



Merry, Merry Christmas!!
and a
Happy New Year
to
One and All!

On a day long ago, a Person was born into the same Earth we inhabit. He came not to observe, but to live with us, to feel all the things we feel - the sun warming His back, the blood coursing His veins, playing with others as a child, bearing physical labor as an adult. He attended weddings and saw the death of others, just as we do, a full participant in human life, with its joys, griefs, and sorrows. As God, He Himself had no need to do these things - and what would have been the attraction? But He came as a Saviour, because we so desperately needed one. We, each and every one of us, bear the burden of sin; we, each and every one of us, deserve an eternity in Hell for our offenses against God, and we cannot pay the debt. Jesus, being God, could. And He did so by suffering a cruel death as a substitute for all of us. That God the Father was satisfied was shown clearly by His resurrection after suffering that death. This was the purpose of His coming on the first Christmas. It was a gift, a very personal and costly gift, and available to any who will receive it. Your sins, and mine, can be removed, Hell replaced with Heaven, condemnation replaced with joyful acceptance, by the choice to believe in Jesus the Messiah and the finished work of this Saviour.

It is a big deal, Christmas.

We have a number of things to report, none of which have similar importance, but we'll tell you anyway. For the Yankees, we report that Dallas has had its first freeze, that Corpus Christi had a lot of snow (global warming, right?), and that local temperatures vary from the 20s to the 70s. At pleasure. (Texans know all this.)

Anne continues her role as Head Domestic Administrator, minding the many sundry details of getting us through, well, most everything. One of her biggest (and most successful) tasks was getting Larry set up for his entry into Medicare. Since he continues to work, also now drawing Social Security, there were a number of hurdles in getting set up for Medicare, getting the correct Medicare supplement and Part D, arranging for the attendant deductions for premiums - all that stuff, and the additional issues coordinating with employer insurance. Fun stuff, and Anne did most of the shopping and figuring. We should send HER to Congress to straighten out the mess!

Anne is also shopping for hearing aids. This will let her hear Larry better. And the news. (Perhaps she will want one with a switch.) She also presided over the comings and goings of contractors later in the year. In April, there was the garbage truck snagging one of our trees and tearing off a big chunk. So we had to have the tree surgeons out to look at the damage, and while we were at it, to give an estimate for all the pruning well out of Larry's reach. (This was after a diseased tree had to be removed.) Later on . . . it seems that when Fred Flintstone and Barney Rubble were building our house, the plumber engaged didn't hang the drains the correct distance under the slab, and the PVC broke in several places. We discovered this in a left-handed way when two doors in the back of the house began to stick badly. Trusty realtor Wayne Davey was consulted as to WHICH tradesman we should engage to diagnose the issue. He referred us to a foundation guy, who said the problem was likely related to water and recommended a plumber. The plumber performed a number of tests and discerned the need to tunnel (\$\$\$) under the house to rectify the matter. (Shades of Hogan's Heroes.) We have come through all this a bit lighter; if you have kids in private colleges, your outgo may have been greater, but we feel we have stimulated the economy sufficiently.

Larry's first major achievement this year was to total the 1997 Suburban he'd been driving for 12 years. (Yes, it was his fault.) He replaced it with a 2002 Volvo V70 (that's a wagon) that gets about double the gas mileage of the Suburban - and can haul perhaps half the number of passengers.

This he followed with a growth in an inconvenient place that had him disabled from work for a couple of weeks. In the middle of that recovery was when the garbage truck incident occurred. No, the driver didn't notice. With the alley blocked, we had to call the city, including the cops. So here is Larry, wearing diapers, with a pain in his sit-down and pain killers aboard, standing on a ladder with a reciprocating saw trying to see that damaged branches wouldn't fall and injure unwary travelers down our alley. We should have sold tickets. (Fortunately a city crew arrived and removed any remaining threatening plant tissue.)

His tailpipe healed, Larry pursued the issue of his arthritic shoulders and was advised by several surgeons that he's a candidate for a shoulder replacement. (Oh, boy! Did you know the recovery for a shoulder is more than double that for a hip?) We're thankful that a bout of physical therapy restored a good deal of range of motion and allowed postponement of this fun for, well, a while. With some care, he's been able to start construction of the shed he'd planned since the slab for it was poured a couple years back. He hopes to get that knocked before surgery. (And aren't we glad for air nailers!!)

But Larry's left eye must have become jealous of the attention lavished on other parts of his carcass. His ophthalmologist was considering backing off the eyedrops he takes for glaucoma in that eye, as pressures had dropped to a point that might be allowed. However, as he came in for a pressure check, pressure had elevated to a borderline state, and on a revisit had climbed to a decidedly unsatisfactory 36. The glaucoma valve installed in 2015 had apparently lost efficacy, and a new (to Larry) glaucoma surgeon installed a new (and, we hope, better) glaucoma stent of simplified design. At this writing, Larry is recovering from this surgery (pressure measured 6 the day after surgery and 5 a week later) relatively uneventfully so far and is pursuing most of his normal activities.

Golly, time flies when you're having fun. Or when you're not. Sometimes seems hard to keep up, but this is our attempt. We hope we'll hear from you also as you find it convenient.

Our love,

Anne
Larry

