

Christmas 2009



Jenny in Las Vegas

Jenny loved her job with Virtual CFO ... until she was laid off in mid-year. vCFO reorganized so that the people who sat in meetings in the headquarters now will do real work with the clients, and the people who were working with the clients are out. She quickly found some private clients that have kept her busy – she has no benefits like health insurance, but charges enough to cover the costs, so no real pain in the process except to the ego. She is working all that she wants to work, and spends a lot of her spare time quilting and other sewing.

Charlie continued building furniture, but as he says, his business plan does not include working hard. His backlog of paying customers extends a couple months – he is now quoting February to prospects. Work often includes entertainment centers and dressers. He built a saddle stand about 5 years ago, and hadn't even had any inquiries, until this year when he has sold about a dozen – go figure.

Despite swearing to never do it again, he did enter a piece in this year's Texas Furniture Makers show. As expected, the judges didn't like it (Charlie likes to build with the sophistication that customers like to pay for, rather than the far more expensive level that only judges appreciate). But as several furniture makers commented, he won the ultimate prize... his "quilter's end table" was purchased at the show, and Jenny is enjoying the prototype.



Quilter's End Table



Stacey and Mark - newlyweds

In March Jenny and Charlie went to Dallas for a traditional celebration with Mark... Charlie's birthday falls between Mark's birthday and adoption day. His girlfriend Stacey was sporting a diamond... they had gone out to dinner a few days earlier on Mark's birthday, the third anniversary of their first date, and he proposed. We are thrilled! The birthday party quickly was recast as an engagement party! And on July 11, (Mark says they chose 7/11 so he could remember) they were married in the "Little Church of the West" in Las Vegas.

Suddenly Mark has an almost 16 year old "daughter" Chelsea who is very active in high school. To allow her to continue in the same school district, they decided to move. With a detailed battle plan including modest improvements (like paint and new tile floors), his house was sold in weeks – many houses in his neighborhood have been on the market for a year or more. They found a great new house 45 minutes away, and finally negotiated an acceptable price. With a lot of preliminary work, a PODS unit, and our help, everything was moved to the new house less than 24 hours after their closings – sale and purchase on the same day.

Jenny and Charlie went to Riga, Latvia in September. Why Riga? Charlie's father was born there, and lived in Latvia for many years (a graduate of the Latvian naval academy and an officer in the Latvian navy). There are no known relatives there, and family homes are long gone through the war and occupation. But Jenny has been anxious to visit Latvia since we were married in 1970, and Charlie is always delighted to see new places. It was a great trip, and lots of pictures and stories are on the web at www.plesums.com/Latvia. Jenny is already planning the next trip – to Prague.

At the end of April we made the annual pilgrimage to visit Jenny's family in Minnesota, Iowa, and Wisconsin, and to attend the Berkshire Hathaway Annual meeting. You only have to own one of the cheap "B" shares (not the \$100,000+ "A" shares that everyone talks about), to get tickets to join 30,000 of your closest friends being entertained for a couple days by Warren Buffett.

Other trips included Philadelphia in March for nephew Robert Ott's wedding, Cambridge Minnesota in July for niece Kelsey Ott's wedding, and back to Philadelphia in November to help good friend Fr. Austin celebrate his 50th anniversary as a priest, and visit John and Louise as they leave Philadelphia to move to Iowa. And most important to Jenny, she finally achieved "Gold" status flying American Airlines.

We wish you health and happiness this Christmas season and pray that you have a very Happy New Year.



Charlie in Latvia

Jenny and Charlie