



HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM THE BEINLICHS! DECEMBER, 2008

Well, Mickey's little hand has made another 8,784 revolutions around the clock's face, and that means it's time for the next edition of the Beinlichs' annual holiday letter. Our year was just as full of activity as any other year, but it seems like it was concentrated into fewer areas.



Let's begin on our farm, where Sharon's gardening thumb seems to get greener every year. She planted six 100-foot rows this year: salad greens, beets, celeriac, broccoli, kale, basil, garlic, onions, potatoes, beans, peas, corn, squash, pumpkin, melons, plus the requisite tomatoes and chili peppers. As if that weren't enough, she also raised veggie starts for sale to our neighbors and friends.

The growing season was long this year, and some crops were particularly bountiful. Sharon netted 150 lbs of onions, 355 lbs. of potatoes and nearly that many



About 1/3 of the potato harvest

pounds of tomatoes. A late frost killed many cherry crops in Washington state. Our cherries not only survived, but bore prodigious amounts of fruit – over 500 lbs!



Cherry trees heavy with fruit



That's a lot of cherries!



Apples ready to press into cider

We also made an extra effort to make use of more of the wide variety the farm produces. Notably, we made horseradish sauce, pumpkin and apple butter, and apple cider. Brian also enlisted some local home brewers to help him make some yummy ales using our Cascade hops. The preserving and canning didn't stop until just a couple of days before Thanksgiving.

Steve and Mishelle Radtke, who run Abundant Harvest CSA from our farm, again had their extensive veggie crops here and at our neighbor's New Earth Farm. This was their third year with us.



Mason had a busy year this year, graduating from third grade and entering Montessori "upper elementary" in the fall as a fourth grader. Mason is excited to be in upper el, and loves his teacher, Greg. In May, he attended OMSI Science Camp at the Hancock Field Station in central Oregon. Brian went along as one of the chaperones. They both had a blast despite the unusually rainy (and muddy!) conditions. Our web site has many photos from the trip.



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In August, we had a “camp-out” party at our farm for Mason and several of his friends. Everyone had a great time; however, as fate would have it, we were awakened at 2AM by a summer thunderstorm, which temporarily sent the kids inside. We moved the tents into the barn, at which point the rain promptly stopped. It was quite the memorable experience for all of the kids!



Another thing that kept Mason busy this year was BASEBALL. Mason pitched and played several other positions for the North Plains Midget National team during spring ball. As if that weren't enough, he was back at it for fall ball, pitching for a Reedville Midget team. The great thing about fall ball was that Mason got to play a lot of different positions. It turns out that baseball also kept the rest of us very busy, too, as any sports parent

will tell you. Two practices a week plus games and tournaments add up to a lot of hours. Brian attended all of the practices and Sharon joined him for the games. And of course, there were the countless hours of pitching and batting practice in the back yard.



Agnes

Bernice

It was an eventful year in the four-legged-friend department. We acquired two goats (Agnes and Bernice), who help keep the north pasture mowed and provide entertainment for Steve's subscribers and our other visitors. Our Golden Retriever Maizy Mae (now two-and-a-half) is still very much a puppy, and we still have our cats Murray (the Great Orange Hunter) and Moxie (the invisible one). In

September a stray kitten found Sharon in the parking lot at one of Mason's baseball games. After we failed to locate his owner, “Mugwump” joined our animal clan. We had a big scare at the end of October when Murray went missing. We thought we would never see him again, but one rainy night two weeks later, he showed up on our front porch, loudly announcing his presence. Needless to say, we were all very happy to see each other!!



We managed to do some traveling and entertaining along the way, too. We hosted a Summer Solstice potluck for the Northwest Earth Institute in June, and spent a few days at the beach in August. Joining with two caterers, we hosted a dinner for ten as a fund raiser for Mason's school, Childpeace Montessori. September brought our annual Farm Party – a grand event that includes our friends and everyone associated with Abundant Harvest.



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Some things don't change a lot from year to year. Brian still mixes sound for Fez Fatale, who released their fourth CD, "Six Pack," this year. He still does web site development for his high-school friend Rob Duncan, who runs Airbase1.com. Brian has been the web developer for

The Airport Guide (www.the-airport-guide.com) for the past three years. Rob and his wife Andy visited us in September and took a very thrilled Mason for a ride in "Wanda," their Cessna 185. They flew over our farm, and Mason took some great photos.

Sharon still volunteers extensively for the Northwest Earth Institute, and helped to develop the curriculum for their "Menu for the Future" discussion course. She also puts in a lot of volunteer time at Mason's school. Here's a photo of her taking a break with Mason during her spring plant sale.



We've had an eventful December to close out our year. Sharon's mother Susie came to visit, staying with us for a week. While here, she also spent time with her son Michael, his wife Ouan, his son Sean and daughter Summer, and Summer's baby girl Jady, who turned 1 in July. She also visited Mason and Sean's school and went shopping and sightseeing with Sharon. We always enjoy Susie's visits!



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Last but not least, we've had snow and cold weather for the last ten days, which has brought over 14 inches of snow and ice – so far! That's a lot of snow for this part of the country! School was canceled most of last week, and travel has been difficult. As we write this letter, it is snowing once again, and we are reminded that winter is the time of year when Mother Nature prompts us to slow down and rest. We have taken her advice to heart, playing in the snow, sitting by the fire reading, crocheting, and just generally being lazy. What a fabulous way to end the year!



May this holiday season find you in a similarly relaxed and peaceful mood. We hope that you and your loved ones are healthy and content, and extend to you our wishes for happiness and success in the coming year.

See larger pictures at our web site:
www.beinlich.org

Our love to all!
along with Murray,

Brian, Sharon, and Mason
Moxie, Mugwump,

and Maizy Mae

