



Dear family and friends,

We send warm Christmas greetings in the middle of winter. Thankfully, we don't measure the condition of our hearts based on the weather! But...

*...if we measured our year in the ordinary, we'd rate it high!* Our daily days are filled with work we both love, with time to eat most meals together, with the convenience of gadgets—from cars to floss holders, with a comfortable place to call home. Lately, the ordinary includes tabulating our Weight Watchers points together, an occasional ride on the refurbished tandem **we crashed a year and a half ago**, watching a couple of favorite (usually recorded) TV shows together, and in August throwing our **annual garage sale**.

*...if we measured our year in adventure, we'd rate it high!* Our travels took us to Jacksonville, FL; Philadelphia, PA; Grand Rapids, MI; Denver, CO—sometimes solo, sometimes together—to visit the lives of dear family members. Our passports date back to the '60s, but we manage to find plenty of adventure right here in the lower 48. In Orlando I attended the **National Religious Broadcasters** convention with my brother; in Denver we attended an **outdoor Easter service** with the Andersons in a snowstorm (causing Mauri to make a momentary involuntary appearance on the Today Show); in Nazareth, PA, **Mauri toured the Martin Guitar factory**, where in the early '70s his beloved guitar was created; in Winona Lake, IN, son Ben and I witnessed the marriage of my **cousin's daughter** beside the lake that holds a lifetime of memories. And joining a reading group has been an adventure for us. We meet with three other couples to eat a meal and talk about a book we've all read. In January it will be my turn to lead the discussion on *Cold Sassy Tree*. I'd better get started!



*...if we measured our year in ministry, we'd rate it high,* in that we are both released by our church (Mauri in a pastoral role; I in a staff role) for fully part- and full-time ministry. Clearly, we are *all* called to ministry, and those in secular workplaces might have the best opportunity for ministry. We both feel blessed to be allowed to use our gifts to encourage the body at Newberg Friends Church. The church releases Mauri from his usual responsibilities to help lead four week-long spiritual growth retreats out at the coast in January. Ministry isn't one way; we are high on the receiving end as well. Daughter Quinn and I make a point to attend a Beth Moore conference together at least once a year (this year in **Seattle** and in **Denver**; next year we already have our tickets for Colorado Springs). And I'll be starting a personal Beth Moore Bible study, "Living Beyond Yourself: Exploring the Fruit of the Spirit" in January. These are designed for group study, but I like to make my own pace.

*...if we measured our year in fun, we'd rate it high!* I've always wanted to experience a **hot-air balloon ride**, and this was the year. Maybe you heard about the balloon that caught on fire up in Canada. That happened the very day I went up! Timing. And blogging has to be rated in the category of fun. I could tell story after story that illustrate how much smaller the world has become and how much larger *my* world has become because of writing and reading blogs. We don't attend many concerts, but a little birdie told me that Leo Kottke (guitarist extraordinaire) would be playing a concert in a small college hall in a neighboring town, and the same little birdie got me tickets with her inside connections. Definitely fun.


*...if we measured our year in aches and pains, we'd rate it high!* Along with the mischief of Father Time, we've managed to wreak some havoc of our own. I really did a number on my ankle and

apparently my alignment in our bike crash, so I'm still trying to find a therapist who can pinpoint the trouble and get me moving right again. Mauri lifted a heavy object and tore something in his arm that is slow to heal. Add that to a resurgence of trouble from a torn "hibiscus" (that's what he calls it because he's a silly man), causing him to limp most days. We used to walk hand in hand because we like being close. These days we hold hands to stabilize each other. Not that we're complaining, mind you. We see enough pain and suffering around us to know how truly blessed we are with our measure of good health.

*...if we measured our year in family, we'd rate it high!* It was our turn to host the **Nil family reunion**—that's my two siblings and our offspring. Not everyone came, but those who did affirmed our desire to stay connected in this way. This was a rare year that I got to visit *all three* of my younguns on their own turf. And to see Ben in the same calendar year *three times* is almost more than this mOm could ask. And looking at my 2007 calendar, I count five trips to Denver (**Quinn and Taylor** both live there) and nine together times with Quinn, including the brief serendipitous **airport visit** with her and Cassidy earlier this month as I traveled through Denver to Wichita. Mauri got to visit our Philly family and they came this way in August. We're equally intentional for together time with our family who live nearby. We host a monthly family potluck dinner. And our local "kids" are always ready to fit in a meal together as busy schedules allow. **Thanksgiving** was a perfect illustration of that particular joy. We have three parents here in town and they are part of our regular lives as well...sometimes because they need us and other times because we need them.

*...if we measured our year in blessings, we'd rate it high!* We don't need a list; we know we are blessed beyond measure.

With our love,

 for both of us

In favor of inundating you with pictures, which I'm prone to do, I chose to include the links to pictures and the accompanying stories on our website. To access the stories, hover your cursor over the blue words, near the "http://www" and it will turn into a pointing finger. When that happens, click!

**we crashed a year and a half ago** < <http://www.mauriandsherry.com/2006/04/23/blowout/> >  
**annual garage sale** < <http://www.mauriandsherry.com/2007/08/10/we-both-lost-weight-today/> >  
**National Religious Broadcasters** < <http://www.mauriandsherry.com/2007/02/24/family-ties/> >  
**outdoor Easter service** < <http://www.mauriandsherry.com/2007/04/10/easter-highlights/> >  
**Mauri toured the Martin Guitar factory** < <http://www.mauriandsherry.com/2007/10/23/156/> >  
**cousin's daughter** < <http://www.mauriandsherry.com/2007/09/09/weekend-with-ben-continued/> >  
**Seattle** < <http://www.mauriandsherry.com/2007/02/05/still-grinning/> >  
**Denver** < <http://www.mauriandsherry.com/2007/09/21/asher/> >  
**hot-air balloon ride** < <http://www.mauriandsherry.com/2007/08/25/full-of-hot-air/> >  
**Nil family reunion** < <http://www.mauriandsherry.com/2007/07/19/family-reunion/> >  
**Quinn and Taylor** < <http://www.mauriandsherry.com/2007/09/19/im-still-grinning/> >  
**airport visit** < <http://www.mauriandsherry.com/2007/11/08/serendipity-extraordinaire/> >  
**Thanksgiving** < <http://www.mauriandsherry.com/2007/11/22/thankful/> >

Or just visit <http://mauriandsherry.com> and browse the archives. Or not.



**Jesus came that we might have life, abundant life.**

***John 10:10***

