



Happy Winter Solstice, Friends and Family. May the coming year be our best yet!

The most newsworthy event of the past year is that Ted and Andrea have bought land in Brattleboro (half an hour away) to build on and have put their house in Tucson on the market.

One once used to hear the phrase “aging gracefully.” I never really understood what that meant, but assumed it had something to do with staying in good enough health to become an elder respected for wisdom and judgment or sinking quietly and uncomplainingly into uselessness. I’m here to tell you that where sinking quietly and uncomplainingly is concerned, Eddie and I’ve become increasingly awkward customers.

Civic responsibilities: Our last letter went out before I was awakened last December 12 by a 5 a.m. phone call from the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency asking me, as Chair of the Warwick Selectboard, to declare a state of emergency in the town so work to cope with a massive ice storm that had brought down electric and telephone lines throughout the state and in most of the town could get under way. (“State of Emergency” also has budgetary implications: We were able to get reimbursement for much of the round-the-clock Highway Department work during the emergency and clean-up work afterward.) For most of the following five days, we had phone service (and a hard-wired phone) but no electricity, so I became the *de facto* communications hub for townspeople, conferencing with engineers from Verizon and National Grid and checking on and reporting service status for households both here and just across the town line in Northfield. I’ve never felt so useful in my life!

The town-wide broadband service we have been awaiting so impatiently went public the first of June; what a difference it makes in our lives! Still no reliable cell phone service, though.

In mid-June, other members of the Warwick Historical Society persuaded Eddie to become the Curator of their collection, which had been uncatalogued and badly (if at all) conserved for decades, to the point that some owners of historically valuable documents had been unwilling to donate them to the Society. As could be expected, Eddie didn’t do things by halves; after consulting with a UMass conservator, he set up an online database to make information about holdings accessible on the Internet. He has so inspired other members that until the weather made working in the unheated building impossible, teams were working on data entry and improved display on nearly a daily basis. We (the Selectboard) also persuaded him to let us appoint him to the Historical Commission.

The Town Website, www.warwickma.org, of which Eddie is Webmaster received over 360,000 hits this year!

Mel did her triennial jury duty in May, and agreed to serve on the local Cultural Council, which allocates lottery funds to projects related to the arts. She has joined the local book group, whose other members enjoy her cogent comments and analysis.

Health—Eddie: By early January, all was back to normal (“for a given value of normal,” as Ted would say) after the ice storm, and Eddie felt up to starting *tai chi* classes in the Town Hall and short walks outside, both with Mel, who has also resumed swimming at the Best Western in Keene. He has now worked back up to three miles a day, although he has to be careful to eat before he sets out to keep from draining his energy reserves.

Soon after my return from Oklahoma in January, Eddie had his cataracts replaced with distance-vision lenses. He now needs glasses only for reading, but having worn them pretty much all his life, it’s hard for him to remember to leave them in his pocket when he’s not reading. At one point, Signe got him a pair of window-pane glasses so he could feel like he was wearing glasses without putting himself in danger of tripping over his own feet. 😊

He has been diagnosed with COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease). His doctor says he’ll just have to live with it, but it means he tires easily from lack of oxygen.

I will not expand on the fact that I have breast cancer; if you want to know more, you can read more than anybody could possibly want to at <http://www.fugue.com/~plemon/cancer.html>.

Travel and Visits: Mid-January, I took the train to D.C. for a visit with Signe and Paul and flew on to Tulsa for a month’s visit. It was good to find everyone in Claremore doing well, including J.J., about whom I had been worrying. David and the boys were excitedly getting blueberry plants into the newly cleared sheep pen.

Over Columbus Day Weekend, I took the Vermonter to NYC, where I met Signe and Paul and we all went to the spectacular wedding of my student Su-Kyeong and visited with others of my students who are friends of hers. Paul’s sister Karen came in from Westport for part of the weekend, as well. I then drove back with Paul and Signe to Herndon and flew to Oklahoma briefly to oversee the repairs to the Parish House roof.

As usual, Eddie went to the NMH reunion in June. NOT as usual, his former student, Nancy Huston, brought her twins by on their way from Frankfurt to New Jersey, and a couple of weeks later, his cousin, Brian, was here for a visit, this time with his wife, Gillian, both doing very well. Signe and Ted have been here several times this past year as have Kate and Mike and her mother, Mary.

We think of you often and wonder how your lives are going. Please let us know.

Love,