

## 12/2020 Holiday Survival Update

Unusual times, aren't they? We are living through the century's pandemic, those of us lucky enough to avoid or survive it, and the sky turns orange from forest fires. We feel exceptionally lucky or blessed having children bent on keeping us alive, and doing all they can to ensure it. That and an air purifier.

We may be among the few who consider it a blessing to be spending more time with kids and grandkids, given the economic and social struggles descending on so many. We don't even know anyone around here who has contracted the disease. Moreover, at our advanced age we know a bit more about patience, about the "This, too, shall pass" philosophy, so though we lack a social life, there is much about life to enjoy, especially each other. We all might be grateful that the virus was no more contagious nor lethal than it could have been. As in Ebola.

Dave has been able to substitute conference calls for hour-long trips to and from the East Bay. I counsel via phone (I don't really like what I see of myself on Zoom). I do an increasing number (8-9) of ballet and point classes on Zoom, which works surprisingly well. My instructors never miss a thing. And core strengthening classes. We don't do Jazzercise on Zoom because the music is disappointing, but we're looking forward to returning to Jazz in-person classes, because that was a significant part of our social life. Dave and I also walk the neighborhood frequently, and have "backyard beer" over the fence with the neighbor. We found an app that computes our place in the vaccine line in our county. We have 500,000+ ahead of us. But that's ok. What could be better than waiting with each other.

There was no ballet recital last spring, but as many of you know, I danced in the Waltz of the Flowers for an online production of the Nutcracker. Most rehearsals were on Zoom, a few in a grassy park, and the filming was done on the Fleishhacker estate in Woodside, masked and socially distanced, and I saw it as the experience of a lifetime. It's usually an audience-participation event, but it needed to be different this year. It even included some SFBallet principals who otherwise had no dance opportunities this year.

We made four trips to the mountain cabin this year to help Sal and Stacy rebuild the deck, and pretty nearly rebuild the cabin. Thanks to jacking it up, the doors open. The smoke was thick, but the visits pleasant in that few others were in the mountains. It must have been hard for businesses that rely on summer visitors to survive the year. But it was a wonderful opportunity to share time with these interesting kids, especially since they usually work such long hours now, and time would be lost quarantining if we went to San Diego, as we often do for the holidays.

Our cottage is mostly landscaped. Our kids put in a summer garden, and what was a culinary gift that was! We're enjoying two kinds of persimmons and avocados now. The gopher wars continue. Thanks to Dave's many conference calls he doesn't have time to set traps, so the gophers are winning. Owl boxes (Barn and Screech) are in the planning stages, and will join a hummingbird feeder and a seed feeder. Perhaps the best news of all is that Dave is finally able to walk almost as well with his new knees as the old. We may actually have a backpack trip next summer. And the prostate cancer seems to be in remission! Talk about blessings!

Now we need to focus on climate change which is great for growing avocados, but not if water disappears, and we all have to move to Northern Canada. I hope the Canadians are more receptive to immigrants than we have been. But let's not go there. Let us assure you that we love and miss you.

Judy and Dave



Judy getting apricots ready for drying. Our crops are getting smaller each year, but we still have enough to last the year.



A small zucchini from Jeff's garden (or is that a baby in disguise?)





The deck that Stacy and Sal built at our cabin. One of a number of projects that they accomplished in only 3 ½ weeks, while enduring smoke from wildfires and multiple trips to Sonora for supplies, to rent and return a cement mixer, and take debris to the dump. Oh, to be young again! Judy and I, as well as the dogs, supervised.

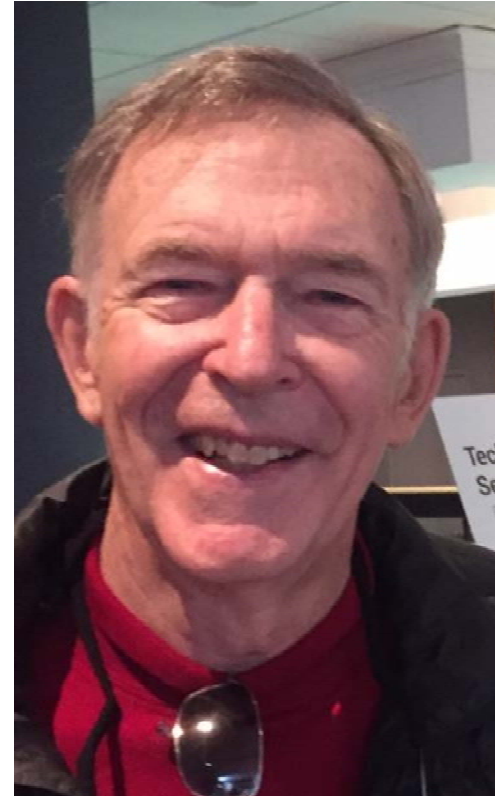


To be more precise, I supervised while Judy joined in the fun (installing insulation here).





Judy insisted on having a picture of me in this newsletter. Notice my smile?



Finally found one (picture and smile) (pre-covid).



Planting a garden last Spring



Summer treats on the patio





Christmas cookie decorating!



The day before Christmas—  
stories in bed