

The year started with loud noises. What I (**Ross**) actually heard – and what nearly stopped my heart, was a thud and a scream! **Karin** had slipped backwards when stooping to pick up paper from the floor and landed hard on her bottom. For a long time, she could not move at all. After some pain pills, saved from dental work, (these “drug-seeking” people!) she was able to get into a chair, then to the bathroom and slept in a recliner. The date was January 6, which was apparently a big day for other reasons. After 6 days we visited the clinic and had an X Ray, which showed a compression fracture of the third lumber vertebrae.

There was no neurological damage, and the treatment was basically giving it time to heal. Because **Karin** has severe osteoporosis – loss of bone mineral – she qualified for daily injections of (the very expensive) Tymlos, a parathyroid hormone. Within a few weeks it was already working to strengthen the bone. This became important, when on August 9, **Karin** slipped in the handicapped restroom stall at a HealthPartners Clinic, where she was about to see her endocrinologist. She initially started falling backwards, but then – probably not wanting to duplicate her January injury -- overcompensated and fell forward onto the knee that holds her prosthetic leg. When I (**Ross**) got that phone call, it was an “Oh No!” moment.

If you have **Karin** on the phone and want to hear a “drama in real life,” just ask her. The short version includes army crawl across the stall to reach up and open the door before they called the janitor, then being greeted by 5 clinic staff members, one of whom had a clipboard. The endocrinologist referred her across the street to the orthopedist who X-rayed and diagnosed a tibial plateau fracture. Surgery was scheduled for August 13 and a splint fitted. Late in the evening of August 9, **Karin’s** pain was exponentially multiplied by severe muscle cramps in the stump -- all that is left of the right leg. Cramps were set off by any movement. Nevertheless, the on-call orthopedist would not prescribe muscle relaxants without an ER visit – which would have produced scream city! Using the narcotics prescribed by the surgeon and by NOT moving, the cramps let up. Then it was a marathon 10 more weeks in a wheelchair. **Karin** has good upper body strength because since her amputation, she uses her arms to transfer when her leg is off. Finally, the fracture was healed enough to put the prosthetic leg back on and gradually increase weight bearing. Without the osteoporosis treatment, there was danger that the surgical screws might not have had enough bone to grab! God was in control. Soon a new leg can be fashioned that fits the remodeled stump.

But the drama within the drama deserves its own paragraph. August 13 had been previously scheduled as the day that a Chinese graduate student arrived. We have been hosting students and scholars since the mid-1990s but had not had anyone for several years. Cancel? NO WAY! Mobilize the extended family! First, on the day of the injury, I needed to get to the clinic with another driver because **Karin** was not going to drive herself home. It’s a blur in my mind. Then, with a student arriving at the airport at exactly the time **Karin** had to be brought to the hospital for surgery, daughter-in-law **Rachel** did the transport and drop, although she could not accompany **Karin** to the floor because her daughter **Helen** (16) had come home from Camp Shamineau with COVID. Our daughter, **Susan**, had been cleaning for us that week, arriving the day after the injury and scheduled to leave the day before surgery. Because I (**Ross**) could not host a female student while my wife was in the hospital, **Susan** stayed until her mother was home.

So, **Susan** and I greeted **Stella** – who is an absolute delight – at the airport. Then daughter **KaWan** also came over to fix a “typical American meal.” The three ladies, all “dutiful daughters,” had a wonderful time together. I couldn’t have planned it any better – I wonder Who did? When **Karin** came back home, she soon got into her routine of creative activities, from her wheelchair. She was busy making greeting cards, leading the “Sunshine Committee” and leading the Gramercy Woman’s Bible Study. She has embroidered all together over 70 dishtowels during COVID to use as gifts! She has taken to texting like a teenager, sending encouraging messages – with Emoticons -- to family and friends. She is a Mentor Mom for Mothers of Preschoolers. Only teaching Kindergarten Sunday School will have to wait a year. During the early injury phase, people were informed by Caring Bridge and many prayed. Homemade and delivered restaurant meals were so appreciated.





In other news, **Ross** survived all year, living up to his reputation of “troublemaker” but overall behaving himself and increasing his repertoire of food preparation that even guests can eat. (Turkey and Swedish meatballs have been his specialty for years.) He has led “family hikes” with church families, taken and made photo posters of the Sunday Bible Time students and teachers as well as the Wednesday club kids and leaders. He has also given talks to the club kids on “Dinosaurs” and “Star of Bethlehem.” He participates in Gramercy Men’s Bible Study which meets in our apartment, leads “SoulShare” for men at First Free Church and manages the website for Twin Cities Creation Science Association. He teaches a science class to the MOPS home school older kids. We could not have our usual time at the Elk Lake cabin this year and that era may be ending as the grandkids age out. The year has included 8 funerals, including a medical colleague, **SoLian Tio**, and small group member, **Doug Beckett**. Our only trip was to Missouri in May for the funeral of **Karin’s Uncle Ron Falck**.

The next two generations of Olson descendants continue to make a mark on the world. **Jeff** is in his 28th year with Thomson Reuters and is chairman of the church council. **Rachel** manages their homeschool and the family taxi service. **Laura** (18) is in her first year at UW Eau Claire studying nursing. **Helen** (16) has started public school at Jefferson High and is in 10th grade. **Esther** (13) is in 8th grade and is in her 5th year of Ballet Royale and on pointe. **Clara** (11) is in 6th grade, sings with Angelica Cantanti and is taking up the piano. Since she is the only grandchild available for “Papa Day,” she invited her friend **Keyah** (12) who has become an honorary granddaughter. **Martha** the golden retriever passed away at age 15, and **Eddie** the sheltie is the new star of the Olson Zoo and has over 200 followers on his Instagram channel at @grapegrahams.

Susan (Anderson) comes from Wisconsin to clean for us monthly. She does proofreading for her church’s elder devotional and weekly newsletter. Husband **Eric** Anderson has worked over 10 years for MetroSpec, which is doing very well in the LED lighting industry. **Eric** is managing his newly diagnosed type 2 diabetes with diet, medication and weight reduction.

Jason has been busy all through the pandemic as a siding and roofing contractor as well as completely renovating a Summit Avenue mansion damaged by a fire. He also loves doing volunteer work when he sees a need. He has helped son

Aizec (20) learn the construction trades.

Tami and **Chris** Olson-Molitor still live in Wyoming Minnesota, although their rent made a huge jump. **Chris** drives less over the road truck and does more in the office. Tami is a major volunteer for Phoenix Chinese Dance Academy, where **Annika** (16) is one of the advanced dancers. **Annika** also plays the Erhu, a Chinese violin. **Aizec** lives in the same house although his job with Fenix Group as marketing assistant takes him as far as Las Vegas for Trade Fairs. His skills as a promoter are being appreciated and rewarded. Plans for welding are on hold but bowling continues.

Patrick (22) is on his own and left Safelite AutoGlass over workload and compensation issues and currently is between jobs. He volunteers with the youth program at church. He has travelled to Canada to visit classmates from his one term at Capernwray school in Australia.

Christopher (adult) and **Sarah** (likewise) have the stability of **Sarah’s** work as graphic designer for church and the feast or famine of **Christopher’s** freelance video production. He is a legend in the speed-cubing community but now leans towards pickleball as a competitive activity. They celebrated their second anniversary in September.

KaWan and **Brian** Powers live in an artist loft near downtown St. Paul. He teaches recording technology at North Central University and IPR. He also does gigs, playing saxophone with his own and others’ bands. He does mixing work for well-known musicians. **KaWan** works for Transitions Plus, teaching employable skills to Minneapolis Public School graduates with disabilities, recently teaching floristry. She also has been very busy as a professional photographer and photo editor. **Brian** and **KaWan** are worship leaders at 3 Degrees Church in downtown Minneapolis.

Avery (22) is studying exercise physiology and treatment of injuries, with a view to a career in physical therapy and coaching. **Xavier** (18) is a freshman at Mayville college and plays football. He is a good example to his teammates.

After years of cross-cultural experience, mostly with Chinese, we are part of a group of volunteers helping an Afghan family get settled in Minneapolis. Google Translate can take an English text and turn it into Pashto!

Christmas is a time of many emotions which may be positive or negative. But they are based on a reality – that the Creator made an incredible sacrifice to rescue us and the world He created for us. When we really think about it, we will praise Him and want to please Him. We are grateful for God’s care and protection and the support of so many friends and family members in 2021. We are grateful for 9 years at Gramercy. Merry Christmas to all!

Ross & Karin Olson, 6711 Lake Shore Drive S, Unit 1105, Richfield MN 55423