

The Anderson Epistle

Dec 2024

The signs have been accumulating. Shorter darker days, we've been splashing through several atmospheric rivers, survived a bomb cyclone, the leaves have fallen from our apple and pear trees, and finally the unmistakable sign: The calendar has changed to December 23rd. and we can procrastinate no longer! It is time to send greetings to friends and family via our yearly Christmas letter and to declare that there are still signs of life at 605 Peregrine Lane, Oak Harbor, Whidbey Island, WA.

This year has been a bittersweet one as we have lost close friends who are deeply missed. It has been hard to say goodbye. However, their services of remembrance provided times to gather with friends and reflect on just how much the departed friends enriched our lives. The services were also reminders to cherish friends and family while we can. We continue to welcome times to socialize with remaining friends here on Whidbey on a regular basis even while missing the individuals who are gone or who are too sick to join us.

We are still enjoying our subscriptions to the Seattle Symphony and Seattle Rep Theater which often bring us to Seattle. Visits with our daughter Katherine, her husband Bill and grandkids Lise 9, and Emil 6, are always an excellent reason to take us into the city too. They live a very busy life as Lise and Emil are both in different soccer teams, Emil plays on a T-ball team while Lise is taking piano and guitar lessons. Add onto those busy schedules, Katherine and Bill's work responsibilities, play dates, birthday parties, sleepovers and the occasional request from Katherine and Bill for us to babysit. We notice pace of their life compared to the quiet life we live here on Whidbey...where we retreat to recharge.

Terry is still working as a software consultant half-time, and Jan stays active with her gardening tasks that seem never ending. But help from a great high school student has meant that Jan and her stiff complaining muscles creaking with aches and pains, can keep going for a bit longer. Terry disagrees, thinking it's time to recognize the obvious signs from a protesting body and cut back on gardening. Perhaps it's because Terry is getting less enthusiastic about redoing the watering system every time a new plant arrives, or about hauling all those bags of compost and bark chips down the steep hillside that is our back yard. Jan's goal is to finish a landscape that provides blooms all summer while also looking interesting in winter. And... How can one resist all those beautiful new plants that feed an irresistible addiction to "just one more?" She has declared the fern garden

complete, so perhaps she will meet the rest of her landscape goals soon??

Most of our Christmas letters have involved sharing news of travels, but this year we have decided to share the joys of living on Whidbey. It is a place of unmatched physical beauty that we have only to glance out of any window in our house to experience. We have the waterscape of Dugualla Bay in the foreground with the mountains displaying Mt. Baker in the background. Every time we come home from off island, we cross Deception Pass on the iconic bridge that signals welcome home in dramatic fashion. We have wildlife that surrounds us everywhere. Eagles soar past our house, osprey nest in the bay within view as every summer we witness the hatching and growth of a new batch of chicks. Deer, to the dismay of Jan (they eat plants not intended to be food!!) tuck their fawns in among her garden plants. We can always tell when the apples are ripening as the bucks start hanging around under the trees hoping for windfalls. Families of quail parade around our yard. Bunnies make regular visits to eat dandelion blossoms when they are in bloom. We know when blackberries are ripe by the purple bird droppings under our bird feeder.

In summer we have several music festivals on the island including classical, folk and jazz. Arts and crafts shows display the talents of individuals that call this island home. Our weekends are spent attending as many of these as possible. After skipping two years because of covid, we are back attending the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. This last summer, the festival showed signs of recovery from the ravages of covid and heavy smoke from severe fires in the region. It was wonderful seeing a vibrant season!

There is nothing quite like summer on Whidbey. There is no (almost no) rain June through September, and we have glorious sunny days that linger past 9pm.

Temperatures are generally in the 70s with no humidity. Mother Nature gives us plenty of time to explore neighboring islands via ferry, picnic on beaches, in parks, or to just beach walk, listening to the sound of ocean waves and sea gulls.

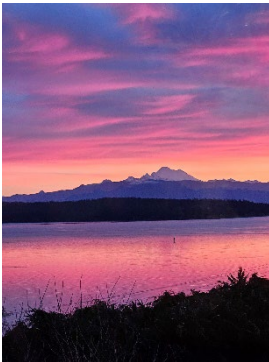
This summer we were treated to two amazing displays of northern lights! The first very colorful display was captured by Terry using the night photo app on his cell phone (see the picture looking up into the center of the display with streaks creating a huge dome effect falling down in a 360-degree pattern).

But paradise is not always perfect, in the fall we experienced nearly three weeks without hot water. A crew running a new electric cable under a street above us, totally severed the 40+ year old main water line in our area (some kind of fabric – not metal, clay or ceramic). That was fixed in only a day, but then we had to shut off our water while they flushed all the lines in our entire development (2 days), but then it got air bubbles in the line which blocked

some sections (another 2-3 days) and then we had water. Of course we had to shut off the water heater during much of this but still it seemed to have, in some way, damaged the control board in the water heater (a couple of days for our dealer to diagnose), and the part had been discontinued. Then they found that the newer part was backward compatible but out-of-stock at the distributor. Our dealer called all over the US and located one on the East coast but it took a week to arrive. In the meantime we took cold showers (after the water was back on) and finally a neighbor with hot water took pity and us allowed to take a warm shower; we almost rented a motel room just to take a shower.

In the winter, as mentioned earlier, our weekends are kept full of symphony and theater performances. A very special performance this Christmas will be the Nutcracker ballet with Katherine's family and Bill's parents on the 24th. A great way to start Christmas!!

Hopefully, the pictures we have attached to this letter will show glimpses of what we so enjoy.



View from our deck



Deception Pass
Bridge



An eagle flew by



Fauns in our garden



Spring tulip fields



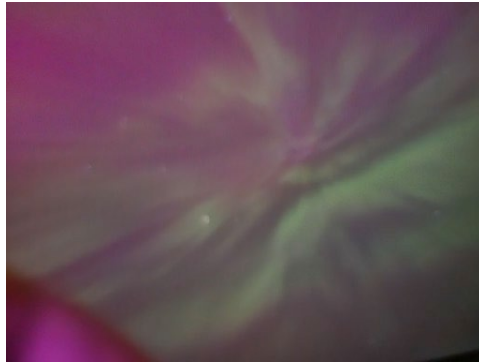
4th of July



Picnic with friends



Aurora Nov 10 from our deck



Aurora looking straight up



Backyard in winter



Ready for Christmas



Just us



A reflection rainbow from out deck



A double rainbow from our deck.

Because it's impossible for words to include all that Whidbey offers, or to show in a few pictures, we invite everyone to come visit us and experience this wonderful island that we call home. Consider this an official invitation. Hope to see you soon!

Season's Greeting from Terry and Jan