

December 2004



Holiday Greetings to friends and family from the Swedbergs, the herd, and the occasional visitor (see left). We hope this finds you well and enjoying the spirit of the holiday season. We and the animals are fine. Some health issues with the animals, but under control for now.

It has been a lovely, quiet year here in the hill country. We have had the fortune of visits from friends and family and we would be thrilled to share with you the beauty and serenity of our own special version of paradise - our home is always open for visits and gatherings. The margaritas are frozen and ready to serve and the salsa is always hot!



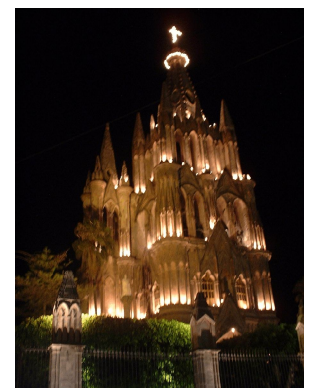
In February, we had an encounter of the unusual kind with snow in Austin. It was lovely, but short-lived. Snow does not last long around here. Chad and the dogs were up early to enjoy the event. The cats and I wisely, I think, slept in. It has never snowed on Christmas Day here in Austin. Maybe this year?

After all these years of threatening to leave state government, I finally made the commitment to retire early, in August of 2006. I filed my papers with the retirement system, and now it's just a matter of working hard and counting down the months. Watch this space for further details as the time gets closer. I plan to do wildlife rescue, habitat restoration, and maybe even some dressage training; who knows? That's Tequila, our bob-tailed cat, helping me figure out my new budget.



Chad is not as anxious as I to leave current employment and is playing it by ear. His boss, the Travis County Tax Assessor, recently won another four-year re-election, so Chad may stay with the Tax Office until she retires. Or until the traffic to work gets so bad that he can't stand it any longer.

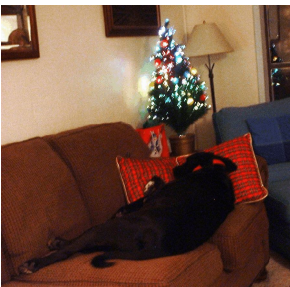
In June, traveling with special friends and meeting new ones, we visited magical San Miguel de Allende in central Mexico. Founded in the mid-1500s, San Miguel is a cosmopolitan city with beautiful Colonial architecture and many cultural delights. Nightly, we would walk the Zócallo, or square, which is beautifully set off by the city's landmark parish church, La Parroquia, dating from 1683. Truly a beautiful place.





Other shorter, but most enjoyable outings included a trip to the state fair in Dallas with dear friends and neighbors ("Big Tex" guarding the entrance to the Fair pictured here), where I learned more facts about pigs and hogs than I ever wanted to maintain in my memory bank.

In August, we joined sister Judy and husband Adrian for a long weekend in the western hill country, on the banks of the Rio Frio. We tubed and kayaked down the river, generally threatening and alarming other tubers on the river with our daring expertise and control (or lack thereof). Our cabin in the trees was difficult to leave for the "real" world.



We are ending the year behind, as usual, but grateful for all we have. Shiner, as are we, is happily worn out from a "wonder-full" family Thanksgiving at our house, shortly followed by our annual holiday party for close neighbors and friends.

Chad and I approach the end of the year with our normal maturity and age-appropriate behavior, in hopes that you all will have a new year of hope, happiness, and fulfillment.



We wish you all things good in this and all seasons. Take best care of yourselves and Happy New Year!

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