



Happy Holidays!

December, 2006

The winter winds are blowing, the rain is falling, and we've even had some snow already this season. The farm is quiet, hibernating until spring's warmth awakens seeds and buds alike. Only the crazy humans scurry ever more rapidly, ignoring Nature's cycle. All of which reminds us that the holiday season is fast approaching, and it's time for us to collect our thoughts (and the occasional photo) for our annual holiday letter.

Life is never dull around here, and this year was no exception. The circle of life continues to turn, as old spirits pass on and new ones enter our life. Mingus, our 15-year-old Dalmatian, passed away in February, five months after we were sure we were going to lose her, and now awaits us at the Rainbow Bridge. This is the first time Brian has been Dalmatianless since sometime in the 1970s. In August, another canine spirit joined us, a Golden Retriever puppy that we've named Maizy Mae. She's full of energy, as you'd expect a puppy to be. It turns out that she has a urinary tract condition, but it's being managed with medications, so all is well for now. Murray, our great orange hunter cat, still roams the farm in search of rodents and (unfortunately) birds, while his adoring companion Moxie is content to watch from the window.



We are fortunate to be happy and healthy, which allows us to stay busy. Sharon is a very active volunteer at Mason's school, Childpeace Montessori, serving on two very active fundraising committees and staying tuned into the goings-on at school. Mason's class has both a new teacher and a new assistant this year, and he has adjusted to that transition quite well. He is doing great academically and socially. His cousin Sean attends the same school—fortunately for the teachers, they are in different classes!

Mason also loves sports. He played basketball last winter, baseball this spring, and now lives to play "wall ball" with his classmates and with his Dad. No day is complete without a rousing game of wall ball in the barn!

Brian is still doing web development for his high school friend Rob Duncan, who runs about 150 mostly-aviation-related web sites as Airbase1.com. Brian's primary assignment this year has been web and database enhancements to The-Airport-Guide.com, a global resource for pilots. He continues to be active in North Plains politics, helping to defeat attempts to annex surrounding farmland. And Fez Fatale released a holiday single, "Swing Those Sleigh Bells."

Brian and Sharon continued their personal education efforts by attending a lecture series on Oil & Water, which was mostly about Peak Oil. And we helped the Northwest Earth Institute test their latest discussion course on global warming.



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Our extended family is also doing well. Sharon and Mason traveled to northwestern Arizona to help Sharon's grandmother celebrate her 80th birthday in November, and Brian's mother is on track to celebrate her 90th next March. Both enjoy an active life and good health, for which we are all very grateful.

But by far the biggest change has been on the farm. In March we re-connected with Steve Radtke, who we knew from Ecotrust. Steve has been a farm apprentice for the past three years and was looking for land to farm on his own. So we have partnered with Steve and his wife Mishelle in support of his business, Abundant Harvest Produce. Our partnership has helped us realize one of our goals—to have our farmland be more actively used.



And "actively used" it was: Steve, with help from Mishelle, his family, and us, started and ran a 24-member subscription farm from June through November. He developed a significant business relationship with one of the head chefs at Bon Appetit, the catering firm that manages the cafeterias for all Intel locations nationwide, and provides produce for one of their cafeterias. We started with bare ground—literally—in March, completed one of our greenhouses in April, and began the subscription farm season in June. It's kept all of us, but mostly Steve, hopping almost all year. We've had to adjust to the increased activity around here, but we are all proud of what we've accomplished. We have a ton of photos, and will try to get some of them up on our web site so you may see the amazing results.

The harvest this year was indeed abundant. Sharon spent an incredible amount of time canning and preserving. It started with cherries in July, and didn't stop until the tomato harvest ended in November. In between were five kinds of berries, grapes, apples, pears, plums, and our beloved chili peppers. Sharon even canned tuna this year!

But now the farm, like Nature, is quiet for the moment, giving us all a needed break to rest, rejuvenate, contemplate the past, plan for the future, and most importantly, to enjoy the warmth and delight of this special time of year.

We hope our letter finds you healthy and content, brimming with the love and peace of the season, and surrounded by those you love. We wish all of you a joyous holiday, and success and happiness in the coming year.

You can see full-size color pictures
at our web site:

www.beinlich.org

Love,

Brian Sharon Mason

Brian, Sharon, Mason, Murray, Moxie, and Maizy Mae



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Dos Sequoias Gothic, circa 2006



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Happy Holidays from all of us at Dos Sequoias!