

Christmas 2011

Autumn leaves are still falling - so is the temperature - no rain for weeks and plenty of snow in the mountains - a perfect Oregon December.

We'll soon be at Mt. Bachelor for skiing, then back home Christmas Eve. Andy and JoLani will join us from California.

As another year passes, Tony and I are even more convinced this is "home." Besides the obvious reasons (being near the "kids"), having a new routine, meeting new friends, discovering new places to explore, etc. have been added bonuses. Doing projects, as we all know is more fun when they're someone else's and word has gotten out that Tony can fix most anything, so he's a happy and busy guy!

My 70th B-day in January held many surprises. We flew to Arizona for four wonderful days with my brother, after which he drove us to our old neighborhood in California for two days of visiting with friends. Next, we were chauffeured to the Excalibur in Vegas where Andy and JoLani took over and hosted a *very* fancy, elegant meal and a Cirque de Soleil show. It's not so bad turning 70! My last gift from son Joe was redeemed in April. Patsy and I went to the Oregon Ducks Football "Women's Only" Clinic held at the football complex by Autzen Stadium.

It began with food, drink, and informed time with Coach Chip Kelly and his staff. We were divided into small groups and rotated through ten "classes" given by his assistants in their areas of expertise - offense, defense, special teams, blitz, etc. Next came a tour of the locker rooms, medical and training facilities - with Phil Knight of Nike as an alumni benefactor. These facilities were grand! As an avid, season-ticket holding Duck fan, this was quite an amazing evening for me. After a very exciting, successful season, we will play Wisconsin in the Rose Bowl January 2nd - GO DUCKS!

Tony's URI 50th Reunion was in May. We scheduled our vacation with family then. It was my first school reunion, and I enjoyed watching the years melt away as Tony and his Sigma Chi brothers reminisced. As always, our Portsmouth family was very welcoming. Jo and everyone were more than generous with their time and thoughtfulness.

This summer, Joe, with able assistance from Patsy, spent many days prepping and giving our house two coats of paint (we have seven eaves on this small home - Joe had to be a contortionist!) He also tiled our bathroom floor and spent twelve days helping a friend re-roof his old house. They discovered three layers of shingles but no base-boards underneath. School "vacation" was mostly "work." Thanks, Joe! Are you still glad we came?...We are!

Bro Joe drove here from Arizona in October. Family time, visiting friends, our evening Texas Hold-Em games, a trip to the Columbia River Gorge, and of course, Dim Sum (which will not be a surprise to anyone who knows Tony's favorite place to go) were all on the agenda...after winning our pennies, he stopped at Vegas on his way home...hope he was as lucky there.

Hannah, almost fourteen, and Cassidy, eleven, continue to love school and enjoy many sports and music. Their active lives are a big part of *our* social lives, too, and we're grateful to share these moments.

As Christmas approaches, we appreciate the memories shared with family and friends and send best wishes for our good health and contentment in the new year. God bless you!

MERRY CHRISTMAS