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December, 2016



Dear

Always winter and never Christmas ... The first *Narnia* book comes to life. This past week we've had snow, cold, long lines of traffic ... and hot cider and wood fires and kitties and a couch and a book ... not so bad after all. And then comes Christmas. Thinking back to the very first Noel. That baby was everyone's problem. Nobody had room. Politics was throwing a connoption. All the world needed to be taxed ...



Right now this year feels like we're just getting ready for next year. Things keep coming down and ramping up. Spent a little time campaigning. The issue I put the most time and effort into lost by two votes. (Yes, that's right, -2- on the recount!) Might as well laugh.



Our biggest adventure would have been the Japan trip. We had a total 2-week blast! Got to go stay with a former classmate in Osaka who'd built a thriving church in that very busy city. In the middle of our stay we flew down to the island where Kumamoto is located, where they had the big earthquake last Spring. Spent a few days working with the *Operation Blessing* team (a 700 Club ministry) helping some of the earthquake victims and reaching out to kids who were living in temporary shelters at their local grade school.

A couple months later we received quite a shock. My pastor friend died suddenly from a hidden health issue. Have to say when Our Lord takes one of the very best we're always asking why. There aren't any good answers but we had the privilege of knowing someone truly great and a total blast to be around, a friend among friends. Have to be thankful for what we had and look forward to meeting up in Heaven. Most of us have very little hope of getting off this planet alive so we just have to do the best with what we have.



Projects ... Been a good year for lots of fun little things. Took down my forty year old mailbox for a little body and fender work, as well as a paint job. Was going to go with the neighborhood standard (black) but as I sanded it smooth I discovered the original colors to be cream & green. Well ...

Actually working on a pipe organ again. Been overhauling the keyboards on a 1926 Kimball console. Have to say I'm enjoying it, re-tensioning springs, rewiring contacts, regulating key travel ... Can't wait to be able to play the thing when we get it all ship-shape.



Went after pickles again this summer. Knew it was time for some refrigeration so I picked up a glass-front merchandiser, the type one finds in supermarkets. Cost a bit more than a typical home unit but we felt it was well worth it. We're all visual enough that it helps us to keep track and not forget things. The heavy-duty shelves make a lot of sense for people stacking them with heavy canning jars and bags of juicing carrots and things. The Pepsi logo and LED lighting tends to add to the fun but we don't keep it lit up all the time. So here it's December and we still have pickles, but they're going fast ...



Chris still lives with us although he isn't fond of being photographed. We've seen him grow in many ways and continue to be very proud of the young man. Made parking a bit more crowded but we all manage ...



Popeye is feeling his age a bit. One thing and another means he's needed to be bathed a few times. Can't say he really likes it but on the other hand his own private catnip patch seems to help a little.



All in all, Sandra and I have had a very good year. Hope it's been blessed for you too ...

