

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from our house to yours!

We had much to be thankful for in 2017.

Steve has enjoyed his teaching assignments at Tarrant County College. He has now completed the Fall semester in which he taught one section of Statistics and two of Contemporary Math. After the January break he is set to be back in the classroom again. TCC has six campuses (Steve teaches in Arlington, 21 miles east of us), and the the total enrollment for all campuses is over 100,000 -- they serve a large constituency.

We are thankful for our church. Since we moved to Fort Worth they have been so very welcoming, supportive, and caring -- not only toward Steve's parents who have been members there for over sixty years, but also to us, the "newbies" (although Steve was baptized and confirmed there, awhile back).

We continue to enjoy the church seniors group which sponsors monthly luncheons and table games, as well as occasional bus trips and outings to cultural events. Also we are in a home group that has blessed us in many ways, especially prayers. Steve has led a couple Bible studies there, and recently facilitated discussion of the book, "They Found the Secret," a collection of short biographies. It has been quite interesting to hear the testimonies of men and women in varied life situations and ministries who experienced a turning point of commitment in their walks with God. What each bio has in common is Christ's call to each to draw nearer to Him. This encourages us to do the same.

We are thankful that we've been able to stay in touch with friends in the Dallas area, usually when we're over that direction to visit Peggy. Although Peggy had some serious fluctuations in her health this year she is doing better now. She was very happy to have both her brothers (both US Air Force retired) come for a visit in early October.



We are grateful for a wonderful vacation. In June we drove to Colorado Springs for a Mission India conference, which was great -- great people and great news about what miracles God is doing in that land.

After that conference we were very blessed to be able to connect with several friends we hadn't seen in years, some living in the area and some who also happened to be vacationing there also. The weather was wonderful and the

scenery awesome! The picture is the view of Pike's Peak from the conference resort.

On the drive there we saw friends in Amarillo and on the way back to Fort Worth we did some sightseeing in West Texas. We visited the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum, the spectacular "Texas!" pageant in Palo Duro Canyon, Buddy Holly Museum in Lubbock, and the WASP (Women Airforce Service Pilots) Museum in Sweetwater. We definitely agree with the saying, "Texas is like a whole 'nother country."

Later in the summer we did another driving trip, this time to Houston. It was great to visit with long-time friends in that area, and we also had time to visit San Jacinto Battlefield, the Battleship *Texas*, and NASA's Space Center. It was fun, even though we had to pause for a rainstorm or two. Little did we know that two weeks later Hurricane Harvey would devastate

Houston... we are thankful that our family there, as well as our friends, came through OK. Our church here in Fort Worth was able to send trained Comfort Dogs soon after the storms, and later sent relief/rebuild teams -- which continue to be needed.

A highlight of the Fall was Steve's 45th-year high school reunion. Great to see long-time friends, and sad to remember the fifty who have already passed away.

We were also blessed by visits from long-time friends from Washington and Georgia.

There were also several blessings of live music: a Bluegrass festival; a Reformation celebration with an orchestra, several choruses, and the biggest organ in Texas; and a big band dance where a friend was playing his first gig with the band!

More gratitude: We praise God and thank Steve's sister, Susan, for the good changes which have come about since she offered to take Harry and Betsy (Steve's parents) into her home. His folks get better rest, and have a much more enriched environment (petting cats, watching birds, views of gardens and meadows outside, lots of artwork inside). The schedule is relaxed and TV use is rare. His parents eat healthier and interact better with caregivers and family. Although they require longer periods of sleep, during waking hours they are much more contented in outlook than at the nursing home. We are thankful for the home care which hospice provides, and also for our faithful church which sends care notes regularly and an elder who brings communion to them.

Of course there is a lot of planning, scheduling, and paperwork filing which keeps this happy situation going, and some weeks it is a full-time job for Steve, but it is certainly worth it to see them comfortable and at peace.

How did we get to this point with Harry and Betsy? We last reported in 2014 that they had moved to a retirement community and we had bought their house. They had a couple of good years in that independent living apartment, but Harry began to realize they needed more help. So they chose an assisted living apartment and moved in January of 2016. However, due to weakening health and memory issues, they were unable to make full use of the "assistance" that was available. This time last year, we were in a three month period that included eleven hospitalizations between them. (Hence, no Christmas letter from us.) At the end of one hospitalization, we were told that we needed to move Harry into a nursing home. Without Harry available, Betsy needed 24/7 care. When she understood that Harry was not coming back, she asked to go live with him at the nursing home. Unfortunately, the nursing home went from highly rated to the lowest possible rating (in less than six months), which led Susan to decide she could do better by moving them to her home.



Even in a wheelchair, Harry is still helping others

God bless you,
Steve and Nita

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