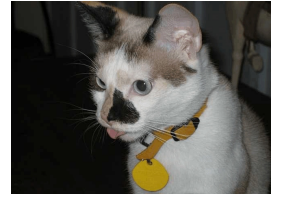


Holiday Greetings to all our Friends and Family. Recognizing these are tough times for many, we are thankful, and feel fortunate, that 2008 has been a good year for us. We hope your year was as good and offer a wish that the coming year is even better.



No surprise that critters remain a great part of our life and enjoyment - and, yes, the menagerie continues to grow. Buddy, a canine addition last year, has settled in nicely while our new cat, Hannah, is evolving from shy and retiring to effervescent! Hannah, a "rescue" cat, is a year old but seems to be making up for a lost kitten-hood.



"The Herd" remains unchanged: Sunny (horse), Baby (donkey), and goats Maggie, Sandy, & Cocoa. Shiner (lab mix) and cats Fargo and Tequila round out the crew. We also delight in the wild bunch with whom we share the land - the deer, squirrels, & birds. The hawks, owls, vultures, fox, coyotes, racoons, armadillos, possums, and noisy crows aren't always as welcome but are still treasured. On rare occasions we have been treated to a visit from a stray (lost?) turkey, duck, or pheasant. If you come visit, we can always guarantee a show!

Chad continues to spend his retirement here at home, clearing land, maintaining and hopefully improving on the homestead. Linda meanwhile tends her flower, vegetable, and butterfly/humming bird gardens in her "spare" time even as she works on building a small business. She has experimented with several options looking for the right mix of time, enjoyment, and gain. Currently, she describes it as a combination of buying & selling American artisan goods; caring for a 10 year-old, one-eyed, incontinent French Bulldog in "tinkle trousers" (among others); and contributing to animal rescue and habitat preservation. Definitely a work in progress. Its hard work, but she is learning a lot and enjoying it all.

We had two great road trips this year. In August we drove to "Florabama", the coastal area along the Florida/Alabama line. Linda spent several days in Gulf Shores, AL with a special group of friends from high school while Chad visited a long time friend from Academy and military days near Pensacola, FL. We routed our return trip to visit with other very dear friends in Alabama and Mississippi. And on a spur of the moment decision, spent a very nice day touring the quaint town of Vicksburg and the surrounding Civil War battlefield monument park.

In May we joined two neighborhood friends on a seven-day 2500 mile driving/train trip thru the state of Chihuahua, Mexico, thoroughly enjoying the culture, history, scenery, and food. Highlights were overnights in Divisadero (in a lodge on the ledge - literally - of the

magnificent Copper Canyon) and in Casas Grandes from which we visited the Paquimé Indian ruins and museum, and the Mata Ortiz village, home of the famed and unique pottery. There is an interesting story behind this pottery (www.mataortiz.com) featuring an American art anthropologist, Spencer MacCallum. In a bit of amazing luck, we struck up a conversation with a stranger outside the Paquimé Museum who turned out to be MacCallum. After a very nice and interesting discussion, he offered us a night in one of the several adobe homes he maintains for visiting art/culture academic research groups. A lovely, quaint adobe filled with unique art treasures!



Many other blessings, large & small, filled the year. We celebrated weddings, graduations, and career moves for nephews & nieces; the 50th Anniversary of very good friends & neighbors Ed & Olga; and the 60th Anniversary of Linda's sister, Janice & husband Bill. We enjoyed, as always, day and overnight trips to the surrounding area, especially in the Hill Country west of Austin that we love so much. And we very much enjoyed visits from friends and family, especially when we had an extended visit and were able to show off central Texas. We hope that in 2009 that you will be among our visitors!

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