

Merry Christmas, 2015

Dear friends and family members,

We're a few weeks slow this year and have stories to tell. So this letter is going to start with Christmas. Maurie had to work on Christmas day so Deanna, Michael, and both dogs brought Christmas to her in southern California by hooking up Button, our 1970 Airstream trailer, and setting up camp near her place. Linda graciously included the three of us for the Christmas festivities at her home.



Bear, Maurie, and Mattie sending you smiles for Christmas.

Deanna started her new job at U.C. San Francisco as a Case Manager in the hematology/oncology/bone-marrow-transplant unit. She already knew some of the people over there from her old job at Sutter Infusion Pharmacy but now she can get across the Bay and across The City all on public transportation.

We're sad to say that we lost our sweet kitty, Luv Dove. She had cancer treatment in February and was doing fairly well for a few months so we had that extra time with her. We even took her to Linda's in southern California post-op to keep an eye on her during our annual birthday visit. We backed Button right into her driveway (yup, dogs and all as always) and added spice to Linda's life (which is already never dull).



Bear, Maurie, Mattie, and Button.

Last year, we gave Maurie a GoPro and it has seen some interesting use. Bear used it on a walk we took around the neighborhood so we got to see the street from a dog's-eye-view. Bear is up to about 80 pounds now and is taller than Mattie (who is at 90 pounds). Both dogs keep a close eye on Maurie to make sure she doesn't get away; they love their girl.

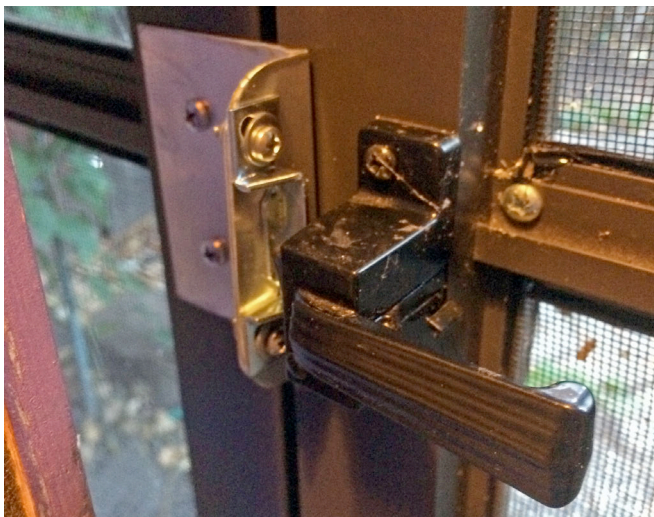


Irwin Court as Bear sees it.

We are working on some improvements on the Little House which is this little cottage in our back yard. It gets a little better every year. We did the roof and fence a year ago. This year, Deanna refinished the French doors and Michael provided gigabit Ethernet to the place.



Fresh paint and some fresh window putty.



New screen doors and some home-made hardware.

We decided that the floors downstairs in the main house should have had more coats and thicker coats of varnish when we put them in many years ago. So we fixed that. What that means is we moved all the stuff off the floor and into the garage and camped out upstairs for a week. The dogs looked pretty funny with their little socks so as not to scratch the varnish before it set.



Before and after

We had quite the family reunion during the summer. The first half was in and around San Francisco. Many stayed in a fun hotel south of Coit Tower. We hiked Muir Woods and dined in Tiburon.



Michael, Deanna, Evann, Anna, Jon, Natalea, Kaylynn, Thom, Susan, Larry, Janie, Wayne, Howie, Linda, Kathy, Tina, Thom, Tom, Jacqui, Bob, Natasha, Sheafe, Peggy

The second half was in Yosemite Valley. We had good views, good food, good peaceful time, good adventuresome time and not enough time ever with Anna and Evann before they went back to France.



Some of the gang at Glacier Point. The dogs were popular with Evann.

Mike and his field partner Jim Moore did some more fieldwork in the northern Sierra as part of the mapping we do at the U.S. Geological Survey. We were sampling waters at sites used by Native Americans over the millennia for salt production. We don't have our analyses back yet but we are looking at isotope ratios to address ages and sources.



Jim at one of the sampling sites

Maurie is in her second year of graduate school at Calif. State Univ. Northridge (CSUN). Her program for a Masters of Social Work (MSW) is three years so she's half way there now. She has schoolwork, internships, a job, and still has a busy life besides all that. We'll be running down to visit again, dogs and all, around Valentines Day.

Deanna finished crocheting one baby blanket for Teddy and is working on another for Oliver. She also made one for Maurie's old roomie Casey. Keepin' busy.

If you've been to dinner at our house, we thank you for not mentioning how uncomfortable the seats are on the dining chairs. But we didn't like 'em either. So Deanna found some nice new fabric and Michael leaned how to do upholstery.



New fabric and a million staples

A little woodwork and a pro shop for new caning added to the adventure

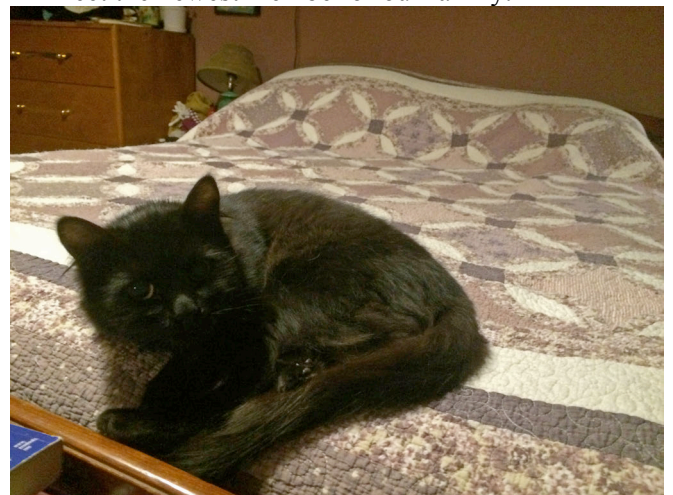


big and little clamps



Mattie has a soft place also

Meet the newest member of our family.



Mocha

Have a wonderful and safe Christmas and New Year,
-Michael, Deanna, and Maurie
-Lilly, Mocha, YoYo, Lola, Mattie, and Bear