since, with curiosity and dedication, she has seen it turn to grasslands and forest, recording data on the re-emerging foliage and learning more about how nature moves and adapts after catastrophe. We helped once before, in the delayed, pandemic-era study of 2022, and it was a privilege to be able to do so again.

Our journey began in Seattle, with a ferry ride, exploring Pike Place Market, and a historical walking tour. But soon it was time for more rugged places, leaving behind electricity, running water, and any hope of cell service. The campsite this year was based around a helicopter pad, with room for our tents in the shade of the trees at the periphery of the flat, gravel expanse. The challenge was to find spots without lumpy rocks under our sleeping bags. Being at a more accessible site meant we could have the luxury of a porta potty! (*Having been without one on the previous trip, I call it a luxury without a trace of sarcasm.*)



To find the research plots and record the data takes many hands. Virginia recruits research friends, students and family for the cause. Botanists and those who know the native plants are vital. Recurring volunteers can comment on new species appearing and the radical change across the decades. The good atmosphere of support and camaraderie was made only stronger by the fact that we were doing long days of hard work.

I hiked many miles on these long days, on a team that rediscovered the plots and marked them clearly for the data collection groups. Though the re-growth of the plant life was beautiful, scientifically intriguing, and inspiring, it made for difficult hiking. Littered with hills and hummocks, the area is evolving with shifting rivers, trenches and ravines. Blackberry thickets seemed spiteful with thorns when one needed to get by them, but they also provided the occasional treat, if you could spot a berry that the elk and black bears had missed.

Dad stayed in camp, helping prepare meals, run for supplies, and sorting the soil samples that we lugged out in our packs each day. There were elk encounters, remote lakes to swim in, river crossings, and beautiful stars.

We paused our work for the Mount St. Helens 2025 "Pulse," a weekend meetup of many scientists working on other projects within the national monument. It was one more special experience among many, alongside amazing people, all set at the base of the volcano responsible for it all.



# See you... in September... in Europe!



## Freya und Maximillian Get Married!

We were delighted to be invited to the wedding of our 2<sup>nd</sup> exchange student, Max Zirbs, and his partner Freya, on Sept 5th in Passau Germany.

The ceremony was performed by the mayor in a local city hall, and a German band greeted us as we exited. We then moved to a beautiful event space on the Danube River, where the reception and vegan dinner lasted into the wee hours. The next day the celebration continued with breakfast and a river cruise. Congratulations Max & Freya!

## Garda Bike Hotel “La Dolce Vita” Week

After the wedding, we flew to Verona, Italy where we spent a week at the Garda Bike Hotel. The hotel offered complete services, deluxe accommodations, an excellent restaurant, rental bikes, guided rides, daily laundry for bikers, and more!

Non-riding spouses like Tama were treated to shopping and sightseeing outings, and met us for lunch daily. We enjoyed cooking classes, dinner at a winery, a boat ride on Lake Garda, visits to historic sites, and more.

But the highlight of Italy was seeing Sophia and her parents. We spent a lovely day together. Grazia!



## Rhone River with Grand Circle Cruise Line

After Lake Garda we flew to Toulouse, France. We were met by our guide, Sophie, who organized daily excursions and experiences that taught us about French history, food and culture.

After two days exploring Toulouse, we bussed to our elegant vessel, the M/S Chanson, whose crew welcomed & spoiled us with attentive service for the next 10 days. And the food... ooh la la! Stops included:

- Arles, famous for a Roman amphitheater, and for its ties to Vincent VanGogh.
- A farm raising the famous Carmargue bulls, used in a traditional arena game. The bull is not harmed, but the players may be!
- Avignon, a walled city with its famous Papal Palace,

and nearby Pont du Gard Roman aqueduct from the 1st century AD.

- Lyon, famous for gastronomy, where we learned about the French resistance's use of hidden passageways (and where we wished we could dine at every restaurant).

From our final stop, Macon, we boarded a comfortable high speed train to Paris, where we spent our last two nights. In our short time there, we took an evening cruise on the Seine, walked Le Marsais & found a bowl of onion soup to take the chill off, enjoyed a tiny basement jazz club featuring a phenomenal vocalist & pianist, had a gelato from a favorite spot near Notre Dame, and lingered at a sidewalk café over a plate of pomme frites. And so we were charmed by Paris once again...



Top: With Max's parents in Passau

Middle: With Sophia's parents in Lake Garda,

Carmargue horse, trained to herd bulls in wetlands of the Rhone delta







Sunset view from Cook's beach house on Oak Island NC

# 2025 IN CONCLUSION...

This year was some tough sledding. We made it through thanks to the friendship, encouragement and support of so many. We are blessed. Thank you.

"Caring" is at the heart of Christ's teachings. From Matt 25: *'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'* John 13: *'A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.'*

Yet in so many ways we are failing to care. I'm especially troubled by our treatment of immigrants. Weaponizing the courts and sending masked officers to terrorize entire ethnic groups is not the solution. Those who support tactics such as these have lost sight of the 2<sup>nd</sup>-greatest commandment.\*

The words of Bhutta Mubeen, with the British Red Cross, resonate with me. (*Britain has been flooded with refugees, with many risking passage on small boats.*) He writes:

***"We must not forget that at the heart of this issue are men, women and children, who have already experienced the trauma of having to flee their homes... We know that they want to live in dignity, rebuild their lives, & contribute to their communities."***

At Dad's funeral, we read the Prayer of St. Francis. **Will you join me in making this your prayer for 2026?** Let's treat everyone with the compassion & kindness they deserve. ***Sending our love, praying for peace, & wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! Phil***

## PRAYER OF ST. FRANCIS

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:  
where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
where there is injury, pardon;  
where there is doubt, faith;  
where there is despair, hope;  
where there is darkness, light;  
where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master,  
grant that I may not so much seek to be  
consoled as to console,  
to be understood as to understand,  
to be loved as to love.  
For it is in giving that we receive,  
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
and it is in dying that we are born to  
eternal life. Amen.



## \* Matthew 22: 37-40

Jesus replied: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

