



Merry Christmas & Happy New Year from Jaye & Chuck

As I sit here and write this, it's the winter solstice. There's a layer of white on the ground from a recent snowfall. Never mind the fact that just three days ago the thermometer hit 61 degrees! But another year has come and gone far too quickly and a lot has happened in the past year.

We are still doing well. Still live in the same house with the same address (613 Tamerisk Dr, Junction City, KS 66441), same phone number (785-238-8800), and the same email address (otte2@cox.net). I included those just in case you may have forgotten or misplaced any of that critical info. Chuck is still the County Extension Agent, getting ready for his 30th anniversary of starting that "3 to 4 year" job - unbelievable! Jaye is still at Central National Bank, however they are getting ready to close her small branch on the south side of Junction City. She will be moving to one of the newer branches on Highway 77 not very far from where we live. Jaye has now been with the bank for 10 years.

Jaye's Mom still lives on the farm north of town and is blessed with good health. We spend a lot of time there and enjoy helping take care of the house, yard and small orchard and garden, knowing that some day we will be there permanently. And yes, Jaye and her mother still enjoy Bingo on Friday nights!

In March, Chuck's parents, Ted & Ardell, celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary! We all planned a big open house at the retirement community where they live in Omaha. Many friends and family came for the weekend and we had fun catching up on the past 20 years or so. For all of those of you that came, thank you for making it a special event!

In early July Ted had a very bad stroke and passed away on July 12th at the age of 94. We all felt very blessed to have had him in fairly good health that long and thank God for the mercy in taking him quickly in the end. Ardell is still at the retirement community in Omaha and, like the rest of the family, is adjusting to life without Ted. Just a few weeks after Ted's passing, his older sister Sybil also passed away, marking the end of that generation. Sybil was laid to rest three weeks after Ted and just a few feet away in the Arborville Cemetery. Thank you to all who were present during this time as we celebrated the long lives of these two wonderful people.

In between the two funerals, we were in Overland Park, Kansas (Kansas City metro area), where the Kansas Association of County Agricultural Agents hosted the National Association of County Agricultural Agents at their annual meeting. It was a big undertaking that was four years in the process. Chuck literally transitioned off the national board and into a major role in planning for this national meeting. But four years of planning and a wonderful support crew of Kansas agents, spouses and Extension folks made for an excellent event that went off without a hitch.

After all of this, we decided that we had earned, and needed, a little bit of a break. So in mid-September, just in time for our 26th anniversary, we headed to Colorado. We love Colorado and the mountains, and of course the bird watching. We set up an itinerary that simply had hotel reservations and no other real plans other than to relax, visit with family and friends, go birdwatching and anything else that just happened along!

We spent a couple of days in Colorado Spring with Chuck's cousins Johnny and Ardyce Putnam. This is the second year in a row that we've spent several days with them and we always have a delightful time. From there it was up into the mountains and a few days at a small resort in Almont (near Gunnison), where we could spend time with dear friends Mike and Cheryl Christian who were spending the summer as camp hosts for a forest service campground. The photo at the start of the letter was taken at Mirror Lake. A rough road to get there, but certainly worth it! From Almont we spent a couple of days in Gunnison and a couple of days in Idaho Springs before we headed home. A very relaxing and enjoyable vacation to end the summer!

As 2011 heads towards a close, we find ourselves looking forward to a new, and hopefully less busy 2012. Pending trips to Las Vegas and Charleston, SC are on the horizon and who knows where else. So you'd better be on your toes because you don't know where we'll show up next!

Here's wishing all of you a very Merry Christmas and a glorious 2012!
Love - Jaye and Chuck (*please enjoy some photos from our Colorado vacation!*)

