



Merry, Merry Christmas!

and a

Happy New Year!

to one and all.

Christmas is (already?) upon us yet again. Each of us is about whatever activities we, or our families, associate with the celebration - caroling, shopping, baking, decorating. And the merchants rejoice - or at least cross their fingers. The sobering fact is that many of them will survive or fail on sales of the Christmas season. That's quite something - people who, some of them, may be somewhat indifferent about Christ are dependent for their livelihoods upon the celebration of His birthday.

Well, He IS the reason for the season. Having compassion on a race of men who couldn't even forego the fruit of ONE particular tree advertised by a snake (be honest, you and I would have done the same), He humbled Himself to be the Father's gift to us as Savior. He lived with us as true man, died on a cross to pay for our sins as we could not, and rose again. God so LOVED that He GAVE. The Father gave the Son, the Son gave His life. The gifts we give (that sustain an economy as a side effect) are a pale reflection of His gift. We wanted our greetings to reflect the One Whose season this is.

Our news, such as it is:

Anne has now passed the 5-year mark since her last cancer treatment. Her oncologist has said that he's cautiously optimistic, even though he related at her last visit that, earlier in her treatment, he'd thought a recurrence likely. We're thankful for good news, but are reminded that this isn't heaven and isn't our home. And, looking at the news, we're thankful that it's not.

Larry was expecting cataract surgery in his right eye, but, although the cataract imposes a yellow tinge, he continues (so far) to measure 20-20 corrected in that eye and 20-40 to 20-30 corrected in the left (the eye with the retinal swelling, which imposes distortion) - even not having injections for the last 6 months or so. We are not disappointed in missing the injections or the surgery. He remains at Heartland, and still plays his horn when he can.

Our most "interesting" news seems to be house stuff.

- We put in a new water heater in February,
- removed a 43-foot dead tree in August,
- had the house re-roofed (thanks to a March (?) hailstorm) in October,
- replaced our tired deck with a patio in November, and
- started December with the installation of a new heat pump.

Some of this was expensive. A bit of consumer info we can share:

- We live in an all-electric neighborhood - don't do that.
- The new water heater is a GE Geospring heat-pump hybrid unit. Don't buy one.
- The new heat pump is a Daikin 2-stage unit, replacing the previous Goodman unit at only 6 years. The price was maybe half of what it would otherwise have been, owing to a conscientious position taken by All Systems here in Allen. They get a thumbs-up, and so does the unit, with 12 years parts-and-labor.

Other than that, we continue Boring. You are not, though, and we'd love to hear from you, as always.

Our love,