

1-1-95

NEW YEAR'S GREETINGS TO ALL OUR FRIENDS & FAMILY!!

Yes, the Christmas Cards are late--later even than usual. A complicity of events, not the least of which was procrastination, is at fault. But the Post Office has assured that I will pay for my tardy ways!

While it has been a very busy year for us, there were few momentous events; rather, we have been busy with the day-to-day joys, sorrows, triumphs, and frustrations of living. Certainly all of these words apply to country living, but by far the joys outweigh all else. The frustrations are mostly not having the time to work/play with all the projects and tendings of a small "ranch."

Linda even sold one of her horses (**Striker**, the Tennessee Walker) because she could not fairly devote the time he needed for training and exercise. Linda was more discerning about the buyer than any buyer was about the horse. He now has a lovely home and it is within visiting distance. In turn, we now have **Prescience**, an Arabian mare who is very well trained and requires less attention. We of course still have **Bingo**, the Paint, who has recovered from last year's surgery better than hoped; although we still don't ride him, riding is not an impossibility for the future. The horses get the vast bulk of Linda's spare time which is both a necessity and a pleasure. When not able to be with the horses, Linda is usually buried in a book somewhere. Work (Director, Collections & Distributions, Child Support Enforcement, TX Attorney General) of course consumes most of her days, but that is merely a necessary evil to support the fun stuff.

Chad is still with the Travis County Tax Office as a Management Analyst, tho he has been filling in for a supervisory position over the past 6 weeks as well. It may result in a permanent move; no promotion per se but it would be a nice change/challenge from staff to ops supervision. Whichever position he gets, it will be nice to get out from under the double load he now carries! His weekends are spent "putterin' 'round the spread". There is certainly lots of "putter" here. Only one major project this year: finish fencing the property (and we hired this out!; except Chad put in the solar gate opener). Got an excellent product at an excellent price and we can now occasionally (not often enough!) let the horses out of their pasture to roam. Chad also has been active in helping to establish a neighborhood association. Its amazing that there can be so much politics in one small neighborhood. But there should be some long term gains, we hope.

No exotic trips this year, except a conference for Chad in **College Station** (Texas A&M Aggies)--that was exotic! Kidding aside, my greatest impression of the area is of the young people we encountered around town--all so very polite, friendly, and "clean cut". I don't consider the youth of Austin & UT as

"bad", but I sure admire what I saw in Aggieland. Also impressed with the size and openness of the campus; the town abuts the campus on two sides and the rest is open country. The Bush Presidential Library has not gotten past the "future site of" sign as yet. There's a fight on now about the forced move of the A&M pig farm (really!).

We had two fun trips. One weekend in the **Hill Country** at a "guest ranch" about 100 miles west of Austin. Beautiful area but lousy weather, so we spent most of the time sight seeing rather than participate in ranch activities. The Hill Country is really beautiful. We live at the edge of the Hill Country and have only an inkling of the hills/trees/water that define it. If you come visit, we'd love to show the area off to you. Our other fun trip was with Chad's family to the area around **Galena, Illinois** on the Mississippi River. Another surprisingly hilly and beautiful area, with lots of interesting history. The most important historical moment was when Chad and his brother Bruce canoed by the area as Boy Scouts many (many) years ago. Couldn't find the historical marker; someone must have taken it as a souvenir.

Cats (**T.K., J.J., Jameelah, & Tee Som**) are fine; T.K. had a penchant this year for wandering off and getting lost, but seems to have figured out his surroundings. We currently also board Timothy, a neighbor's cat who likes the good life here. None of us (except Timothy) has decided yet on how permanent the arrangement will be. Dogs **Solomon and Tejas** also well. Solomon is recovering from exploratory surgery for abdominal pains; nothing definitive found, but he seems to be improving. Tejas has grown beyond expectations--probably up to 70# by now.

Well, I'm not sure you got 32 cents worth of news so we'll make up for it by offering our best and most sincere wishes for a **Happy, Healthy, and Prosperous New Year**. May 1995 go down in the annals of your family history as one of the best ever! May you even win the lottery (after us, of course)!!

Same place & phone--come visit when you can. We guarantee fun.

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