

Merry Christmas

And

Happy New Year



November 30, 2020

Well – hasn't it been a year! We hope that this finds all of you well and safe even if your Christmas plans this year are a bit "different" from the usual.

January to mid-March was pretty normal. Our calendar was full with Sheila going to events for two weaving guilds, a yoga class and an in-person meeting with the advisory committee for the sewer system. There were some regular in-person doctor and dentist appointments and even haircuts. In February we attended a series of Saturday lectures put on by the Elder College program about changes in the world caused by climate change.

We were not able to have Christmas with Scott and Charla and the kids so in the middle of January we went to Victoria – with a turkey for Charla to cook – and celebrated "Christmas II." Little did we know that we wouldn't be seeing them again this year! Towards the end of January we went to Nanaimo for a lunch to help Alex celebrate becoming a teenager! That was the last time we got to hug anybody.

Then came March. Weekly knitting group stopped. Monthly weaving and spinning meetings stopped. Doctor, dentist, haircuts, yoga – all cancelled. From the middle of March through May our calendar was just about empty. Sheila learned to use Zoom to "meet" with the weavers and knitters.

To celebrate Mother's Day and Sheila's and Heather's birthdays we met with Heather, Steve, Alex, Dan and Hilda and Bernie Mackey at a highway rest stop just south of Courtenay. We all took our own food and lawn chairs and only "air hugs" were allowed.

In June we gathered for Dan's 30th birthday at a beachside park near Qualicum Beach.

There is a good take-out food place there. By Father's Day things were opening up a bit, so we ventured all the way to Nanaimo for an outdoor lunch around the fire pit in Heather and Steve's back yard. By then Sheila was meeting with the knitters at outdoor locations, and had started weeding at the Anderton Garden where she has volunteered for several years. It was easy to stay six feet apart there.

June through August more things were open and we had much delayed haircuts, dental, doctor and optometrist appointments – most of them even in person! Toward the end of August Heather organized a family get together at the same beach where we met for Dan's birthday.

All this being at home meant that we've had lots of time for work around the house and our hobbies. In June we had a new patio door installed. Allan removed the baseboard heaters and their electrical control boxes all over the house that haven't been used since we got a heat pump five years ago. That led to a bunch of repainting and new baseboards, which still isn't quite finished. All three bedrooms now have one wall that is a different colour from the rest. He also makes most of our bread, and made tomato sauce, and fire roasted peppers and tomatoes for the freezer.



Sheila—September 2020

Lots of gardening was done – We had our own fresh asparagus this year, but the tomatoes didn't do very well and the raised bed/greenhouse has been dismantled and sold off. In the front yard the lilies were gorgeous.

Allan made a new cat scratching post, a small table with pennies under epoxy resin on top, a new cane, a wooden gear to raise and lower his seed starting table, finished the utility post to take water and power to the back of the yard, made a fancy bin to store potatoes in the cold room and has done several projects on his lathe, including some new pens.

Sheila has managed to knit three scarves, two small shawls, a vest and a hat and cowl set. She's also woven seven scarves, a fine threads gift and has just finished six place mats and matching napkins. She also sewed some pot holders (from handwoven fabric) and made a few masks.



Allan—September 2020

The biggest job of the year was that we had the fence between us and the neighbours on the east side of the house replaced. The people on the west side did a major re-do of their back yard which included putting in an above-ground pool, so they had a new fence built on that side which previously had only some loose page wire. That caused us to get looking at the aging wooden fence on the east side and the neighbours sharing it agreed that it needed to be redone. Luckily for us, the low bidder was already doing the pool fence so did both jobs together in August - otherwise we'd have had to wait until late September.

By September there were so few cases of the virus on Vancouver Island that things were almost getting back to normal. We went to a restaurant in Deep Bay to celebrate our 53rd anniversary. We were seated outside, but there was too much smoke from the fires in Oregon that day to enjoy the view. That was the only time we've been to a restaurant since early March.

Sheila even started attending a yoga class – spread six feet apart, but indoors and no masks. The weavers and knitters were still meeting outdoors. Then came October and the numbers started to go up. Sheila changed to a Zoom yoga class three weeks before the in-person one got shut down. When it got too cold to be outdoors the knitters tried meeting indoors a couple of times with masks on (we are almost all seniors) but also went back to Zoom about a week before we were told to stop gathering. We continue to shop for groceries at 8 AM when the stores are mostly empty and were wearing our masks wherever we go long before it was ordered.

Last year we reported that in November we had lost our beloved Puddy cat. We were going to wait until January to look for a companion for Shadow, but about a week before Christmas we found "Charlie" - a one year old female tuxedo cat - put up for adoption by a local rescue society. We didn't realize at the time just how feral and afraid of people she was. She spent most of her first two months with us hiding under our basement stairs. It was July before she first got up on Sheila's lap – which she now thinks is HER space much to Shadow's chagrin. But she still flees from loud noises and don't try to pick her up. She hates Sheila's noisy loom. But both cats now provide the hugs we can't share with our human family and friends.



Shadow & Charlie—October 2020

So far – fingers crossed - all of our kids and grandkids have been well. But it looks like Christmas will be "remote."

