



Merry Christmas & Happy New Year from Jaye & Chuck

It's New Year's Eve Day. Outside it is snowing and I have no where to go. The world didn't end with the Mayan calendar so before 2012 quietly bows out the door I guess I'd better hurry up and get this year's version of our holiday letter done and down the internet to you. Sorry, those of you receiving this via the post office will have to wait a few more days!

2012 was a very interesting year for us. Let's see if I can consolidate it down in a few quick paragraphs. The winter weather was warm and dry (a trend that continued through the entire year!) In mid February we took a little trip out to Las Vegas - not really for my birthday, but we did get there in time for my birthday! Meeting us there were our dear friends from North Carolina, Fred and Debbie Miller. Fred and I served together on the National Association of County Agricultural Agents (NACAA) board several years ago and we've all become close friends from that time. The four of us hit the highlights of the area including, deserts, dams, pawn shops and tattoo parlors. No skin was pierced for this trip however!

The rest of the winter and spring seemed calm by comparison. An early May birding trip to eastern Kansas with our Kansas Ornithological Society friends was fun and then in early June there was a trip to Grand Rapids, MI for a three day meeting. After the meeting we went to northern Michigan to see the rare and endangered Kirtland's Warbler and then a stop in southern MI to see good friends Linda and John Kavan.

Then back to Kansas, a few days at 4-H Camp and then I (Chuck) started going through a series of medical tests. On going symptoms from late winter and through the spring resulted in a failed cardiac stress test, a heart catheterization and a blockage clearing stent the end of June. A close call and a wake up call to be mindful of your body and its little warning signs!

Twelve days after that little overnight hospital stay, we were back on the road headed to Charleston, SC for our NACAA annual meeting. A stop in Lexington to see good friends Kriss and Scott Johnson of course (to complete reconnecting with both of my Zue Brothers clan in the space of just 6 weeks!) and then on to Newton, NC to spend a few days, again, with Fred and Debbie before we all headed on to Charleston for the NACAA meetings.

South Carolina was fun but as the week drew to a close it was time to say goodbye to our North Carolina "family" and head home for the Geary County Fair. The fair was uneventful, but hot, and it seemed like nobody would let me do anything, which was okay with me! Once the fair was over I could finally start in on cardiac rehab. Twice a week for eleven weeks I spent an hour on various torture devices ("they" call them exercise machines) while hooked up to an EKG monitor. It was a good thing in the long run as it helped me start to get back into shape and helped me (and Jaye) realize that the heart was back to working like it is supposed to!

The rest of 2012, by comparison, was very calm. A record hot and dry summer gave way with a little bit of rain in August and September before turning off warm and dry again which is why this bit of snow on December 31st is so welcome!

We make regular trips up to Omaha to check up on Chuck's mom, Ardell, who turned 95 just after Thanksgiving. She is still enjoying the retirement home in Omaha. Jaye's mom, Bernice is still on the farm where she enjoys watching sports on television (especially Kansas State or Kansas City teams) and the ongoing fun with the birds in her yard and birdfeeders.

Jaye is still with Central National Bank and I'm finishing up my 31st year at the Geary County Extension Office (that seems unreal!) We're still in the same house we moved to in 1986, so address, phone numbers and email addresses haven't changed and I find this comforting!

2013 is going to bring another trip to Vegas to celebrate an unmentionable birthday for Chuck's sister Ann. Joining us, again, will be the Miller's from North Carolina (do you notice a trend here?). The Millers and the Ottes will also be meeting up in Pittsburgh, PA in September for the NACAA annual meeting which is always a wonderful gathering! And in between who knows what other trips may follow, but hopefully none to the hospital!

So as 2012 and this letter draw to a close, enjoy a few photos from our year. The one at the top of the letter was from a meal, with the Miller's of course, from Dunleavy's Pub on Sullivan's Island, SC - great crab burger by the way. The rest of the photos are either from Las Vegas in February or South Carolina in July.

So as we head into the new year, may your journey be memorable, show tolerance and coexistence, and I hope our paths cross somewhere soon!
All our love - Jaye and Chuck!



Jaye and the Angel Tree in South Carolina



Chuck and Fred at the beach on Sullivan's Island, SC



Jaye, Fred and Debbie at Hoover Dam



The waterfront, downtown Charleston.