

"We can blame it on the electricity being out for a week", I said to Mo when it became obvious we weren't going to be anywhere near ready to get Christmas cards out "on time" this year. That did send me back to high school days, where I recall a teacher reminding me that an unplanned diversion on the night before a month-long assignment was due was not a particularly good excuse for not having any of it done.

2007 was a year of milestones - the passing of my Uncle Clifford Henry Smedley in March, a family gathering at Mt. Rainier for sister Pam's 60th birthday in July, a 50th Wedding Anniversary celebration for my Aunt Nita and Uncle Dick also in July, the retirement of my long-ago chemistry research advisor from Western Washington University in the fall. In August, the first grandchild to Mo's dear friend Sandy was born, followed just one short month later by the end of Sandy's long battle with cancer.

The McGuire family got together numerous times during the year, often centered around a feast of one kind or another at Our Lady of Good Help in Hoquiam. The Smedley cousins enjoyed a rare reunion in June where we had fun looking at old photographs from Cliff's extensive collection. Brother Stephen joined us for a weekend "sibling vacation" to visit Pam in Spokane, where we got a chance to meet most of the family of Pam's significant other, Greg.



In early December, a windstorm - the likes of which haven't been seen here in at least 50 years - bashed its way through Grays Harbor. We lost about a dozen trees on our property, although thankfully none of them came over on the house. Power was out at the house for eight days - we made good use of our generator and pellet stove to stay warm! The aftermath of this storm was unprecedented - all of the BPA feeders into Grays Harbor were knocked out, leaving the entire Western half of the county (including all of Aberdeen and Hoquiam) completely dark for more than two days.

This is more fun than a barrel o' monkeys!

Our biggest home activity was a logging operation in August. We hauled out seven truckloads of logs from trees removed to "daylight" the area around the house. It was all a big adventure for me - I rented an excavator to yard the logs and help clean up the enormous mess left behind. Any time I can have a few pieces of machinery running and smell the sweet odor of diesel exhaust, I'm a pretty happy camper. I marveled at the skill and experience displayed by our hired cutter to drop the big trees down in a precise pattern (away from the house!). The lengthy cleanup proved to be a terrific weight loss program for me, although I wouldn't recommend it as the easiest alternative.





In mid-December, we traveled to San Antonio with Mo's sister Kathy to see nephew Jason who was recently relocated there by the Air Force. We got to meet his new dog Argos, and spend a little time on the Riverwalk with its dazzling Christmas lights. The last time we were in San Antonio, it was well over 100 degrees and we ducked into every air conditioned shop we could find to take a break from the heat. This time, it was a respectable 50-60 degrees, which felt just fine to me although it was on the cold side for the natives. Mo agreed to fly on this trip which saved quite a bit of time, but flying is no substitute for a good train trip!

We spent the year getting to know the "new dog" Jacy, who came to live with us last November. She's a great companion for us, although she doesn't care to be left behind at the kennel - which has changed our vacation strategy a bit. Mo and I marked our 32nd anniversary this year. Those of you who have been married that long should be able to appreciate the value of having a compliant dog around as a go-between: "Jacy, go tell your Mom we're going to be late again unless she hurries up" "Jacy, do you think your Dad doesn't know how to put his clothes away at night?" - all of these "conversations" taking place, of course, well within earshot of the intended audience. We're not sure that Jacy fully understands the importance of her role as a conduit for human communication.



Mom and Dad are settling into their new home at Emerald Heights, and we've enjoyed having family gatherings there - with no food preparation or mess to clean up afterwards! Stephen, Mo and I took Mom and Dad to see the fantastic Zoolights display at Tacoma's Pt. Defiance Zoo after our Thanksgiving dinner.



But wait....there's bigger news! Mo's braces came off in October!



By the time this gets printed and mailed, we will have already turned the page to 2008, so ... Happy New Year!