

Seasoned Greetings

from the entire Arnold Family

Dear Friends,

In just over a year since 911, as with most of us, a lot has happened. Some good, some bad. The world is changing around us, faster and faster. Some for what we perceive to be good and others not so good.

We are still so very lucky and we all know it.

This year in January the Church of Christ the King in Alpine, where Grandma Delna used to be a member, decided to start having a traditional 1928 BCP service on Thursday nights. We have missed one when we were out of town, but no others. Jack is an Acolyte (Altar Boy) and really enjoys it. Hap and Dru love the chance to worship with him. We were pleased to get a chance to share our new church with Mrs. Kay when she came and our friends the Halls when they came out.

The Arnolds have been in our new house now for 7 1/2 years. Hangar One, our steel building, is filling nicely no new acquisitions this year, but we are getting vehicles up to speed. As you may have noted on our card, no snow this year so we took our photograph by the well house where Jack and Macy have their Friendship Club. The Old Man (42 Chevy pickup) is still down being re-done. But at least we got a roof on our BBQ area.

Young Jackson is now just over ten and wears a size sixteen. He is a first rate Fourth Grader, homeschooling, having dropped out of school in First Grade. He finally grasped that math is fun and is doing incredibly well with it. He still prefers history, but is excellent at math. He is still growing by leaps and bounds, not only physically, but spiritually and mentally. Jack is learning to drive. He started out with the old orange lawn tractor, moved on to the M422A1 Mighty Mite, then the 1943 GPW and finally the 1978 M151A2, seen on our card cover. A couple of months ago, we found a new lawn tractor on sale for fifty percent off, so Jack has a new vehicle all his own. The orange tractor, still running at 21 years old, went to a new home. Jack is a very careful driver and a responsible young man. Jack and next door neighbor Macy started a Friendship Club; their first new member was Macy's sister Molly. They started cleaning up the second story room in the well house. After they started Hap and Dru helped them paint it and made some cool furnishings. The Friendship Club is a great place to hang out, play video games and generally have a good time. Jack is so amazing! There are no end of Jack stories. He is concentrating on being God's Buddy, something we all need to do more of.

William came back into our lives a bit this year. Just before Labor Day, he came up two Sundays in a row; then he went to the desert for the Labor Day weekend and we have not seen him since. He missed all the family holidays. We ask your prayers that he might stay safe until he finds what he is looking for.

Dru has continued in her full employment as a nurse for Hap and taking care of Jack. She is now Jack's Fourth Grade teacher, another full time job. With Jack going to school at home, we quit supporting Smart and Final with their wholesale rates on cupcake mix and those cute little cups.

Physically Hap is doing very well. He still has nerve damage, walks like a penguin and all the rest, but he is here with us. We are all happy that we are together more. He is flying and happy about that. He is very busy at work. The office had a lot of changes, some as the result of 911, others also. Everybody seems very happy together there now. For a recent business trip, Dru packed Hap three books, one for each night. Jack looked at the books and said, "You are just going to read them over and over, so you don't have to carry so many books, right?" Hap used to be known as a fast reader; his speed hasn't changed.

Angelina Catalina, Angie Cat, or AC is keeping our home and garage free from rodents. Our main family unit augmentation is still the various and assorted fabric based life-forms who in outward appearance vaguely resemble different species, but are all rodents at heart, as in pigrat, sharkrat, tigerrat and even the odd rat-rat.

Because of 911 we did not get to go on a family vacation this year. We did make a trip to Vancouver, BC for the Organization of Flying Adjusters meeting. We flew the Aztec up to Bellingham, Washington, rented a car and drove across the border. It was a beautiful flight, both ways. We got to see Mounts Whitney, St. Helens, Rainer and the rest. What a flight! It was super to see all our OFA friends. The weather was beautiful, at least for Vancouver. As usual, we went on a dinner cruise. This time the cruise was livened up by an onboard fire; Hap got to do his Marine Surveyor thing for a couple of minutes, then back to dinner.

Brother Bruce and wife Lorena have been re-doing their home's floors. The change in appearance is remarkable. They have been continuing to re-do their backyard and it is looking great. Bruce has been continuing with his painting, some of the paintings are really good. Their daughter, Megan, is doing quite well at La Jolla Country Day School. As she gets older, she takes up more and more of their time. They seem to be surprised, but pleased. Once again we had Thanksgiving at their home, it is a beautiful place and the food was wonderful. This year we had Uncle Jack and Aunt Muriel join us as usual, plus many members of Lorena's family. It was a great time to be together.

Brother Tuck, wife Robie and daughter Alison have been working on their house also. It is really looking super. This year Brother Tuck is the Training Sergeant for the El Cajon Mounted Police; he has participated, or "ridden" as he puts it, the Raider's Game, Fourth of July and numerous other events and really enjoys it. Tuck was the President of the Los Senderos Riding Club for the past year. He did a great job, but his term is finally up and Hap can quit doing the mailings for his monthly letters. Robie's job teaching Art at Valhalla High School seems to be even more enjoyable as the years go by. Ali is growing to be quite a young lady and enjoying school.

Robie's father, Bill Clemens, is gravely ill with a brain tumor. We ask that you keep him, as well as her mother Georgina, in your prayers.

Sister Jacquie's new job firming leads for a sales and marketing position firm seems to be going very well. She looks like she is enjoying life more than she has in a long time. Jacquie may make it down for Christmas this year. It will be great to see her.

Uncle Jack and little Jack celebrated their birthdays this year together as usual. Uncle Jack was 90, little Jack was 10. It was a wonderful time. Uncle Jack is still driving, although we always send a car and driver to pick them up. With Jack were Aunt Muriel, her brother Rod and his wife Jessie. Rod was an Avenger pilot on "Cabot" while Jack was the Air Group Commander on "Hornet" for her first war cruise. Against odds, "Cabot" was the ship that ferried Jack's Air Group to Hawaii where they joined "Hornet." The driver, a rescue swimmer from HC-2, loved the stories.

As this is being written, just before Christmas, Aunt Muriel fell and broke her hip. She has been suffering from macular degeneration. This new problem will have to be overcome. We ask your prayers for both her and Uncle Jack.

In late spring, our excellent friend from York, in the UK, Kay Denton, came to stay with us for a whole month. She is the best houseguest one could ask for. She loves to cook and cannot make anything less than wonderful. This time she let us cook a few nights, so we only gained 10 pounds this year. Just as she was about to leave, she ended up in the hospital for a week with heart/lung/kidney related problems. She was doing very poorly when she went in and we were worried to no end. Thanks to God, in week she was out, looking fitter than when she got here. Her son Paul was able to come over to fly back with her. Even though the initial reason for Paul's trip was a real worry, it was great to see him. Paul, Emma, Jack and Evie are leaving York next year for Australia, so perhaps we may see more of Mrs. Kay.

Once again, on the Friday after Thanksgiving, Hap and Jack went shooting with Butch Hadzima and son in law Bryce Shields. They had a great time. You should have seen Jack with the SoCom Mk23 .45acp, he loved it!

The Aztec is doing very well. She is finally about up to speed after four years of living with us. With almost eight hours range, she goes further than we do. As in years past, the Cessna 150 is still getting a new engine maybe next year she will finally fly. Hopefully, the new 150 hp engine will have been worth the wait.

Unless it rains, we are going on a Jeep ride this New Year's Day. 1030 Show for an 1100 Go. About 1500 we should be back to BBQ some dead mammal. If you are what passes for local and have a 4WD, come join us. If you do not have a 4WD but want to go, we have spare seats!

Those of you who have sent us your holiday letter, thanks! We really enjoy them, it is great to know what our friends are doing. For those of you who don't send them, start! As our friend Marge said, without the letters the cards hardly seem with the postage. We would like to write each of you a personal letter, but the fact is we would only get one letter sent a year.

Please keep our family members in your prayers – Bill and Georgina Clemens, Muriel and Jack Arnold and William Arnold

This past year, as much as any year in the past, it has been made clear how lucky we are. We have been blessed with health in soul, mind and body. Those of our family here on earth are all healthy and extremely happy. Once again, we have concrete evidence of just how kind God has been to us this year. As we look over our Christmas list, we think of our friends, some we have seen, most whom we have not. We think of years gone by, time spent together. We wish we could have spent more time together. We wish you all a very happy and joyous holiday season. May God be with you as He has made so clear He is with us.

Best wishes and Love, Dru, Hap/Bill & Jackson, Mr. O, and all the Buddies

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