

Christmas 2007



Jenny - Santa Monica beach

Charlie was describing Jenny's job to a visitor... "She is assigned to a number of small companies as their controller (the primary financial staff member) – often companies just starting, that don't yet need somebody full time. She typically fills that role for 4-5 companies at a time, and if the company grows to need her half time or more, she helps them find their own staff member rather than contracting for her services." OK, it seemed innocent enough – nice variety of work, changing environment, growing companies, but Jenny bristled. As she went through the list of her current assignments, she had 9 companies, not 4 or 5! When she joined "Virtual CFO," it was supposed to be a part-time job. HA! Of course Charlie appreciates

that, as a full-time employee of Virtual CFO she has group health insurance, and can cover Charlie as a dependent. (She sure likes saying that!)

Charlie continues to enjoy furniture making. Projects for the family keep being pushed off, (again and again, as Jenny reminds Charlie) and paying customers now have to expect a 2-3 month backlog. See his work at www.plesums.com/wood. He doesn't earn enough to have supported the family, but he does pay for the machine and tool addiction, and it does impact our income taxes! Many woodworkers (and other artisans) have expressed envy that he is able to do what he really likes doing, and also get paid for it, so he is building a new web site www.solowoodworker.com to help other craftsmen and hobbyists get started. He has also tried to stay up to date on some computer technology, and CSC occasionally calls on him for short projects, but happily that has been less than 10% of a full-time position.



Charlie in Budapest



Mark spent most of the year as the Database Administrator for a mortgage company based in Dallas. He was a large part of the computing team, so had lots of "on call" time, and few colleagues to share ideas and explore new technologies. He was recently offered a job working in a larger group (including a couple people he had worked with before), that will get him involved in new technologies, as well as being far closer to home, so he will be changing jobs just before Christmas.

Mark has been dating a lady named Stacey for over a year – we are quite delighted with both her and her 13 year old daughter Chelsea – we hope to meet her family at Christmas.



Tipper 2007

Mark's wonderful 8 year old Rottweiler, Tipper, was diagnosed with bone cancer, and sadly had to be put down in November.

Travel included Jenny visiting her sister Mary in Santa Monica in March, a weekend trip for both of us in early May to hear Warren Buffet (the oracle of Omaha) in the three day Berkshire Hathaway Annual Meeting, also (appropriately) known as Woodstock for capitalists. Later in May we spent a couple days on the Texas coast with Jenny's brother Jim and his family. In July we went to Las Vegas for AWFS, a giant international woodworking show. We enjoyed an August weekend at a wedding in New Orleans. Jenny traveled to quilting shows in Dallas and Houston with her sewing buddies. She also made a weekend trip to Minnesota to visit her mother after some surgery, and to honor her first wedding anniversary (on her 84th birthday – her younger husband is only 83). Longtime friends Wilton Bunch and his wife Vicki Dvonch spent several days with us over Thanksgiving.

The trip that gets the pictures was a brief trip to Budapest in October. Why Budapest? You have to ask? Don't you know Jenny? Three criterion for a great trip. 1. Cheap tickets, 2. Requires a passport, 3. We haven't been there recently. She might add details about the good exchange rate (they are joining the European Union, but have not yet converted to the Euro), and may ramble on about seeing countries that were behind the iron curtain before they change too much. Yawn – focus on the cheap tickets and passport. It was a delightful trip with lots of details and pictures available on the internet at www.plesums.com/family/budapest .



Jenny's entire potato harvest

After years of digging up patches of the yard, and planting seeds to no avail, we agreed that we would stop trying to grow food. If we had to grow our own food, it would be easier to starve to death. But Jenny found a potato that had sprouted in the back of a drawer, and couldn't just throw it out. She planted it in a giant flower pot, and tended it all summer. As the tops withered, we harvested her crop of 26 potatoes (at first we thought it was 29, but three of them turned out to be acorns buried by the squirrels). Total weight of the crop was 11 ounces. We spread the bountiful harvest over two meals!

For her birthday a few years ago Jenny got a computerized sewing machine that also did embroidery. We won't say she wore it out, but it did get a LOT of use. The sewing store was having a BIG sale. We didn't realize that the machine Jenny had was merely the entry level. And you can get a machine where your laptop computer is an accessory to the sewing machine (not the other way around). You can also get a serger, a mysterious machine that specializes in sewing and trimming the edge of fabric, but uses up to 8 spools of thread and 5 needles at the same time. She got both, as a birthday present, 37th wedding anniversary present, and Christmas present, combined. We have almost figured how to thread the serger.

Charlie turns 65 early next year. Boy is that complex. Sign up for Medicare 3-6 months in advance. Do you want supplementary insurance coverage plans A through Z? Pick the wrong combination and it can cancel your health insurance (on Jenny's policy) or can cancel the government coverage. We are getting a couple letters per day promising doom and poverty if you don't choose the insurance plan they recommend. He claims he isn't smart enough to handle this! But there is a good side... he also got a letter from one of his past employers saying he **must** start taking his retirement pay ... it seems like enough to live on – or at least pay for the Medicare supplement insurance plans being proposed. Charlie is sure sainthood is assured for those who have survived the government process of turning 65, or helped someone through the process.

We wish you peace and joy this Christmas season and hope you have a very Happy New Year.

Jenny and Charlie