



Christmas Season 2004 -- Happy Holidays!

Hard as it is to believe, another year has passed, and a new year is almost upon us. Time sure goes quickly when you are retired! As we look back over 2004, we remember many happy times with friends and family. Not much has changed. Dick is still golfing, Barbara is still painting, and we both are still birding although we are no longer actively involved with our local Audubon chapter.

We started the year with a trip to Arizona, which included a golfing outing in Tucson. We stopped to see Pam & Paul in Goodyear, spent a lovely time with family in Phoenix, visited a few days with Jerry & Betty in Tucson, got some great raptor photos at the Desert Museum, golfed and partied with friends at the Westin La Paloma, and then went by the Salton Sea to do some birding on our way home.

In April, we traveled to Europe for a Mediterranean Cruise with a number of friends. Our Tours took us to Lisbon, Jerez, Seville, Granada, Aix en Provence, Cote de Azure, Genoa, Florence, Rome, Palma de Mallorca and Barcelona. If that sounds like a lot to see in nine days, it was! We were exhausted by the time we got home and Dick swears he will never do Europe again, but we saw a lot and had some great times. Also, we loved both Lisbon and Barcelona, where we spent a few days on either end of the trip.

In June, we rented a house on Mission Bay in San Diego, and had some real quality time with children and grandchildren, as most everyone came to stay with us for some time during the week. It was really relaxing to be near the water for all that time, looking out over beautiful scenery with nothing to do but enjoy ourselves.

July saw us on our yearly trek to Pine Mountain Club with our birding friends. That is another great time we always enjoy with beautiful scenery and no worries. We always eat very well and have at least one wine tasting and this trip was no exception. July also saw a visit from Jerry and Betty in their new 42 foot motor home. Jerry and Dick didn't come home with many winnings in the Mackie tournament like they did last year, but it was fun, anyway.

In August, we took an interesting trip up to Northern California. We had purchased a 3-day Redding Hilton golf resort package at a charity auction, and decided to make a grand tour going up and back. Our first stop was to see Barbara's cousins, who had moved near Roseville. It was a great reunion, since we hadn't seen each other for twelve years. We talked night and day catching up and remembering old times growing up. From there, on our way to Redding, we stopped at all the birding locations we had read about. We did an overnight in Oroville where we saw some very interesting combat fishing for salmon at the Feather River. We drove through Lassen National Park the next morning and enjoyed some breathtaking scenery. On our way back, we stopped at Clear Lake and discovered still another Wine Country in Lake County. The next morning we did a few more wineries in Calistoga before heading down to Tres Pinos to spend a few days with Jeff and Daniel Modic (Susan and Kate had just left for their girls' time out vacation). A few more wineries on the way home topped the trip off perfectly.

After that it was pretty quiet until November when we did another trip to Arizona, where we stopped to visit John and Nora in their new home and went on to spend Thanksgiving with the family. And then next week we are heading out to Hawaii for a few weeks. We will first do Kauai and try to find a few birds for our life-list and then will join Jerry and Betty in Maui. We'll be home just in time for Christmas and our yearly Village Country Club New Year's party.

Well, you can see why the year went so quickly for us. It seemed we were always on the go and even the quiet times were filled with dinners, theater, painting lessons, birding excursions, shopping, country club board meetings, country club web page development, wine tastings, golfing and the like. Barbara tried one more time to conquer that elusive game of golf without success--maybe next year. And Dick is still taking care of his baby bluebirds each Spring. This year he fledged 143 babies between the country club and the Sanford vineyards. Altogether it was a very good year, indeed. And, by the way, Barbara has, of course, put our pictures albums up on the web to share. If you are interested, you will find these at <http://willeyweb.com/family/albums>. And please write to us at willey@willeyweb.com if you are online.

We wish the very best to all of you for the holiday season and a very happy new year.

With Lots of love,

Dick and Barbara Willey