

## ***Season's Greetings – 2014***

Winter is upon us, Christmas has come and gone, so it's about time to get my annual greetings in the mail. Much has happened.

The first big event was Mary Frances' retirement from Intel last May after 20+ years. She had intended to put in perhaps one more year but Intel decided to help with her decision by making the proverbial offer she could not refuse. Working at Intel was never a cakewalk, so the decision was not difficult. She is 'taking it easy' – the landscaping and equines (she owns Shadowfax and half-leases Jag), reading, and other projects now consume her time.

She's also accompanied me on a few business trips. While I worked in Reno last June on the AWRA conference she flew down to visit a long-time friend, stayed with me one night in a suite at the Nugget and then flew home. I had driven Platita (Toyota MR2) down – a nice one-day drive from Corvallis, although I stretched it into two with a side trip to Lakeview, OR, to see beautiful country and (desiccated) Goose Lake.

The next big event was not joyful. Edna, Mary Frances' mother, died in November just three months shy of her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. She had deteriorated quite a bit and we had moved her from assisted living to a nursing home last winter.

We traveled to Vancouver (that's BC, not Washington State) in October where I gave a talk at the Geological Society of America meeting and we did some sightseeing. Beautiful setting, neat city. We followed that journey with a November trip to the DC area (okay – Tysons Corner, VA) where I attended the American Water Resources Association (AWRA) conference and Mary Frances did some sightseeing and spent time with her brother Bob, who had driven up from North Carolina. Little did they realize that they'd see each other a few weeks later in Kentucky at Edna's funeral. We also saw my sister Ellen and brother-in-law Mike while in VA. They have just returned from the Amazon basin. Niece Becky and husband Hugh are still enjoying Colorado.

All is well in the 'happy bubble' (a moniker a colleague uses) that is Corvallis. As I write this it is raining. It will be for the rest of the winter and into the spring. We are getting our landscaping redone. Exciting!

Oh yes - the happy bubble did burst briefly in September, around Labor Day. A brush fire came within 100 yards of our house before the crews extinguished it. Mary Frances and Galahad evacuated and spent the night at the Holiday Inn Express where the manager gave fire refugees a reduced rate. Odd thing: I was in Honduras and received this text from a friend: 'Are you home? Looks like your area (north Corvallis) is burning.' I Skyped Mary Frances who was on her way out the door. Close call! We later learned that the fire had been set by a couple of stoned teen-aged boys, one of whom dared the other to start a fire with his lighter. But they were 'good kids'. One of the fathers claimed the City

of Corvallis was partially culpable because it did not place signs indicating that the dry grass was a fire hazard. How stupid of Corvallis! Of course, it was dark when the fire was set so the stoners would not have noticed the signs unless they had been illuminated. So I guess Corvallis would still have been at fault! Note: a few months later we joined our Washington and Colorado friends in legalizing marijuana. Go figure.

OSU is still enjoyable. Many of the students I have are amazing, and if it weren't for them I likely would have retired by now. I am looking at retiring in the spring of 2018 when I turn 70. I am taking a sabbatical next year (mid-June 2015 through mid-September 2016) and will serve as the Technical Director for AWRA, which is based in Middleburg, VA (another 'happy bubble'). I'll remain in Corvallis, from where I will travel east as needed and to points south (Honduras) and other areas.

I was selected to sit on the Steering Committee of the Global Water Partnership, an international NGO based in Stockholm. We had a meeting in Budapest in November and will meet in Stockholm in mid-May. After that I plan to join Mary Frances in Edinburgh where I will have another meeting. We have been 'threatening' to visit Scotland for years (my mother was half Scots-Irish) so it looks like this is the year!

In Budapest I received an email from an Iranian engineering professor asking if I would like to serve on an international expert panel to advise the municipality of Isfahan on the management of the Zayandeh-Rud River Basin, the most important river basin in Central Iran. So if all goes well (i.e., obtaining a visa, with help from the locals) I'll be attending a workshop on 10-11 January in Isfahan. Looking forward to it.

Both of us are still in good health – just the usual assortment of aches and pains. My eyesight is okay as long as I get my Avastin shots (right eye). The left eye is stable but can't be improved. I am very thankful; I wasn't sure how this was going to play out a few years ago.

The ACJ Foundation is going well – see our 2014 newsletter: <http://bit.ly/1vfU3uV>  
We continue doing our own projects in northern Honduras, along the Caribbean coast, near the Guatemalan border just west of Puerto Cortés. Rolando López, our man in Honduras, is indispensable. See what we do with limited resources and please consider a donation by check or credit card; it's US tax-deductible. Visit <http://www.acjfoundation.org> and click "Contributions". See "Financials" for 990-EZ (IRS) forms to see where the money went.

Enjoy 2015!