Christmas 2011

Jenny continues to be happily self employed, working as controller or CFO of multiple smaller companies. One of her clients keeps starting new businesses, taking most of her time, so Jenny is working with multiple companies, but primarily one boss. Overall, she has all the work she wants, and more. Between client projects she remains an avid quilter and seamstress (and traveler).

Charlie continued building furniture, with a large backlog of work – for example one item that a customer wanted for a Christmas present this year will become a mother's day gift. Saddle stands have become a family joke… he built one 5 years ago, then none for several years. Then in 2010 he sold 12. This year he already built 6, and then in the week after Thanksgiving got a total of 9 more orders for Christmas! He was already fully committed for December and beyond, but 8 of the customers will take delivery of their stands after Christmas.

The Cherry writing table lost in the fire

Many of you probably heard of the Bastrop wildfires that destroyed 1,440 homes about 30 miles from here. One of the homes included a writing table he had built. He got an order for a replacement, currently in the shop, but feels sad about the lost table – sort of like there should be a memorial for it.

Chelsea – high kick champion

Our son Mark continues to work as a database administrator for Ignite Technologies in Frisco (suburban Dallas). His wife Stacey continues as Director of Business Travel (sales) for the Dallas Intercontinental Hotel (despite the impact on business travel from the recession). Their daughter, our granddaughter Chelsea, is a senior at South Garland High School, and is high-kick champion of their Southern Belles Dance Team.

Travel is always a big part of our life, and Jenny strives to keep her passport from collecting dust.

In May we took our niece Jackie Ott to Germany. Jackie is scary bright, graduated from high school in 3 years, and in her second year of college, already her junior year, wanted to do a semester in Germany. She had never traveled abroad, so we decided to give her an intense dose of customs and immigration, foreign currency, ATMs, shopping, and other preparations for her trip January through May 2012. A travelogue of that trip, with pictures, is at www.plesums.com/travel/germany including pages on driving the autobahn at a slow 120 mph, and the furniture at the Goethe home in Frankfurt.

In August we flew to Buffalo and drove on to Warsaw for Charlie's 50th high school class reunion. We had a great time, despite all the other people there being so old. We got to "meet" our nephews' kids – on the left are Tim and Caren, with their kids Quinn and Logan, on the right are Tracy and Shelly, and their kids Carissa and Jacob. From Warsaw we drove to Pittsburgh, and had a great visit with Karen Waterman Teaman (finally met her husband), and got to see her mother, Louise Waterman, who kept Charlie fed and loved through college. We then flew from Pittsburgh back to Austin

The Plesums of Warsaw

Jenny and Charlie in Germany

For years Jenny wanted to visit Rome, but the death of pope John Paul II skyrocketed interest in Rome, which is another way of saying, no cheap airfares nor inexpensive hotel rooms. Finally this fall she arranged a trip to Rome, Florence, and Venice. Despite the October schedule, much of Italy was crowded – far different than when Charlie was there on a business trip 25 years ago. The Italy travelogue is at www.plesums.com/travel/italy

And most important, Jenny maintained her "gold" status with American Airlines for another year.

Shortly after we got back from Italy, we took our annual pilgrimage to Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Iowa, to visit Jenny's family. We drove almost 3,200 miles in 10 days, and got 39.9 miles per gallon of diesel fuel in our used Mercedes.

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

Jenny and Charlie