

2017 HOLIDAY LETTER



We are blessed!

This year 'truck troubles' reduced our travel plans – only 48 nights in the HitchHiker. Emission system problems and dealer errors three times (four times counting today) have been frustrating. We were able to camp at gatherings in Michigan and the Woodward Dream Cruise. A week parked at Michelle's cottage at Houghton Lake was fun even if her family was not there.

We used our cottage 41 days in 2017. It is almost as comfortable as home except we can step out the door and we are surrounded by nature. Fred mainly fished and cut grass. Mary Lou spent her time reading, crafting and sitting outside enjoying fresh air. We watched TV in the evening.

Our spring trip to visit Fred's family, in advance of the family reunion, was shorter than planned – the first round of truck trouble occurred on our way to Indiana requiring one tow truck for our truck and another for our 5th wheel. We did arrive in time for the family reunion. Ashlyn and Lily stayed at Fred's house, we used our trailer, the other two families stayed in a motel. Fred smoked two delicious briskets for dinner the first night. Our usual good time included yard games, miniature golf, eating pizza in a jail cell restaurant and a trip to an escape room. Melanie and Scott won the Euchre tournament.

Our four day fall trip to Indiana included staying in a motel and driving to the house each day. We missed our HitchHiker - much easier.

We have updated our Web site for family pages and our travels – still more to do. Check it out at www.RVtowster.com.

Mary Lou needed arthroscopic surgery to clean up Synovitis in her replacement knee. The surgery is needed on only 5% of patients. She is very happy with her knee now. A December bout with shingles was treated with an antiviral. She had only a few uncomfortable days. Her fever of unknown origin remains an issue.

Fred's health has been good. Going up and down stairs, getting on and off the boat, in and out of the truck has been getting easier for him.

Fred, Becky, Caitlin and Nick: They attended most of the children's games and are good at cheering. Fred is known as the volleyball 'team dad'. They arranged a couple weekends away – alone.

Fred's business is doing well. He alternates his second season ticket to Colts football games with Caitlin, Nick and Becky. Fred tries to get a round of golf in before going to the office many mornings.

Becky's use of more technology and hiring an home office assistant means less time on the road, less home office time and more listing and selling time. A personal touch, she posts photos of her clients at closings. She is still cautious with her 'repaired' knee – when asked when she could run again, the doctor said "never".

Caitlin is a high school junior preparing for college admission testing. Having a car available makes her a chauffeur at times. She plays volleyball – loves to play the Libero position. She works for her dad doing general duties in his office after school. She says he is a good boss. She is a big help around the house.

Nick, a freshman, plays on the high school tennis team. He has gone to a couple Colts games with his Dad. Summer was different this year with Caitlyn working. He and friends went to a water park a couple times. He also hunts with his dad. In fact, he shot his first deer this fall. He used a crossbow.

Michelle, Steve, Ashlyn and Lily: Michelle and Steve continue to work long hours. Their summer got off to a slow start at the cottage – high water, cool temperatures and busy schedules. Their much anticipated September anniversary cruise to the southern Bahamas was blown away by two hurricanes. They landed in Florida just prior to the cruise line's last minute e-mail cancelling the cruise. They cruised in December to use the credit they received.

Michelle and the girls visited Washington D C for a long weekend. Another long weekend saw Michelle and Lily on Mackinaw Island with the Girl Scouts.

Steve went golfing with neighborhood guys while the gals were in D C. He sneaks away for guy time other times also.

Ashlyn, a sophomore, had a busy summer – many Marching Band Color Guard practices followed by two brutal weeks of band camp. The work paid off – they received high ratings at competitions. The Color Guard performed in the Peach Festival in Romeo, MI and the Memorial Day Parade in Brooklyn, NY.

Lily, an eighth grader, still loves animals – all animals. Her summers at 'Horse Camp' have graduated to lessons at a local equestrian center. Her latest class started body positioning training in preparation for jumping.

Melanie, Scott and Wyatt: They are enjoying being parents of four year old, spending much of their time on family activities. Melanie and Scott joined friends for a beer tasting weekend in Kalamazoo. Wyatt stayed home with his 'golf' grandparents - they moved close-by this year. A family vacation in Petoskey in early August was fun for all three of them. However, the weather was more autumn than summer – temperatures in the 50s put a damper on water activities. They all enjoy the various festivals celebrated in their community and near-by communities and socializing with friends.

Melanie, like other working moms with a young active child, does not have much time to herself. Scott is always there to lend a helping hand.

Scott drops Wyatt off at daycare every morning, Melanie picks Wyatt up - a tag team effort. Scott's job is located very close to home – handy for Wyatt duty. He gets away for some guy time every once in a while.

Wyatt continues with his swim classes. This year he also learned the basics of baseball by playing T-ball. He spent most of our family reunion riding or pretending to drive Uncle Fred's 'toys'. He enjoyed the six-wheeler and the four-wheeler ... but ... his favorite was the BIG farm tractor.

*Best wishes to you
and yours for a
Merry Christmas
and
Happy New Year*

*Fred and
Mary Lou*