



## Happy Holidays, 2009!

*(From Chuck's point of view subject to final editorial approved by Jaye.)*

It's Christmas Day! As I sit at my desk and put pen to paper, okay, fingers to computer keyboard, there is a blizzard winding down outside, so we truly are having a white Christmas. The birds are flocking in to the feeders and they adorn the trees like so many yellow, gray, red and blue ornaments. I'm just glad that we didn't have big travel plans this Christmas!

*(Photo by Bob Gress)*

2009 has been a much different year than the past four. My days on the board of the National Association of County Agricultural Agents (NACAA) behind me, it was quite nice to not be traveling so much and home has looked pretty good!

In January, Jaye and I, along with five other Kansas birdwatchers, headed to Panama to escape the Kansas winter weather and to see lots of truly amazing birds. The guide and company that we used was exceptional, the scenery and birds amazing, the weather was warm (hot), but wonderful in January, and we developed bonds with our trip mates that will stay with us forever. The above photo is from our third day in Panama - yes, it really is a jungle out there! We got to travel on part of the Panama Canal (a.k.a. "The Big Ditch") and found it to be truly amazing. But for those who merely take a cruise ship through the canal, you don't get to experience the real Panama until you travel the country from one end to the other. We were in the western end of the country, near Costa Rica, in the Chiriqui highlands, actually birding in coffee plantations. And then we were to the eastern end of the country, just 31 miles from Columbia, spending a couple of days in an Embera native village in the Darien region, sleeping under mosquito netting and even spending one night in the rainforest in tents! A lengthy story and links to more photos can be found on our webpage: <http://chuckandjaye.com/> just click on Birding Trips and then Panama, but specifically it is at, <http://chuckandjaye.com/Panama.htm> Thanks to trip mates Kevin Groeneweg (KG) and Bob Gress (BG) for sharing some of their wonderful photos, and making it possible for Jaye and I to be in the same photos!

Our return to Kansas soon turned into sadness as Jaye's father, Dan Dundon, passed away in early February. He had been in a care facility for about five months, but the last few weeks his condition deteriorated rapidly until he was finally released from his suffering. Jaye's Mom is doing well and keeping busy. We have been helping her do some upkeep and maintenance on her house that had been put off for the past several years.

To be right honest, the rest of the year has been fairly calm. We spent a week in late September in Portland, Oregon for my NACAA annual meeting. This was a great time to reconnect with good friends and spend some time on the Oregon coast, one of our favorite areas to visit and bird.

Our work situations are stable, thank goodness. Jaye is still at Central National Bank and I'm still the Geary County Extension Agent and neither one of us have any plans to make any changes in the near future!

Chuck's parents, Ted and Ardell, are still comfortable in their retirement community, Rolling Hills Ranch, in Omaha. We are just thankful that at age 92, they are still with us and living fairly independently, though Mom does admit to enjoying letting them do the cooking. She decided not to send out Christmas cards this year, so if you have historically received a card from them, don't worry about not receiving one this year, they are still doing well. Oh, and in "other family news", Chuck's oldest brother Fred got married in December. Fred's wife Helen passed away several years ago, but he has been blessed

with a new companion and we are pleased to welcome Gina into the family!

Just in case you may have missed any updates, our home email is [otte2@cox.net](mailto:otte2@cox.net), Jaye's work email is [jayeo@centralnational.com](mailto:jayeo@centralnational.com) and Chuck's work email is [cotte@ksu.edu](mailto:cotte@ksu.edu). Email is often the most efficient way of getting in touch with us. Our home phone is still: 785-238-8800, Jaye's cell phone, is 785-223-1534 and Chuck's is 785-223-1403. I try to get periodic updates to our web page and I already gave you that address when I was talking about our Panama trip.

We look forward to 2010 not even knowing what to expect! Our NACAA annual meeting will be fairly close by in Tulsa, OK. (And then in 2011, Kansas will be hosting this big event in Overland Park - Kansas City suburb). We will celebrate our 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary in September and have toyed with the idea of taking a trip someplace, but details are far from firm, so stay tuned!

In closing, I've included a few photos from 2009 and here's wishing all of you a very special holiday season and a great 2010!

All our love - Chuck and Jaye



Mt. St. Helens in background



Jaye at Haystack Rock, Oregon



In Panama at "the village" (KG)



Getting "tattooed" like the locals (KG)



Siesta time (BG)



Watching hummingbirds



Jaye at Portland Rose Garden