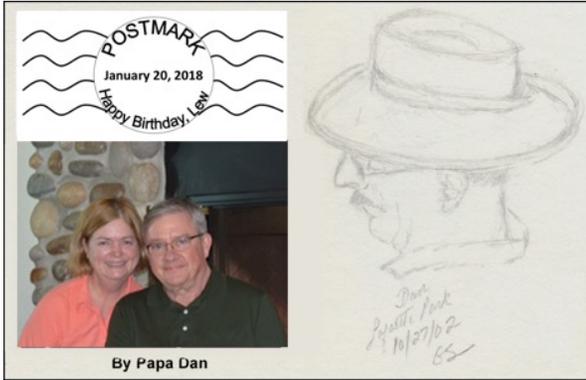


'The MAN' Turns 68

By Dan Sapone



**Lewis Frazier Bell: "The MAN"
An Inspiration to us all.**

Happy Birthday, Luigi

On November 3rd, 1997, I wrote you a letter entitled "The MAN." It was my attempt at expressing my admiration for you after knowing you for nearly thirty years. We met in the dorm at Santa Clara University in the fall of 1968 and you had been an inspiration to me ever since. Some time later, I was given the privilege of reading it to you at your birthday dinner.



**Sitting across the table,
celebrating your birthday.**

You had written to me that you were taking two days off as a reward for working some long hours. You had been sick. Now that you were feeling better, you had a view of work I had not experienced. Here is the letter I wrote and read to you across the dinner table on your birthday:

Lew,

Good for you! I am glad that you are taking these two days off. You mentioned an idea that I had not considered: that right now you feel that you "get to do this." I suppose it was exhilarating to do 14 hours at work for three weeks and breathe in the accomplishment of it — after so many months of recovering from being sick. When we are working too hard we dream of working "only" eight hours a day, five days a week. When we are not working at all we dream of being so valuable and so good at what we do that we have to work 14 hours a day. Perhaps you had to prove to yourself that you could do it again.

Well, I hope you have proven everything to everyone to your satisfaction and can settle into something more regular and sensible. You have proven to me (years ago, continually, and all over again) that you have a huge capacity for work and accomplishment — for quality and quantity, and more. You can dish it out, take it, and dish it out some more — you have stared this life in the face and shouted, "Give me more to accomplish, send me more hurdles to jump over, there, take that, and that; I can do it all, and then some!

Want me to become a valued professional? Done it.
Want me to raise a magnificent son? Done it.
Be part of a great family? Done it.
Maintain a long and solid marriage? Doing it every day.
Support, encourage and inspire friends? Done that too.
Make everybody's life better because they know me? Done it. Doing it.
How about if I quit smoking? Done it.
Learn to make wine, great wine? Check.
How about learn to become a computer artist and Photo designer in my spare time? Check.
Want me to beat cancer? Done it.
Want me to do it again? BRING IT ON! I'll drink it dry, make some more, design a label, bottle it and drink THAT dry!"

THAT'S what I have heard from you over these years, Lewis Frazier Bell. You can look this world in the face once again and say, "I don't have to prove anything to anyone, including myself. I'm the MAN!"

And then, you can drive to work in Monterey and "experience the most beautiful morning . . . layers of pink and blue and white and yellow and rust and lime green and red and sand and aqua and purple and..... The day was perfect in Sand City."

Drink deep, Luigi, you're The MAN!

AND ME? I get to turn and look at that same world and say with pride:

"See that? That's my friend."

Dan

So, it's your birthday again and it's 2018

This year, you and I turn 68. Sixty-eight! Could we have imagined that, back in the dorm fifty years ago? But here we are. Since those days, we have a string of memories. Topping the list, you and your lovely wife, Rita, raised an amazing son — a giant of a man — a surgeon, a hero. All three of you were there with us at our wedding in Yosemite. You were there at many family events. You and Rita and Gretta and I went to Europe and visited Varenna, on Italy's Lake Como, and took the train to Southern France. We ate some great food and drank some wine (it's what we do), and I'll never forget.



Dan & Gretta's wedding



Ben's wedding



Varenna, Lake Como, Italy

Thank you, Lew, for being you — Happy Birthday!

With Our Love,

Dan & Gretta

