

Christmas in Englewood, FL --- 2013

Dear Friends.

It has been a long time since I have communicated with you with my annual letter. And I haven't sent "cards" in years.

I'm still living in the same house with few changes. Still have the '64 Chevy (sidelined 4 years ago but due to return to life in a few months).

I no longer cut lawns in my neighborhood. Have a homeless man do mine. Another homeless man - a real gardener - has his own truck and equipment and lives out of his box trailer in the woods somewhere. He did well (from me) last spring when I had the front of my property landscaped.

Girlfriend Judy (Ohio) finally retired at end of last year and arrived 1/2/2013 for a 2 month stay. I drove up to Ohio for 2 months in mid Summer. (Don't know how long this will go on :-). Judy driving down for New Years and will stay 3 months this time. Will we ever make it permanent ? Who knows. The market being what it is she doesn't want to sell her place and my credit is shot (a foreclosure - rental property) so I can't sell mine and get a loan to buy something together. One day at a time.

While in Ohio I connected with a "personal trainer" at a fitness gym (Thanks Silver Sneakers). He taught me some new exercises that have helped me strengthen my back and reduce pain so that I no longer take any Narcotics for same. Yea! (2 Aleve, 1 BP pill and eye drops per day.)

I also visited a long time friend in Kent, OH. His health won't allow him to travel, so he didn't attend our 50th College reunion (2012). As he was one of the only two people I wanted to see (the other died in 2009) so I didn't go either. First one I have missed in past 20 years.

I'm still a member of the Englewood Sailing Association, Inc. ([englewoodsailing.org](http://englewoodsailing.org)), now just finishing it's 11th year. No longer on the Board (2 terms), no longer Treasurer (2 years), no longer webmaster (YEA!) and now just a "go-fer". A few years ago I had a friend donate a boat to the club that, two years later we decided it was no longer an asset and sold it. We were fortunate to find an out of state buyer that paid handsomely (\$14K) and we were then able to purchase six new training boats!

I have sold off all but one of my sailboats. The big one went a year ago and my end-of-month bottom line started to grow! Imagine that. I have now bought nine sailboats and sold eight (since I retired). My remaining boat is a 18 foot wooden day-sailor. Oops, forgot the 9' rubber dinghy (still have) and the 10' dinghy bought/sold and the 2-seater kayak and the latest boat is an RC (radio controlled). Really 'down-sizing'.

I do miss the "idea" of owning a Blue Water boat but I DON'T miss the outgo of money nor the labor involved in maintaining her. There are enough members of the club that still have boats that go in the Gulf so I can always "crew". Works for me.

My daughter (Tarpon Springs, FL – about 100 miles N) has a job again after being laid off for almost two years. Unfortunately she drives about an hour each way to downtown Tampa. Her husband managed to keep things going with his (home based) Architectural business (<http://2youngarchitects.com/>) . Grand daughters Iris = 13 and Violet = 16 continue to grow taller every time I see them! Both girls played soccer for several years (and dad was the coach). Both were very good. They went their separate ways (sports wise). Iris went into tumbling and gave that up for cheerleading, sort-of-mini-professional – not for football. Doing quite well. She is small & light so she gets to be the one that gets “tossed up”. Violet is into photography and skateboarding. And now she drives!

I generally do not go there for Christmas, as Gary’s parents and brother & wife dominate the visit. For me, I choose to go on a day when I have the family to myself.

Two years ago I decided that I was getting tired of Palm Springs (after 20 years – ya think?) and decided to put last years 2 weeks into RCI (time share swapping). We had a week in Orland last spring. Daughter & family came over for a few days.

Just this past November, we decided to return to Palm Springs. We added a variation to the trip; flew in/out of Phoenix, rented a 2013 Prius from Toyota dealer, drove to Sedona, AZ for a week and the over to Palm Springs. Couldn’t believe the gas mileage – 47mpg for 1,300 miles and I cruised at 80 on the open road. WOW!

I plan to put 2014 weeks into RCI and see what we can find that will be very different.

Peace and Love,

*andy*

