

Season's Greetings 2021 & Best Wishes for 2022!

"The real problem of humanity is the following: we have Paleolithic emotions, medieval institutions, and godlike technology." - E.O. Wilson

I joke with Mary Frances about our combined ages. When married in 1993 we were in the 80s. Then we hit the 'Big 100'. She was not amused. Well, surprise - we are rapidly approaching 150. Then I developed another metric: given our declining faculties, what % of a single human would we be if we could combine our best faculties? With my eyesight and hearing and her arthritic hands, we're about 100% - maybe around 95%. I'll be sure to report our 'progress' next year. You can do this with your own spouse or significant other! I'll gladly send you the algorithm (it's in FORTRAN 4).

On a serious note, we are again counting our blessings this year as I am sure many of you are. Don't need to elaborate. Need to thank and praise all those who are putting their lives on the line every minute of every day. Amazing! It's remarkable how some people step up during crises and others bitch and moan and go on about their personal freedoms being revoked or restricted. Hey, it's a *public* health crisis!

Déjà vu, right? But things *are* different this year. We both have been vaccinated and boosted. I finally taught my fall classes in live mode, although what with Omicron loose I might be going back to Zoom on 3 January. And we have a new POTUS. I took my first plane flight since January 2020. In late August I flew to Burlington, VT, to see some friends: former UNM student and fellow Long Islander Jeanine McGann; and Josh Newton, a native Green Mountain boy and famous for <http://www.joshwaterjobs.com>. I then headed to NH to see Carol Stein and Dave McTigue in their 200-year-old farmhouse. I know Carol from the College of William and Mary (Class of 1972) and Albuquerque (Sandia National Labs). There, she walked into my UNM office in 1989 and we resumed our friendship. Dave went to Williams and then Stanford/MIT and then to SNL. I enjoy them both so much. I then headed to northern New Hampshire (White Mountains area) to see the Boston-area fellows from my caddying days - Frank Colvario, Tony Wozniak, Gary Conserva, Jack Morganto, Robert Caggiano, Vincent Lunetta, et al. Couple of days spent reminiscing. See my post here: <https://bit.ly/33wGGEY>.

Interesting note about VT and NH. VT's adult vaccination rate was something like 87%; NH, was, let's say, a lot lower. I commented to a friend that maybe NH should change its motto to: 'Live free *and* die.'. NH folks dismiss Vermonters as 'quiche eaters'. Ouch!

Had a nice visit from Marc Herman and Sarah Iden, who spent a few hours with us on their motoring trip from Tucson. They were staying on the Oregon coast. Mary Frances had never met them and would love to see them again soon.

Conferences/meetings in which I participated were all virtual. In 2022 I hope to go to a few live ones: Washington, DC; Austin, TX; Tuscaloosa, AL; Seattle, WA. I was planning to go to the 9th World Water Forum in Dakar, Senegal, in March but have decided not to.

Despite my plans, I think that the Omicron variant may have something to say about travel. I also have a 'delayed' 50th class reunion at W&M, which decided to have the classes of 1970, 1971, and 1972 celebrate together at the end of April. I would love to go but I think the event will be Zoomed.

My 100-minute daily walk is still on tap. I did miss three days for a total of six since 3/15/2020. It's been great. Love the solitude, darkness, and clarity of thought. And then there's the weight loss.

Mary Frances is doing well, reading, tending to horses, seeing friends, serving on our HOA's BoD, taking online Spanish classes, mediating, etc. She did take a spill on a horse (not Shadowfax) but luckily, no broken bones. She still has chronic pain and is seeing a neurologist. Sadly, she later put down beloved Shadowfax. He was starting to suffer from some afflictions. She had him for ~25 years and he was quite a horse - rescued in NM. He was over 30 years old.

I had a couple of health issues. I had oral surgery on my right gums that had me on liquids and soft foods for 6 weeks or so. I have to get the left side done this spring. In November I had a dizzy spell at the end of my morning class and wound up going to the ER courtesy of Corvallis EMT. Seems my blood pressure was unusually low. I stayed at the ER about 2.5 hours and the only thing I got was a cup of ice cream from the head cardiologist (cost: \$\$). My meds have been adjusted; seems my blood-pressure meds were *too* effective so my new physician (she's from the Hamptons!) eliminated one of them so things seem to function properly. If you don't get one of these in 2022, well....

We've spent the time right after dinner watching foreign (UK, NZ, Australian) police shows. They are all very good. We had trouble with the Aussie (*Mystery Road*) accents; less so with NZ (*The Brokenwood Mysteries*). Compared to US police shows they are tame; very few guns, little gunplay. The UK shows, *Midsomer Murders* and *Foyle's War*, stand out. The latter is my favorite - about an English chief inspector in the London-Hastings area from early 1940 through WWII. Not quite *Chicago PD*. And then there are the (real) veterinarian shows. I have always admired vets but these folks are amazing.

The ACJ Foundation is still going strong. Our most recent project in Honduras, Las Vegas del Corrazal, was about finished. It dodged two late 2020 bullets – Hurricanes Eta and Iota. Then an EQ struck in late 2021 and rendered the spring dry so we had to locate another. Friend Rolando López and I chat every few weeks via WhatsApp. Rolando's reputation and word are solid gold in Honduras. We have several projects on the waiting list, including an ag school. I need to get down there in 2022 to implement them. If you want to help visit <http://www.acjfoundation.org> and click 'Contributions'. Visit 'Financials' (IRS 990EZ forms) to see how we spend your \$\$\$. If you send a check, ensure it is dated no later than 31 December 2021 for deductibility in 2021. Thank you all for your generous support!

Enjoy 2022 and please work for a peaceful, kinder, safer world! Please wear your mask when and where you should and get vaccinated! Love, Mary Frances and Michael