

TORTILLAVILLE TRIVIA



DECEMBER 2012

RIBERAS DEL PILAR, JALISCO, MX

Riberas del Pilar:

A new record, it's Pearl Harbor day and I'm just sitting down to write this annual note, not that I don't sit a fair amount of the time, but I just haven't had the heart to get this done, but Christmas and New Years are fast approaching so here goes - **HO HO HO - and a Merry Christmas to all from Tortillaville.** Once again the odd sheep in the family, who went South, and his trusty gato Max the WeatherCat send their warmest wishes for a Merry Merry Christmas (just can't say that enough).

This year has screamed by leaving me grayer, more wrinkled and puzzled at how little I accomplished? It was a sad year in some ways with the loss of Mom and two dear Aunts; our family's older generation is nearing its "recall date" and we accept the years shared with thanks.

The year had its bright spots, the Lord sent Katie home safely after a tour in Afghanistan and Uncle Eldon is recovering from Thyroid cancer and cousin Myra's husband Clayton was also spared from lung cancer, so all in all the year had its high points.

Max and I bumped along as usual with some changes here at the compound – primarily the absence this Fall of my wonderful friend and neighbor Margaret (yes, she gave me permission to talk about her for once). After renting the casita for 5 winters (probably a story there, like *5 Winters with Margaret?*) she decided the love affair with Mexico is over and is not returning – except to take her car Betty back home to Canada. I tried talking her into coming down again, but that's like, well, like impossible so the next task was getting her and Betty safely to the US border in late November (then she was on her own, I stop at Texas where it's warm).

I finally managed to convince her to fly her son Ross down to help and while Betty is in prime shape for an '83 Mercury Zephyr I had some reservations and insisted I drive up with them to have a backup vehicle just in case – which fortunately wasn't necessary.

At Marble Falls, and my storage area, they decided to stay an extra day so they could meet my friends George & Karen and Marge, my neighbor, I've talked to all of them about each other for 5 years and thought it was time to actually have them meet and it was fun even though brief.

We did a brief tour of Lakeway to see the place Chris and I called home, it's changing more each time I go back, but the flavor of the place we loved is still there.

Then we spent an extra day exploring Austin and the Hill Country, my home. We had a great time, visited Whole Foods, drove by the State Capital and saw enough to get a flavor. Then we headed West to the Wild Flower Seed Farm and Fredericksburg and had dinner at my favorite restaurant overlooking Lake Marble Falls. Margaret fell in love with the ochre colored limestone of the Hill Country and took a piece back to Canada.

Peace
On
Earth



Margaret as an artist sees beauty in everything; she was riding with me part of the time crossing MX and would comment on the beauty of the country, all I saw was a dusty sparse area that I needed to drive across to get to TX where the roads are not trying to destroy the Jeep?



What Me Worry?

It seems we never run out of things that are a nuisance here in MX, if it's not the cartels, it's something else. About 3 weeks ago the Immigration folks came out with new rules for our visas and what is required to come to MX and remain as a Temporary or Permanente resident. They jacked the income requirements to unreasonable levels that may force some folks to leave and preclude others from coming down. I can qualify for Permanente Resident, but I'm waiting to see when things settle down what the final outcome is. It's a MXN tradition that the DF (like our DC) writes laws/rules and then the local offices do whatever they darn well please? – it's just part of life in Mexico – but the weather is real good!



Annual Trip(s) NOB:

As noted I drove/flew to Denver in March for Mom's service and of course a reunion with family from NE as well as friends in Denver. Denver has been "home" since 1955 because Mom was there, but now TX is home.

The second trip with Margaret and Ross gave time to visit friends in San Antonio which was great.

Ross is a woodsman and hunter and is ready to come back to Texas and help thin out some of the deer, his moose hunting this year wasn't successful.



The mail address remains the same this year:

5802 Bob Bullock C1
#328C-125

Laredo, TX 78041

Weather: www.chapalaweather.net



Merry Christmas
From
South of the Border

Steve & Max the Cat





Called Home This Year 2012

Marion Arnold, wife of Ray Jr on January 7th
Ginny Arnold, wife of Gearld on January 18th
Roma Brown, "Mom" on March 4th



Mom was 97 and of course for many years I had expected the call that finally came from my sister that Sunday. I began to make plans, one of my first challenges was to get into my suit that has waited patiently in the closet - it was a tight fit (must have shrunk?) but good enough to remain respectable.

Mom is buried next to Dad at Ft. Logan National Cemetery; her space has been waiting 55 years since Dad was buried there one gray afternoon in 1957.

Being a military cemetery they run "on schedule" and as more of the Greatest Generation now pass each day they're busy, so you have to fit into their scheduling, but I managed to get in the night before the service and joined the family that had gathered at the funeral home.

For my family it's a sad time, but also a happy time as we know the person has gone "home" and so it's a bit difficult to be both at the same time, but definitely not a somber gathering. I was one of the last to leave and apologized to the director, he smiled and said he definitely preferred our type of respect to some of the more somber groups - and that's exactly the way Mom would have wanted it.

Driving across MX I had time to think about Mom and at her memorial service the next day I said most of the people in the room (largely family) had known her all their lives as she was the oldest of her generation. She was known by many names, daughter, sister, wife, aunt, cousin, friend, teacher and to my sisters and me, just simply "Mom".

Mom set the bar high on the wall, not only in years but in standards, you never had to wonder what she would say about something, but if you asked, she was glad to tell you.

She set us on our paths of life and occasionally gave me a mid course correction when necessary. I will always hear her answers to questions I needed answered and will always consider what she would do when it comes to the more serious decisions in this life.

At times I've wondered why the Lord had left her here so many years, I finally decided He probably wanted Mom to finally see me "grow up" but even He had to eventually give up on that idea and called her home.

We are poorer with her absence, but richer for all the years she gave to us.



Keisha & Family:


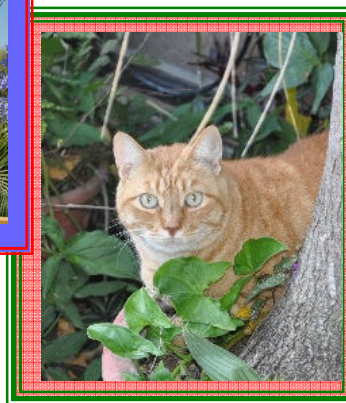
Daughter Keisha and family are doing as well as can be expected today, they're all still healthy and working which is a blessing in this economy. Wil approaches graduation and college next year, Lacey is going great with good marks in school and Nick and family are all well, so those are my special blessings for the year.

One of these years I hope to drive out to CA to see them all again. When I flew to Denver in March I told the lady at the airport it might be my last flight, now I have the time to drive and who needs the hassle of air travel any more?



The Future?

Who knows? I've been here 5 years now and I lost Chris 8 years ago, so time has little meaning now. But, if I had to guess I'd say I'll be here until Summer 2014 and by then (if there still is a US?) I'll probably be ready to come back home to Texas, but then again, the weather here is hard to beat and I've learned a few words in Spanish, enough to get by, so?



So, from Max, Shorty, Punkin, Mamasita, Sweet & Sour and even old Gray -

Feliz Navidad to all



Blessings to One and All from Mexico