

Friday, Dec 12, 2014

Sent Dec. 2015

Last Christmas, I wrote my letter on Xmas day and only got 2/3 of my Christmas list cards sent out in the few months after Christmas; AND 1/3 never got sent. A lot has happened in the last 2 years that has slowed me down, mostly health challenges that have interfered with my love of doing projects like my yearly Xmas cards with letters and even, this year, with putting out my Calendars. Sorry, I just can't do calendars this year. But I vow to get all my cards done this year, including double cards and letters for those I missed last year, even if they, too, end up coming after Christmas. I do the best I can.

My knee surgery in Aug. 2013 to repair torn miniscus on R. knee went wonderfully and my knee is great, even stronger than the L knee. But the doctors are right when they say the side effects from anesthetic, etc are worse. It took more than 7 months to come back from all that, including a month on a heart monitor in Nov-Dec. Keeping track of all that while living alone is what interfered with all my other activities, including doing cards, not to mention our horrible winter last year.

I am still at home with Coco (age 10 ½ ) and Willa (age 6 ½ ) but it gets more challenging each year. I have help from Council on Aging home health aides, but it is a minimum wage job with a huge turnover. I am lucky if an aide lasts 4 to 6 months, then quits and I have to train someone else. Last summer I optimistically set up a 5 year goal/plan to move to a retirement community, predicated on my dog's life span mostly! Ha. That plan got real iffy when I suddenly got sick mid Sept. with gastro problems. A routine cleanout for colonoscopy landed me in the hospital with excessive bleeding so I could be monitored. I was then diagnosed with diverticulosis and severe anemia, receiving 2 pt. of blood. Three days on those *soft* hospital beds with no support made my cervical spine totally go 'kaphlooeey' from degenerative disc disease. Incompetent care from the Dr. office made it even worse, so I spent 5 weeks in great pain and almost totally incapacitated before I could get my epidural and some relief. After that experience, I changed doctors, and health care systems from Tri-Health to Christ Hospital. I now feel like I am being cared for and happily, am now slowly on the road to recovery as I work thru Physical Therapy.. I hope to be back to some sort of normalcy by Spring.



In April, I traded in my Subaru Forester for the little red Ford Focus above. In the 20 months I had the Forester, I had 8 to 10 near misses and 2 contact "wrecks" – more like fender benders. But that was more incidents in 20 months than I had ever had in any 20 year period over the 68+ years of my driving. That car was far too dangerous for me (blind spots), so I got rid of it and leased the Ford. In Aug. Sue & Daniel & German Shepherd Zena drove up from Fla., Brother Michael Giles came over from W. Va. & they drove to Denver for a waterlily convention & vacation at Rocky Mtn Natl. Park, leaving Zena with me for 2 weeks. Sort of like having a deer loping thru the house; but she was a dear, sweet, gentle & smart dog. Willa loved having her here, but Coco really did not like it. We managed to keep the peace and it was an interesting, sometimes fun 2 weeks. After returning from Colorado, Sue spent 4 days here with me before joining Daniel & Zena at Michael's for 2 months in W. Va., before then returning home to Fla.

Annette and I went on several 'staycation' excursions around Cincinnati during the summer. We spent a day at Krohn Conservatory with giant Coleus and Butterflies from Costa Rica; viewed the Princess Diana Exhibit at Cincinnati Museum Center; and especially spent the day at Pyramid Hill Outdoor Sculpture Park just north of Cincy. It's 80 acres of outdoor sculptures plus an antiquities museum. When I was in Greece, I saw a 10x10 bin with sculpture scraps from digs dumped in it. Most of the sculptures in the museum from Greece and Rome were from that kind of source, beautifully displayed. Gave me an added depth of understanding as I viewed the exhibit. I also managed to drive to Brookville, OH to visit their Historical Society in June and get to the Razor Reunion near Greenville, Ohio in July. I also went to 4 operas in June and July, plus the usual May Festival Choral concerts in May. Not in 2015.

Can't handle long (200 mi.) drive plus visits all in one day any more!

I had to give up going downtown to the Aronoff Theater for Cin. Music Theater because of parking and walking demands this past year. I still go to Drama Workshop plays, Cin. Playhouse in the Park, and especially to all the Symphony and Chamber Music concerts. Handicap parking is right by the door making that possible. All this fall, Annette would drop me off at the front of Music Hall, I would be met with a wheelchair, and wheeled to within 30 feet of my seat, making it possible for me to get to all the concerts. What a wonderful service! Of course, I also enjoy going to Phi Beta Fine Arts Fraternity meetings during the year and publishing their Yearbook in early Sept. (Also in 2015)

And so now it is the day after Christmas and I am still working on my letter; fortunately, the end of it rather than the beginning. I have loved reading your cards, letters and notes-- my yearly visit with you. I will spend the next week sharing my past year with you, cherishing the beauty of our years of friendship. So you are much in my thoughts as we move into the New Year. As we all face the challenges of growing older, my hope is for us all to have the healthiest and happiest New Year possible.

