

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to One and All!

Well, yet another year as sneaked up on us and we don't know where all the time has gone. Will once again try to recollect what it is that we've been doing this year...

We spent most of last winter hunkered down here on Thrush Ridge Lane. In March, Mark had some minor surgery to free up a frozen shoulder. He had the operation on a Tuesday and was back to work a week later.

In late spring we slipped in a trip to the coast with a host of friends to enjoy a surprise birthday gathering for our friend Kay Costello. Fine dining was enjoyed in Moorehead City and we all enjoyed a "Low Country Seafood Boil" at the beach home of some friends(Yum!).

In June Michael and Rachel let us know that they are expecting a new baby. Yes, they're expecting a little girl in February, 2010. We can't wait to welcome her to the Meyen tribe. It remains to be seen how Sam will feel about having a sibling. Nanna has his "Big Brother" T-Shirt ready for him.

July brought the much looked forward to visit with our friends Nancy and Frank in South Myrtle Beach. It's always nice to spend a couple of days chillin' on the beach and enjoying the local seafood restaurants.

The rest of our summer was taken up with the occasional soccer and T-Ball games played by our oldest grandchild Walker. He's actually come a long way this year and plays soccer well enough to be a leading scorer for his team. His sister Olivia will be old enough to start playing in the spring of 2010 as will little Sam. We're going to have to split up on Saturdays to make sure all the grands have family representation on the sidelines.

This fall Mark was officially declared by the VA to have service related disabilities (diabetes, peripheral neuropathy). The disabilities are caused by exposure to Agent Orange while in Vietnam. At a current rate of 20% disability he isn't exactly wheelchair bound but he's been told to expect the % rate to go up over time. Oh well, just another good reason to keep traveling and seeing interesting places while he still can.

In November we hopped on a plane to Ft Lauderdale with our friends Anne & Dave and Brenda & Hal to embark on another Mark & Ann's Excellent Adventure, a 10-day cruise to Oranjestad(Aruba), Cartegena(Columbia), Puerto Limon(Costa Rica),Panama Canal, Colon(Panama) and Ocho Rios(Jamaica). We had great company, smooth sailing, interesting destinations and gourmet food every day.



For those who care to look, we have photos and videos loaded on Mark's profile at Facebook.com.

We spent Thanksgiving at Michael and Rachel's together with Rachel's family and our Michelle & Ross. It was really great spending the day with all of our kids and grandkids. Any time we can do that we feel truly blessed. The Friday after Thanksgiving we headed up the highway to spend the rest of the weekend with Mark's mom and his sister Pat and her hubby Ted.

Plans for Christmas are to hang out right here in Raleigh with local trips to Durham and Cary to spend quality time with the kids.

Looking ahead into 2010 we have another short cruise, along with eight of our friends, lined up for March. Biggest news is that we've decided to go ahead and begin our retirement when Ann's school year ends in June. We're having some planning sessions with Mark's sister Pat and hubby Ted for a tentative two week road trip together in September/October to Las Vegas and the Southern California wine country.

As ever, we are thankful to God for our good fortunes, family & good friends and sending us His Son. We hope this finds you all enjoying good health, good times and the company of those you love and admire most.

From our house to yours,

Best Wishes for a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



Mark & Ann