

December 2013

"The most essential thing for happiness is the gift of friendship". Ostler

To our loved ones,

A bit of family news is needed to explain the reason for a big family gathering at Thanksgiving time. Our son Joel decided to retire at age 56, sell all his "stuff", including house and its contents and a car, This leaves him free to travel by motorcycle to see and enjoy America and, in the process, discover what he wants to do for the rest of his life. He has made it from Boston area to Mount Vernon to California to southern Texas where he spent a couple weeks on San Padre Island. He traveled from there to New Orleans to spend some time with Julie's daughter. The two of them flew to Mount Vernon to celebrate Thanksgiving with us. That prompted Julie to drive their RV up with their extended family (7 total) and Joel's son Luke to fly from Boston. With the Washington contingent there were 23 eating turkey together.

While the hefty children and grandchildren were here they managed to do all the moving of heavy furniture that allowed the installation of a new living room carpet. It was a busy week that ended with Joel's return to New Orleans to resume his motorcycling.

Other happy celebrations included Dorcas's 60th birthday, the arrival of her third grandchild (Silas) and the graduation of our granddaughter Hannah from college. Our usual volunteer activities kept us engaged. Lester's most satisfying is working with students preparing for their G.E.D. tests. In response to an appeal for more volunteers for this program Winnie is now tutoring a 36-year-old woman needing help with reading, writing and arithmetic. Winnie's German friend is 97, and the responsibility of managing her care is continuing.

We spent an interesting several months participating in a study in a hospital in Seattle. Though Winnie was the one involved, Lester and drivers accompanied her on the frequent trips to the hospital and sat in on all conferences and tests. A company is studying the results of treating "essential tremor" with a machine which is able to penetrate bone structure with ultrasound to destroy the point in the thalamus which is emitting the stimulus causing the tremor. Winnie has had this tremor for many years and has endured the difficulties in writing and cooking it has caused. She was given two medications which made little difference in the tremor. The director of the study decided after MRI studies and videos of the affects of the tremor that she was a good candidate for the trials. A long list of risks involved and the prospect of up to 6 hours with her head immobile were presented. Winnie agreed to be in the study and was scheduled to undergo the procedure on October 11. After all the anticipation of being in an international study, a telephone call on October 7 stating that because she had a "thick skull" she would no longer be a candidate for the study changed all that. A feeling of relief that God had intervened to prevent a side effect which would make remaining years less satisfactory replaced the anticipation.

WINNIE HAS COVERED THE EVENTS ABLY. I OBSERVE THAT RECENT STUDIES ON HAPPINESS EMPHASISE FRIENDSHIPS AS AN ESSENTIAL INGREDIENT. WE WISH YOU ALL A YEAR OF MUCH HAPPINESS.

LOVE , LESTER and Winnie

2600 E. Division Sp.78
Mount Vernon, WA 98274