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# *HAPPY HOLIDAYS!!!*

**H**oliday Greetings from our *new home!* If you already sent a card to the old address, don't panic--the Post Office faithfully has forwarded everything. If you haven't yet mailed, it is a ready-made excuse for late or "lost in the mail!"

*It has been a busy and eventful year. Shortly after the new year, Chad finally committed to a fall retirement and we did some associated thinking on relocating to the countryside, in good part so that we could stable the two horses ourselves. Since then it seems all our time has been devoted to fixing up & selling the old home or buying and fixing up the new one. Shortly after putting our house on the market, we got a buyer and signed a contract for a nice house with six acres all set up for horses. Unfortunately the property had prior liens and the contract fell through after several false starts. Then Linda found some even better property, although it wasn't set up for horses. The house is stone and cedar with a house-long Texas size front porch, on 13 heavily wooded acres (cedar and oak), located west of Austin on the edge of the Texas Hill Country. It*

*was a vacant foreclosure--well constructed but badly in need of a tune up; also it was a little smaller than what we have had so we also did some major remodeling.*

*Having sold our home in June, we had to be out by the end of July but couldn't move in to the new home until the repairs were finished in mid-August (we didn't actually close until late September thanks to errors by the mortgage company--but they knocked a half percentage off our loan rate in return).*

*While all this was going on, **Chad** continued his job search, with renewed vigor. Early in July, he was offered a **management analyst position with the Travis County Tax Collector-Assessor office**. Altho pleased at the job offer, it was nonetheless annoying that within two days of accepting it, he was contacted to interview for two other positions, both at a higher level. (But interviews aren't job offers!) He was able to negotiate a 3 August start date as we thought it would be good timing for the house move, etc. No such luck there. He was lucky that the Air Force granted his short notice request to move up his*

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retirement date. And so, after 24 years, 1 month, and 26 days, Chad **retired effective August 1, 1992**. The Air Force has been a great career and life and certainly will be missed. At the same time, the Air Force is undergoing a great deal of change, the base here is closing, and Chad's unit is moving to Arizona; so the time to leave had definitely arrived and there are no regrets.

**R**etiring on a Friday, he started work at the County on Monday. Title aside, the position is essentially "staff project officer" for the chief and deputy. The good news is that it is very unstructured and Chad gets to make his own way. The bad news is that it is very unstructured and Chad has to make his own way. It is a different world out there! Most important, Chad likes the folks he works with and for and has found the work enjoyable and enlightening. Speaking of enlightenment, in his spare time Chad is going to school for some business courses, and will pick up a BA along the way. Now just what does one do with degrees in Business, Chemistry, and Mid-East Studies?!

**Linda** continues to head up Collections & Distribution for the Child Support Division within the Texas Attorney General Office, tho that is becoming her "second career." Her #1 career is now caring for **her horses, Bingo & Striker**. We cleared and fenced roughly 2 acres for the horses plus built a nice stable area complete with paddock and pole barn. For several weekends prior to the horses' arrival, Linda was out in the pasture clearing rocks, stumps, roots, etc, and raked and seeded every inch. Since their arrival, there has been no let up in her labors. Fortunately, it is truly a labor of love--and believe me, that is important at O-dark thirty in the morning,

in the cold and rain, as I snuggle under the covers while Linda heads out to feed the "boys."

Additionally, **we now have a dog** whom Linda acquired from an animal "rescue" organization that had set up shop outside the pet store (no fools, they). He is Heinz variety of course--the guesses range from Chow, to Beagle, to Boxer, to German Shepherd. Name of "Sol" which is short for Solemn (his demeanor), or Solomon (not his demeanor), or Sahlem; we haven't nailed that part down yet.

Of course we still have some fish and the cats. It is with great sorrow we report that Nit, our Siamese who has been with Linda for the past 18 years, passed away in May. He had become such a part of our lives and is greatly missed. Jameelah, Tee Som, and J.J. are going strong. Plus we have a stray that Linda feeds tho he (she?) is still very much wild. So far, that is the menagerie; undoubtedly it will grow. Linda already has an area in the paddock fenced off for a goat pen complete with miniature pole barn, and she is reading up on pygmy and Angora goats. Plus she occasionally throws out some hints on some Guinea fowl and/or geese. Guinea fowl supposedly help keep the scorpion population in check. We have seen plenty of scorpions but oddly have seen no snakes despite all our yard work. Perhaps best of all are the deer that inhabit the area and sometimes stroll through the yard. We are surrounded by woods on all sides so the deer are plentiful (in hiding now for hunting season).

We hope you can come visit; it is such a restful place (if the animals don't take over) and we'd love to share it with you. Take care and come to Texas!