

CHRISTMAS LETTER 2011

Seasons' Greetings everyone from Gerry & Jerry here at the Frog Ranch on the southeast side of Manassas, Virginia. This year has been eventful as were our previous years reported in Christmas letters. A quick summary list for this year would be as follows:

1. January - February - March

Gerry got real sick on January 12 and stayed 5 days in the hospital after the emergency ambulance ride on a cold icy morning. She had 5 blood transfusions, lots of scans and tests for potassium levels and other things. The basic problem was diagnosed as loss of blood thru her left leg due to thin blood. We got some heavy snow which took down lots of trees and the power was out for 5 days. We managed with the wood stove and an old generator which finally quit and Jerry ordered a new one.

Gerry's sons came in to help on weekends in February and we got home nurse care, a hospital bed, and physical therapy. Gerry's recovery was slow but everything finally settled down. Jerry had his 67th birthday on March 9.

2. April - May- June

Jerry worked out some changes on vehicles to trade off the 2009 Honda Fit and the 2010 Ford Cargo Van for a single vehicle equipped with a wheelchair ramp. The new vehicle is a 2010 Ford Transit Connect Passenger van and with a special safety approved wheelchair it is easier and safer for getting Gerry in and out for local trips. Unfortunately it gives a very rough ride and Gerry hates being in the back. So now we have \$40,000 invested in our transportation needs and still no comfort to show for it.

In May we went to a music campout at Cederville State park. On the way back we picked up a little black 8-week old kitten from Gerry's nephew Jon. Gerry says "what were we thinking?". We eventually named him Primo but he also is known as BlackJack or Blackie. The other cats are Qtpie and Melanie. Amigo our dog is now deaf.

In June we went to the Mountain Laurel Autoharp gathering at Buffalo State Park near Newport, Pennsylvania. Jerry participated in the contest for the first time playing two tunes, Magpie and Cherokee Swing. Jerry also bought a Fladmark autoharp and worked out a special jazz chord bar setup. We got back home on June 25th and about 12:55 a song from our CD was played the WAMU 88.5 FM radio traditions show. The next day Jerry provided special music at the Dranesville Church of the Brethren with songs At the Crossing, Lord I Hope this Day is Good, I Can Tell You the Time, and Somebody Bigger Than You or I.

3. July-August-September

Jerry made decisions to buy an old 1992 Dodge 14-seat bus to convert to a semi-recreational vehicle with a wheelchair lift so we can go to music campouts and family gatherings at Cove campground near Winchester. Also Jerry continued his new motto of "Dreams Really Do Come True" by buying a 20 x 12 Gazebo made by the Mennonites in Mifflinburg, Pennsylvania. Jerry prepared the site using his Kubota tractor and the gazebo was delivered on August 19. Neighbor Jim helped Jerry get a ramp built down from the patio into the Gazebo. Other projects are underway. Gerry spends her time

sleeping, listening to the radio and reading books and news papers. On September 25 about 11 pm. Jerry discovered a snake in our bedroom - a copperhead over 2 feet long. After running to the barn for the pellet pistol he found it under Gerry's bed and after 3 missed shots he got it. Gerry kept saying "shoot him again- shoot him again".

4. **October- November-December**

It rained a lot but somehow Jerry was able to get in a few days of work on the projects out front. Inside he spent time working on the repair of a steel guitar and learning how to play it. On October 18 our oldest cat Qtpie died - she was about 18 years old. On November 9 we left for a trip to Minnesota to visit Gerry's new grand daughter Phoebe Josephine and older brother Milo - age 3 +. Matt and Jessie are the proud parents. We had dinner with Gerry's cousin Norita and husband Bob. On the way back we visited Gerry's 2nd cousin Carol near Waterloo Iowa. Then we spent the night at Gerry's son Andy's place in Chicago. When we got back, our cat Melanie had disappeared and the goldfish in the little pond by the patio were gone-- too many birds, hawks, owls, and herons around here to leave fish unprotected. I'm sure the frogs will be back in the spring. We plan to have some chickens by then.

A few days ago Jerry was out taking a walk with Amigo and Blackie. Melanie showed up with a little collar with the name Callie and a phone number so we were relieved that she was still alive and either found a new owner or returned to her former owner -we don't know. She stayed with us almost 2 years.

Jerry is still singing with the Manassas Community Chorale. On October 8 they performed a set of Civil War songs and stories with actor/singers presenting the stories and the 100 member chorale singing along. The piano and violin were outstanding also. On December 8 the chorale performed at the old Bruton Parish Church in Williamsburg with the old organ providing the accompaniment. The next day we drove on to Virginia Beach to visit Jerry's cousins Gary and Randy and their mom Inez. On December 17 the chorale will do two concerts at the Hylton Performing Arts Center ..

Andy and Amy are coming for Christmas and will stay at her sister's house. We plan to all gather at my son Mike's house in Reston around Gerry's birthday Dec. 28. Jerry's grandkids Barrett, Carson, and Megan are fun to watch. Last year we were at my daughter Marty's house in Ashburn and below is a snapshot from the Flip video.