

# Merry Christmas

December 5, 2022

Happy New Year 2023

As usual, the year has flown by.

I'm told that when you retire and all

your days are the same that time seems to go faster. Maybe the seconds

are just getting shorter. Last year we were looking forward to 2022 with trepidation due to the pandemic and weather. It really was better than 2021 here for both!

As with the past two years, we have mostly stayed close to home and still wear our masks when we go anywhere. We seldom eat out, but did visit restaurants for our birthdays and 55<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year.

Heather, Steve and Alex dropped in for a visit on Alex's 15<sup>th</sup> birthday in January. He is now over 6 ft tall! On Easter Sunday we gathered at Heather and Steve's house along with Dan and Janelle and Bernie Mackey. For Mother's day and Sheila's and Heather's birthdays we all met at a beach at Qualicum Beach. Father's day was at Heather and Steve's place again. Since then we've had one brief visit when Heather, Steve and Alex dropped in and Brad came by on Thanksgiving. We've still only had phone contact with Scott and Charla and the kids – they will be all grown up by the time we see them again!

We did one excursion out of town. In July we sadly lost our longtime friend Ard Caldwell in Kelowna. So August 31<sup>st</sup> we set off for Kelowna to attend a celebration of his life.

Although the event was for a sad reason, it was easy to smile at the stories of his life as told by his many friends. It was so good to see Jeanette and their children and grandchildren in person. We were also able to visit with friends Lyndsay and Martyn Topham and Lynn Honey before coming home. And we made it there and back without catching Covid!

We still spend lots of time on our hobbies. Allan works on his collection of Raspberry Pi computers that control or display several things around the house. In the workshop, he built a pizza peel, is learning leather work to make knife sheaths, made a spool rack for Sheila's weaving yarns, remade a stacked leather handle for an old hatchet and made one for a new knife, as well as an epoxy resin handle for another knife. On the side he has learned to make very good bagels!

Sheila as usual kept busy with knitting and weaving projects. She took two on-line weaving workshops, took part in a tea towel exchange, wove a silk shawl, a linen scarf and a cotton scarf. She also knitted a vest, one scarf, and a lace shawl. One of the two guilds she's in continued to hold regular Zoom meetings.

The local group started meeting in person again in April and she's been to a few spinning days at the hall where they meet.

She also managed to scan some old family slides so that they are available on the computer. She did yoga via Zoom until September when the class was canceled, and goes for a 45 minute walk when it's not too hot, raining or slippery.

From March to November there was yard work and gardening. Allan started cherry tomatoes and cucumbers indoors in March and it went on from there. We had a new small raised bed at the top of the slope by the side of the house where we grew lettuce and herbs. There were also tomatoes in big pots and cucumbers in flower beds around the house. Of course there were flower beds to weed and things blooming in the front yard from February to October! And MANY leaves to pick up in November which we finished just the day before our first snow Nov 29<sup>th</sup>.



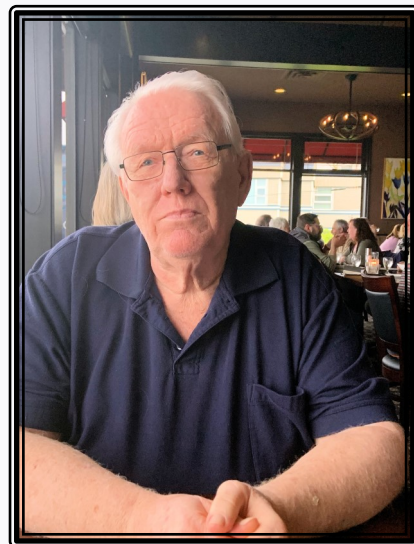
In the house Sheila has amaryllises and zygo cactuses that bloom in the fall and winter.

In April we had a contractor come in and extend the sidewalk at the side of the garage. We can now get from the front of the house to the back yard on pavers. In October they came back and made a crushed rock driveway where Sheila's truck has been parked for years.

Our weather was not as extreme as 2021 but still very dry. January through May were "damp" but below average. Then in mid-June it stopped raining. With the exception of one day of heavy rain on July 4<sup>th</sup>, from then to late October there was only 7.5 mm of rain! The whole island was listed as "extreme" drought which meant "extreme" forest fire danger. Although there were fewer forest fires this year we still held our breath until we got a little rain at the end of October. November has been wetter, but still below

normal. It does not bode well for next year if we don't have a wet winter. The two snow storms totaling about 13 inches of snow we've had in the past five days are welcome water, if a pain to remove from driveways and sidewalks.

We've managed to stay healthy. Sheila had her second cataract fixed just before Christmas last year, and by the end of March had new glasses. In July Allan visited a doctor in Campbell River who "excavated" a spot on his ear where he'd had a growth removed before and it didn't heal properly. This time it seems to be fixed. Otherwise we take our pills and mostly only have phone chats with our doctor. We're thankful to have a family doctor these days!



Our cats Shadow and Charlie are healthy and appreciate their human servants. Charlie is anti-social with anyone but us and Shadow would rather be an only cat. They still require their treats three times a day.

Best wishes to all for a happy and healthy 2023!

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