



Merry Christmas 2005!

We are grateful for all our blessings, especially in this year which has brought so much devastation around the world. We remember nostalgically the wonderful Christmas we spent in New Orleans with our friends Pam & Paul, and hope that it is possible to restore peace and happiness to that part of our country once more.

We are especially grateful for our wonderful friends and family, many of whom we have been able to spend quality time with this year. We had our usual Fall and Spring trips to visit family in Phoenix this year with stops to visit in Tucson San Diego, and Ventura. And we had several visits from our Phoenix and San Diego families, all of which helped us to know and love our grandchildren even more. We also had an incredible cruise to Alaska in July with six of our good friends.

At home, Dick continued golfing at our beloved Village Country Club, and Barbara continued her painting and web activities. Dick claims not to be golfing so well lately, but he and partner Jerry Copeland managed to come in fourth this year at the annual Mackie member-guest tournament. Barbara maintains no less than eight websites, which limits the time she can devote to painting, but she did manage to produce some work this year and actually hung a couple paintings in the Fall show at Lompoc's Cypress Gallery.

We also continued with our other regular activities. We attended the Festival Theater Summer season in Solvang where, among other things, they did an incredible production of Guys and Dolls. We now belong to no less than fifteen wine clubs, which provided numerous events throughout the year. At home, we had wine tastings with our "Ornithological Oenophile" friends, hosted a "Lethal Luau" Mystery Party with friends from the country club, and attended several "gourmet" dinners. In addition, Netflix keeps us busy watching lots of movies. We haven't done much birding this year, but Dick is still tending to bluebird boxes on the golf course as well as at a couple of wineries on Santa Rosa Road. Barbara continues to photographically document our activities on our family website, so if you are interested, go to <http://willeyweb.com/> to find the pictures, or any of her other websites.

This year we did a major remodel on our house, expanding our bedroom and adding a sitting room behind it where the (broken down) gazebo over our hot-tub used to be. We had the contractor dig out an area from the hill behind our house and we purchased a new stand-alone spa to put there. We love the result of all of this, even though it kept us busy from April through July, and was just barely finished before we had to leave for Alaska. One beneficial side effect came of having to completely move out of our bedroom -- we were forced to clean out our closets, and ended up taking a van-full of clothes to our local thrift shop -- something sorely needed ever since we retired. (Has that already been 3 years?) This Fall, we also were finally forced to replace our dishwasher, garbage disposal and refrigerator which had been threatening to fail for a long time. It was the dishwasher that finally went and this, of course, happened right after a big party.

Barbara continues to be a Macintosh nut, and purchased a new Powerbook this year. Completely surprising was the fact that with this we were able to effortlessly connect to the Internet using Ron's wireless connection when in Phoenix. What an amazing technological world this has become! She also has become addicted to a new iPod this year and takes it with her everywhere to annoyingly display our pictures on people's TVs and to listen to audio books at bedtime and while traveling. She even collects other people's photos to add.

So, it has been another busy year, with much to be grateful for. We are staying home for Christmas, and have the house cheerily decorated, hoping for lots of visitors. We wish all of you a glorious new year, with many blessings.