

# Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year in 2024

December 5, 2023

It was really tempting to copy last year's letter and say "ditto". Funny how being retired means that not much changes year to year. But that's a good thing because it means we are still here and healthy.

We still mostly stay close to home and wear masks when we go anywhere it might be crowded. We occasionally eat out, visiting restaurants for our birthdays and 56<sup>th</sup> anniversary and a few Friday lunches.

Our one excursion out of town this year was to Victoria in July to visit [Scott, Charla, Kallel and Xandrea](#) and celebrate Kallel's 15<sup>th</sup> and Xandrea's 11<sup>th</sup> birthdays. It was great to finally see them in person! Needless to say, the kids seemed very grown up from when we last saw them.

While there we also visited Fisherman's Wharf and took in the exhibits at the Royal BC Museum where we learned about ancient Cambodia, the dinosaurs of BC and a Tyrannosaurus Rex named Sue from south Dakota.

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. This year there is a [binary clock](#) and counter, and a camera that takes time lapse photos out the front window.

In the workshop he built a new stand to hold bird feeders on the back deck, some knife handles and leather sheaths to cover the blades, and a roll-around platform to make our "emergency" tubs easier to move. He sanded and re-stained the railing on the back deck and replaced the post at the front of the yard that holds our house number sign. This included turning knobs for the ends of the posts. Made a new feeder for fine bird seed. And removed the old wine rack from our cold room, put in some new shelves and a new smaller wine rack.

Sheila as usual kept busy with [knitting and weaving projects](#) and events of two guilds. She took another on-line weaving workshop – this one on double weave using many colours at once. She took part in a tea towel exchange, wove a wool and silk scarf, two cotton scarves made to "[collapse](#)" with elastic yarns, and two cotton baby blankets. She knitted three scarves and a small "neck warmer" and sweater for the toddler granddaughter of an old friend.

She also took on the job of replacing worn quilt patches on a quilt made by her mother in the 1960's and hand quilted by Allan's mother in the early 70's. Fortunately, Sheila's sister had saved patches to make a similar quilt and sent some so they could be sewn over the patches that had worn through with 30+ years of use. 17 patches were replaced. It is now in use on our

bed.





Sheila also weeded at the [Anderton community garden](#) again. It is always a pleasure to work there because there is something in bloom all season

From March to November there was yard work and gardening. Allan planted some cherry tomatoes in pots and cucumbers in the beds near the house. We have small, raised bed at the top of the slope by the side of the house where we grow lettuce and herbs and a larger bed for asparagus, garlic, peas, and some more lettuce. As usual there were flower beds to weed (and expand) and things blooming in the front yard from February to October! And MANY leaves to pick up in November.

In November we had a contractor come in and rebuild a corner of the [fence](#) so there is room to store new large garbage and recycle cans for automated pick up. Then another contractor came and put down [pavers](#) for them to sit on.

After having snow in November last year, we had very little for the rest of the winter. After the middle of May there was almost no rain until October. We were in the highest rating for five months. So much for living in a rain forest. Fortunately, the only forest fires on Vancouver Island were not close to us. Rainfall so far this fall has been about half of normal. We are hoping that next year will not be so dry.

Cats Shadow and Charlie are healthy and put up with each other and their human servants. Shadow had some expensive dental work done in the spring but seems to have forgiven us for taking him to the vet several times. They require treats more than three times a day now! Shadow greets all guests, hoping for treats. Charlie still hides.

Last December the weather was nasty at Christmas, so we stayed at home by ourselves for the day, then went to Heather and Steve's place on the 29th – which included a visit to see Dan and Janelle's house in the Cedar area. They had just moved in a week or so earlier.



Alex's birthday is January 15<sup>th</sup>, but he was busy with cadets that day so we just spoke on the phone. Allan made him a [sleeve board](#) to press his Cadet shirts, and a seam pressing board for sewing class at school. However, Sheila took a long time to get the sleeve board cover sewn on, so they ended up being delivered early in March.



Easter, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Thanksgiving, and birthdays were variously celebrated at Heather and Steve's, Bernie Mackey's, beside a beach, and in several restaurants. Alex has been learning to play the [bagpipes](#) with the Cadet's band so has piped us out a few times. Their dog Leon isn't sure what to make of this.

Best wishes to all for a happy and healthy 2024!

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