

ELSEGOOD MOUNTAIN NEWSLETTER

2011

So as 2011 comes to a close it is time to reflect on what was a hard year both financially and work wise.

With the temperatures now dropping into the 20's and snow having fallen a couple of times the long days of summer seem so far off.

Last winter again produced heavy snowfalls and kept us indoors, except for trying to track animals and shoveling our way out to the truck.

Screechy (our owl) made its residence in the eaves of the porch and kept down the pollution of mice, voles and other critters. He left about Easter for an outside residence and was not seen again until he arrived back to his old lodgings on the porch where he has again settled down and made home for the winter.

Linda was scheduled for cataract surgery on both eyes in Morganton in early January, but because of the harsh winter the first surgery was postponed until late February. We decided to stay overnight before the surgery as a precaution against breakdown or bad weather and to ensure a good nights rest. The road down the mountain at Spruce Pine is a difficult drive in daylight with many vehicles having accidents. We were very impressed with

the eye hospital that ran like clockwork. With the first operation out of the way Linda could not drive and we pushed to get the second eye done as she could not be fitted for glasses and the vision was totally different in both eyes. We had the second operation in early March and followed the same routine. Linda commented shortly after the operation about the color difference without cataracts. A few more visits to the optician and surgeon and Linda got her new trifocal glasses.



We had our annual visit from Ken and Sylvia when she had finished her tour of duty in Bermuda. Their plans included buying an Airstream and travelling for a few months before settling back down in Canada. The weather was wonderful so we managed to eat out on the front porch for breakfast and relax in the swing and enjoy the games room.

We managed a trip to Roaring Fork Falls and the parkway.

We always seem to have the oddest things happen to us... the coyotes killed most of our rabbits last winter, but one morning I looked out and there was a calico rabbit.... After rubbing my eyes I called for Linda to come see. Two days later it was happily eating the grain out of a cup held in my hand. Ken and Sylvia were here to see this event. But, sorry to say one night she ventured too

far from the cabin and was caught by either the Red tail Hawk or Coyotes.



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On another occasion I looked out of the front to see a big mother bear being followed by her 4 cubs coming up our driveway. We eased outside and watch them; she was giving instructions to her cubs on where to get food, showing them the hanging bird feeder etc.



We were being very quiet when she sensed something and the cubs darted up the tree directly in front of us. I had my camera but I had just taken the memory card out to upload the earlier pictures, so I missed the National Geographic photo of 4 cubs hanging onto a black walnut tree. We stayed frozen in our tracks so she would not sense us, then she finally called them and they went on their way around the cabin at a slow rambling pace.

The agency in Boone kept me busy throughout the year until August when two clients went in-house. I always remember working for the Bank of Butterfield in Bermuda in three different time frames. They would form an in-house agency, then sack the lot as it became too expensive, and hire us again until the next change of management when the new kid on the block thought it would be good to have an in-house agency...

One of the highlights of the year was our show for the art guild "Route 80... Back to our North

Carolina Routes". Linda and I spent many days traveling along Route 80, exploring and taking photographs to help our guild members realize the amount of incredible scenery and interesting buildings and history pertaining to that route.

With 32 participating artists from the guild we had 103 paintings, about 20 boards of history that Linda researched and 2 huge maps of the Route 80 north and south to show

where the locations that the paintings were rendered. We worked on the show for about a year and it was a huge success. In fact so much so that our new Library in Burnsville wants a scaled down version to exhibit in February and March.



We again worked the Mount Mitchell Fair selling water for the Chamber of Commerce. Then after our two-hour stint we managed to join in the festivities and take in the booths and entertainment. The weather was just right and the crowd was enjoying the day.

In late September we were part of the Old Timey Fall Festival, helping to get all the tents set up in the numbered positions around the square and then squeezing fresh lemons and selling lemonade from the booth. The antique cars and tractors circled the square twice before parking for the avid enthusiasts to inspect. I took about 200 to 300 photographs of



the event and put them on my website www.imagesofnorthcarolina.com.

We are on the committee for next year's event that plans to be even better activity. (If that is possible). Linda won membership to the Yancey Historic Society for one year that enables us to use their library and also tour the McElroy House Museum, a pre civil war home with fascinating relics and photographs.

A sad note, we lost a good friend this year, Ben Dowis who ran the store up the road where everyone would take their lawn equipment to be serviced. He also was instrumental in forming the Pensacola Service League, a monthly gathering of folk around here who meet for breakfast and to provide funds to help people in need in our community. Linda and I were able to help on two projects during the year, helping refurbish a home and also help with a food and clothing bank for a small mining town in West Virginia.

Linda and Wendell Chapman again paid us a visit from Texas and Linda and Linda talked of school days, lost friends, reunions and life back in the day.

Laura and her friend Ron came for Thanksgiving... as always a trip to Grandfather Mountain was a must and a trip to the top of Mount Mitchell that was interesting... in the clouds with freezing fog and a wind chill that was leaving ice on the trees. Once we came out of the clouds it was a really

pleasant sunny day so at least the drive was good. Grandfather Mountain the following day with a cloudless sky. The views from the top were breathtaking as the clarity meant you could see forever (well). We saw all the animals and of course ended up in the fudge shop.



Septembers' first weekend brought us the Blue Ridge Relay again. We set up in total darkness at Toodies Creek on

the 197 South with our tent, table, clock, lantern and flashlights and orange cone at just after 4am to receive the first runners through our checkpoint. With Linda as the spotter and me as the Timekeeper it was a busy job, especially when we had groups

of runners of 4 to 6 at a time. First runners through looked so fresh as they changed batons at our checkpoint at about 5:15am. After that the other 124 teams, support staff in their vans came through. Last runners through at 11:30am and by then we were ex-

hausted. When the results were in the leading team ran the 206 miles in 20 hours and 23 minutes I believe.

Our truck is a 2007 Dodge Dakota and has given us a few unusual problems this year. Although our mileage is under 30,000 our warranties ran out on the 3-year anniversary.

Firstly we had a wheel problem that turned out to be a bad tire, the battery we got changed out as the life was low on that, the turn signals decided they would go whichever way they wanted, indicating left and



the right blinker would go on or visa versa or sometimes no at all. This apparently is a problem that Dodge hasn't told people about and the part is on back order due in any day. Meanwhile a noise that started with a squeak, and then turned to a thump we were assured it was not life threatening so we did nothing over Thanksgiving. On the Friday after Thanksgiving we were on our travels with Laura and Ron and the noise turned into a nasty thump when going around curves and over bumps. I repeatedly kept saying, "I don't like that"... I got cautioned for the amount of times I said it by Linda. On the Monday morning I had to go into town and took the river road which has no hills and mild curves. After doing the chores and thinking to myself "I don't like that"... I pulled into our dealership. Luckily they were not busy and took it out for a test drive... he only needed to go around the yard one before it was up on the hydraulic platform . I heard part of the conversation between the mechanics and definitely didn't like the words "it's broken". Well the front endlinks and bushings needed replacing and it was my lucky day.... They had



two in stock and could fix the problem immediately.... Out came the credit card again with a sucking noise and another \$200 was invested in our safety. I think that we were fortunate to have made it back down Grandfather Mountain and home without an accident or a total breakdown.

Our last volunteer duty for the year was the Chamber of Commerce Santa Claus Parade in town where we were marshals controlling the floats and getting them into their positions for the parade. We had 30 of the entrants in our section. It was an afternoon affair this year so the crowds were larger than previous. Fire Engines, Scouts, Beauty Queens, Schools, Shops, Charity organizations including the Yancey Animal Shelter all took part with Santa on a trailer pulled by a tractor at the rear. The kids all scrambled for the candies that were thrown out from the floats. Seems like a good time was had by all.

Linda and I have made a few items that are displayed down at the country



store now run by Judy Dowis who is an excellent upholsterer. The birdhouses, trays and paintings Linda made and the Redneck Reindeers (Randolf, Rudolf and Gandolf) I have perfected are on display and selling quite well.

Well we hope you all have a good Christmas and that 2012 will be a little less stressful for us all.

John and Linda Elsegood

