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Morganville, NJ 07751-2622  
17 December 2012

2012 Seasons Greetings from Suzanne and Rod:

The end of 2012 finds us now both eligible to retire according to the US Government, having reached our full retirement age by Social Security standards. Neither of us feels that Uncle Sam is particularly bright in this respect, but for opposite reasons. Rod feels it's about time his retirement was recognized and Suzanne has no interest in admitting it might be time for passing that particular milestone. She is still pursuing her business interests, even if the graphic design portion has slowed down a bit.

Hiking in England was once again on the vacation agenda - another back-to-back pair of weeks arranged by Footpath Holidays. Although we signed up for both weeks with groups, the first week in the Derbyshire Dales didn't attract enough hikers for a group tour, so we tried a "self-guided tour". Rod dug deep into his Boy Scout gear and pulled out his compass, which along with topographic maps and directions from the tour company, was sufficient to keep the pair of us on track as we hiked across various parts of the Peak District by ourselves. Suzanne decided it wasn't such a bad thing to rely on his directional skills because it gave her all the time she wanted to stop along the way for pictures without the pressure of trying to keep up with a group. The second week was a more traditional guided tour, this one along the Thames in the area around Oxford. Extraordinary rain had raised water levels so that some paths were flooded and all were pretty sloppy. Pictures on Rod's web site for those who might be interested.

We continue to ride our bicycles, even getting in a few hours of exercise during the warmer parts of the winter of 2012, but only on the local rail trail. That didn't preclude getting a record (for us) number of flat tires, all on Rod's bike. Once Rod started watching more carefully as Suzanne rode ahead of him, the flat tires stopped occurring. She proclaims her innocence, but Rod has noticed that many little sharp pieces of wire were being produced during the jewelry making process. It's not all nice little round beads. Draw your own conclusions.

Spring fever hit at the end of May when Suzanne and a friend decided to hit the bright lights of NYC for a play, *Stomp*. When they arrived at the theater for the special matinee performance Suzanne arranged online when buying her tickets they discovered the theater hadn't really scheduled an extra performance just for them and they would have to wait for the evening performance and sit with all the other people. Bummer. When Rod picked them up after midnight at the Matawan train station they were still happily banging on cars, claiming it was just their attempt at emulating the percussion of the play. Rod got them into the car before they were arrested for disturbing the 'pease.'

After that episode, it was off to the funny farm for them. Actually an event held at a summer "camp" on Lake George in NY for a couple of days. High class accommodations, good food, interesting people, and a chance to improve their comedic skills - what more could one want in a short getaway?

Suzanne told Rod in September that she was going to an eerie women's group, which Rod thought particularly appropriate until he learned that she really meant Erie, PA and the Democratic Women of Erie, and it was only long enough to give a speech there supporting Democratic policies from a business woman's perspective. She managed to combine that trip with a visit with cousins that she had not seen in 50 years, since her childhood in the Pittsburgh area. Rod is hoping she sticks to speeches and doesn't decide to run for political office.

Early October found us both on a road trip to Louisville, KY, the venue for this year's NAWBO Conference. The Saint James Court Art Show is held there each year and it was scheduled for the same week as the NAWBO event. Suzanne applied and got a booth there to show her jewelry, so the car was loaded with all the components of an outdoor booth for the 3 day event, a tent, 3 tables, many rocks, and a tiny amount of room for Rod and clothing. Rod was allowed to participate in the tent setup and chauffeur duties, as long as he promised not to hang around and scare potential customers. With several days on his own to explore downtown Louisville, he can now point out spots for obtaining BBQ, Mexican and Ethiopian cuisine within walking distance of the hotel.

As part of her continuing effort to introduce some culture to her spouse, Suzanne found a local theater which was putting on a play with a Science Fiction theme that she thought he might like. The theater in Red Bank is beautiful, easy access by car, and a Saturday afternoon a good time. What could be better? Rod agrees, and tickets are obtained, perhaps without careful consideration of the name of the performance, which was "No Place To Go". Truth in advertising. It was so bad that Rod

had trouble not laughing, and when Rod can tell that the singing is bad, nothing more need be said. Suzanne's cultural improvement project was set back at least a decade.

Late October brought an unwelcome visitor named Sandy to NJ. Having left Louisiana many years ago, we thought that hurricanes would be less of an issue here on the Jersey Shore, but like many others, we were mistaken. There was plenty of warning and 7 Harbor Road is well inland, no harbor nearby regardless of the name, so at 100 feet above sea level we were not worried about the predicted storm surge. Wind and rain were our concerns, and we were lucky on both counts. A friend from a lower area came over before the storm hit and after we lost power early in the afternoon on Monday, we sat around in front of the picture window after dark and watched the transformer bursts light up the sky for our evening entertainment. We lost a single old apple tree that was damaged by rot and due for removal anyway, down without hitting any structures. The major inconvenience for us was the lack of power, which didn't return until Friday afternoon. We were very lucky to have had little rain both before and during the event, so that the lack of power for a sump pump in a leaky basement wasn't an issue. We were a bit cold, but a backup natural gas stove in the basement and a slowly thawing chest freezer meant that we ate well by candle light and headlamps. Many of the others in the area closer to the coastline were not nearly as lucky.

Rod had barely got the apple tree cut up before a nor'easter was due the following week, where we repeated the process from Sandy. This time the power was out for less than a day, but with a measured 10.5 inches of snow here in Marlboro NJ, we lost several big limbs from the remaining apple. After the storm, Rod played lumberjack on a ladder trying (successfully) to remove a large limb without having it fall and knock the ladder out from under him. Probably not the best activity for a 65 year old. Just because you are eligible for Medicare doesn't mean you should actively work on getting the benefits, or at least that's what Suzanne says. He did get points for having had a tree service in July remove a Mulberry that was next to the house and leaning toward it. That could have been a much bigger problem when Sandy arrived. Rod isn't sure which hurt most, writing the check in July or handling the saw in November.

2012 was the last year of Suzanne's chairmanship of the local chamber of commerce. Among her other duties was a hunt for replacement staff for the chamber after the primary staff member announced her retirement effective January 1, 2013. Next year should reduce the almost daily trips to the office in Freehold and significantly extend the life of her car.

Keeping in touch electronically increased, with Suzanne's purchase of a new smart phone with a bigger screen. The claim was that it would be easier to show off her jewelry to potential customers and take credit cards on her phone, thus solely a sound business decision. Observation however shows that more activity comes from "Words With Friends", with audio reminders breaking the silence at all hours of the day and night. She is increasing her vocabulary, and apparently getting to use some of the words she would not ordinarily use in polite conversation. Apparently some of the words are unacceptable if voiced, but if there is a chance of using them for a triple word score it's perfectly OK. Rod now is the sole Luddite member of the immediate family without a smart phone.

We wish you a happy and prosperous 2013.

Suzanne and Rod

web pages:

Rod's personal home page at [www.rodpease.com](http://www.rodpease.com)

Suzanne's jewelry home page at [www.suzannepease.com](http://www.suzannepease.com)

Suzanne's graphic design home page at [www.ampersandgraphics.com](http://www.ampersandgraphics.com)

Kevin's business home page at [www.ceruleanstimuli.com](http://www.ceruleanstimuli.com) or [www.cerulean.st](http://www.cerulean.st)

email:

Rod's email: [rodpease@rodpease.com](mailto:rodpease@rodpease.com)

Suzanne's email: [spease@ampersandgraphics.com](mailto:spease@ampersandgraphics.com)

Kevin's email: [kwpease@comcast.net](mailto:kwpease@comcast.net)