

Christmas Time News

Marilyn and Charlies Year

December, 2011

Hello Once More To All Our Family and Friends!!

Time surely does pass faster the older we get. The past year was filled with good times interrupted by a few sad times. The sudden deaths this year of my uncle Edsel Hamlin and my son Jordon's father-in-law, Jim Schwartz shocked everyone who knew and loved them. Both will be sorely missed and fondly remembered as the years go by.

Our year started with a New Years Eve Mexican Dinner with Pat and Larry Stephens in Hendersonville, TN. New Years Day we headed on to the Everglades and warmer climes via St. Petersburg and a visit with Bob and Jean Black in Englewood, Florida. After basking in the warm Everglades sunshine for a couple or three weeks, we began a slow trip back to the north with a stop at Marilyn's daughter's family's new house in Royal Palm Beach. There, we were personally introduced to each of their flock of chickens, including Doodles the Rooster. As if that was not enough excitement we were there when the first egg was laid!!



Another treat was a visit to the South Florida Fair in West Palm Beach. We saw an assortment of fancy livestock; a calf being born and ate fried Oreos. Wow! Marilyn also got her picture taken with some of the fancy livestock mentioned earlier. The girls are being home schooled by their mom who is also taking college courses in preparation for nursing school.

Laissez les bons temps rouler

From Florida we wound our way over to New Orleans and met up with long time college friends, Dewey and Sandy Watson. The weather was perfect and much progress has been made since Katrina. We visited the World War II Museum, met the first woman Marine, ate beignets, visited the New Orleans Museum of Art (which is excellent) and got to see the first Mardi Gras parade of the season. That was an experience unlikely to be duplicated elsewhere in the U.S., though I understand they throw a pretty good party in Rio de Janeiro.

The most memorable thing on the way back to Missouri was a night at a Mississippi River campground. We were parked about 100 ft. from the

river bank and were astonished at the amount of barge traffic. I don't believe there was any time we could not see a barge either coming or going on the river. All campground buildings were on wheels, so when the floods came this summer they were all hauled to the dry side of the levy.

Jonah's Father Redeems Himself

Last year's issue carried the sad story of how Matt's failure to properly prepare nine year old Jonah's rifle led to the scaring away of a really nice buck. Jonah had to settle for a small "button" buck for his first deer. We're happy to report that Matt took Jonah on a special youth hunt in January where he scored this nice 11 point buck at our friend Don Mayse's place in Macon County! Way to go Jonah!



Jordon's Family

A big winter treat for Jordon's family along with his mom was a trip to the southern Alabama shores of the Gulf of Mexico. This was the kids first view of the ocean. Even though the water was cool they had a great time in the water and out. In addition to a lot of beach time they visited the Alabama, a WW II battleship where I took my family when they were kids. I should also report that grandpa couldn't resist giving Brooke a 4-wheeler for Christmas (with her parents permission, of course). She looks so cool in her protective gear when she rides. Christopher is anxious to get big enough to get his turn.



Chicago

Marilyn wanted to spend more time gardening this summer so our travels were limited to a week in Chicago, my first trip there in probably 40 years. I'm not normally a big city kind of guy, though I do love Manhattan. Marilyn and the Watson's convinced me that Chicago was a great city too. They were right! We stayed at the Great Lakes Navel Training Center where Dewey's retired Marine status got us less expensive housing on base. Since the commuter train line ran through the base into downtown Chicago we did not make much use of the car.

Much of our time was spent at the Art Institute of Chicago. It is unquestionably one of the great art museums in America. Most of you will recognize this famous work, *American Gothic* by Grant Wood. It represents the essence of American character! We spent the better part of three days in the museum and its environs including Millennium Park, home of "The Bean". It is a 98 ton stainless steel sculpture that looks like a bean.



People stand under and around The Bean getting reflections like a fun house mirror, only a lot bigger.

We also attended a performance of the Alvin Ailey Dance Troupe. Its founder is credited by many with popularizing modern dance. The City also has many great eating places. It wasn't until our last night there, however, that I finally convinced everyone to eat a Chicago-style hot dog.



Mmmmmmm! They are topped with yellow mustard, chopped onions, sweet pickle relish, a dill pickle spear, tomato slices, pickled peppers and a dash of celery salt. Heavenly! Second City, a long time comedy venue is another place to check out if you visit Chicago. A lot of big time entertainers have performed there.

Macon County Hunting

Earlier I mentioned my friend Don's cabin and hunting/fishing haven in Macon county, about an hour and a half north of Columbia. During the past two years he and his son Brian along with a lot of help from Matt, Travis and Jordon have been converting the cabin into a "lodge". Work included reinforcing the entire structure, addition of a dining area and large new deck; remodeled bathroom and

kitchen, etc., etc. Just before hunting season work was finished on a new hardwood floor, laid on a diagonal pattern. It looks absolutely great. It's a far cry



from the first little uninsulated, no running water, gas light powered little cabin built in 1980. An indoor toilet was the first expansion. Lake water was pumped up the hill for the toilet and shower. All drinking water had to be brought from home until last year.

This season Jordon was the only one to get his buck on opening weekend. It was a small deer, but had 13 points. Travis had a quick shot at the biggest buck ever seen on the property. Unfortunately, he didn't score, which is unusual for Travis. He was bummed!

The deer didn't show up on any of the several game cameras scattered at strategic locations around the woods. He was probably just "passing through".

Miscellaneous

A definite sign that my mental facilities are failing is the fact that my former boss, Ray Beck talked me into becoming membership chairman of the Boone County Historical Society. For the past twelve years since retiring I have studiously avoided anything that smacked of work or responsibility. Oh well, maybe I can talk enough people into helping that I won't have to do much!

Marilyn continues to work during two eight week sessions at the University. This summer she was awarded the School of Health Professions first Outstanding Alumni Mentor Award from the school's Alumni Association. It was a great, but well deserved, honor that came as a total surprise.

We made our annual trip down to Arkansas during mid-October. We got to see Uncle Ray and Aunt Mary in Malvern, then spent the weekend with college friends at the state park lodge on DeGray Lake. The more wine we drank the better focused our solutions to the world's problems became. It's a shame no one will pay us any attention :)

From there we stopped in Texarkana to visit Kitty and Uncle Edsel. After a three month bout with a



Edsel/Aimee
Jordon's
Wedding
Aug. 3, 02

severe lower back infection he was well on the way recovering his strength. We left on Oct. 24th, my 69th birthday. On Nov. 1, Ed's granddaughter, Renee, called to tell me he had died of a heart attack. It's such a shock when someone you know and love passes so suddenly. **We miss you Uncle Edsel!**



We wish each of you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy, Healthy 2012!!!

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