

Merry Christmas from the entire Arnold Family

Dear Friends,

Once again we come upon a Christmastide, the recollection of those who have gone before us that we might live free in this wonderful country is crystal clear. We give thanks to God that we were born here, into loving families, at this time. We thank God for our family members who have gone before us and given so much that we might live free and thrive. In particular, we acknowledge the un-payable debt we owe members of our Armed Forces and Coalition Allies protecting our freedom, at great cost to themselves and their families, under extremely difficult circumstances with little support from the government at home. God bless the soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, coastguardsmen and contractors of our country and Coalition and their families.

Each year we marvel we have been so fortunate. This year like each year past, this has been a wonderful year. All in all we finished the year far better off than last year, a year very good in and of itself, better in fact than the year before that. The thing that stands out the most is our friends. We have been blessed to work with good people around the country who have become our friends. Each year we grow closer. If you are getting this letter, that means you (that may be good or bad depending on your perspective, we hope good). One thing has not changed, we are still so very blessed and we all know it.

The Silver Tipped Grizzlies (STG) (mostly retired Air Guard people) have been getting together now for a several years the third Saturday of each month at a local Los Angeles area airport for breakfast. They call it breakfast, but Jack and Hap mostly eat hamburgers. Take a look the website: <http://www.grzly.org> and see what we have been up to. Better yet, join us. Pat Rodgers has been putting together Number 11 prototype F-4, like our Cessna 150, it will fly soon! Maybe even sooner than it was going to fly last year. If you want to get on the mailing list, send a note to our SOF: cmac@grzly.org.

Not a lot of news from the Guard. Everything seems classified, but we think the 163rd is still flying Predators. They may like it, maybe they are having a good time, maybe not. Still, they are getting paid.

As with most years, no family vacation. But, all was not lost. In June, we took the Aztec to Glendale, Arizona to have dinner with good friends Ken and Carol Harris. After dinner, Jack and Dru went to see Eric Clapton play at the arena. That was a super time, although everyone, but Jack, may have gotten a little tired of hearing endless Eric Clapton for the next two months! It was motivation for guitar work and Claptonesque sounds have been heard from the studio ever since. Jack and Greg Chase, from church, drove the Black Ford from our home on the left coast to Oconomowoc, Wisconsin so Greg could attend a week long in-residence church school working towards ordination into the diaconate. Their epic journey can be found on our travel page; check it out here: <http://www.descansorodents.com/travel.html>. It was a hoot to follow them through the trip via SkyPuke. Dru and Hap joined them at Carlsbad, New Mexico and the four of them toured the caverns, Bat Tour and all, then on to Deming, New Mexico to meet up with Bishop Win Mott for dinner. The flying weather was pretty close to perfect, tail wind going and no wind coming home. And, most impressive of all, a huge thunderstorm in the evening near Deming while we were on the ground and in the car! Jack and Greg finished the 5,087 mile trip with no air conditioning in the Black Ford, Dru and Hap made it comfortably home in the Aztec!

Hap's 91 Squadron Reunion was in Fort Worth this year, hosted by Rob and Sweet Beth Stenson, it was a great trip. No Aztec this time, left over Southwest tickets had to be used. Nonetheless, it was a great trip. The Stensons put on a first class get together, the location in the Old Stockyard area was perfect. The chance to join up with old and dear friends was an opportunity not to be missed. Hap was particularly happy to see Jim Simmons, his first WSO at Bentwaters. Also, while in Texas, we got to see our good friends Brian and Ruthie Smith, as well as have lunch with Grizzly family members Paul and Susie Dain. It was a great opportunity to catch up with our far flung family. The weather was poor, but Southwest did not seem to care. What a time!

Jack and Dru did not make the Organization of Flying Adjusters meeting in Oklahoma City, Jack had school stuff he could not put off. Very sad, first conference missed in a long time. The venue was great, Clay Healy of AIC Title hosted the meeting at the Hotel Skirvin. OFA is always a great time. Hap took the Aztec, stopped in Glendale, AZ to pick up OFA President Ken Harris and his lovely wife Carol, then in to Oklahoma City. Seems like with the President onboard we should have used the callsign OFA One. First time out with the new Aspen 1000 Digital Flight Director. The Aztec loved it, we were very comfortable shooting the approach to 200 feet. Glad it was not 190, though. That would have been below minimums!

Since we have been doing the custom printed Christmas cards, each year the cover has been a new to us vehicle. Somehow we did not manage to get any new vehicles this year and it is raining, not snowing as this letter is being written on Thanksgiving Saturday. What will the card be this year? Something for sure. We will decide later. Sad about the no new vehicles, just not the vehicle, no new delivery trips, either. They are such a good time for Hap and Jack. The adventure! Maybe just a trip next year.

We know this will be a major surprise to the reader, but for the tenth year in a row our Cessna is still in pieces. Once again, it was supposed to fly by Jack's birthday, but that slipped. God willing, it will fly before summer. Summer 2010, we hope. It is going to be pretty nice, 170hp or so, real radios, even traffic and an HSI (the HSI once was lost, but now is found). Sure would like to fly it before Jack gets too big to sit in it. The Aztec is back flying, the write-ups is short and best of all, the heater WORKS PROPERLY! Thanks to Brian Smith's designer touch, she is a beauty!

Jack is in high school. He is still working at the office with Hap on Tuesday afternoons and Fridays. Jack is still working hard on the guitar and his progress is incredible. He practices about 15 minutes a day, but plays about 3 hours a day! The trip to Glendale to see Eric Clapton really hooked Jack on the Fender Stratocaster. After much searching, we found a rare Stratocaster VG, now he is working on using all its features. After a tour of the Taylor Guitar factory, the Taylor Acoustic-Electric is out of its case and in use. Jack continues with martial arts under the patient direction of Scott Berry, known around our family as Taekwando Scott. He has now taken up riding horses at Horse of the Sun (<http://www.horseofthesun.com/>) in Pine Valley, two villages up the mountain from us. Although we live pretty close to as West as you can get, he is learning to ride English or Eastern, if you will, learning of all things Dressage. He has also been on two trail rides and finds them quite different from the arena. He is learning

The Arnold Family Update Drones on ...

horses want to go out on rides, forget that quickly and have to be urged on, then as they remember how much fun it was to be back in their own corral, they want to get right back. Still being out in the National Forest is great. His current instructor, Ryan Hopkins, is a wonderful teacher and has Olympic aspirations. Jack is working hard at math with instructor Mr. Castenada and taking a literature class from Susanne Barrett. He is playing football with the Barrett kids on Mondays. Pretty fun stuff!

Sadly, the Pine Valley Players, a startup theatrical group two villages to the east of us, went under. Jack and Dru really enjoyed the experience last year. Maybe they can put together something next year.

Our church is beginning its fifth year. Membership has been stable trending slightly upward this year, we now have an average attendance of 23.5 people each Sunday. The parish, known as Alpine Anglican Church of the Blessed Trinity (<http://www.alpineanglican.com/>), moved with the Diocese of the West under the leadership of Bishop Richard Boyce to the Reformed Episcopal Church as part of the coalescing of the Continuing Anglican Churches in the United States true to scripture. It is also the leader in movement to unify the various Anglican factions in America into the Anglican Church of North America. The church is so small that everybody has at least two jobs. Jack is the Senior Acolyte. Anglican churches are liturgical and generally conservative. Like Hap, they are not in to new for the sake of change. But, they are not stuck in place. To accommodate contemporary and traditional music tastes, Jack and Father Acker (also known as Father Ironhand) play their guitars for the pre-service gathering songs every Sunday and for our service, the extremely talented and lovely Marianne Lane plays the organ. Except on the First Sunday of each month, when the Free Teen Guitar Class provides all the music. In addition to being an ordained priest in the Order of St. Luke and Rector of the Church of the Faithful Centurion, an unaffiliated church of the Anglican Way, Hap is one of Blessed Trinity's three licensed Lay Readers, the Junior Warden and member of the Vestry, as well as being the Beadle. The last job is the most interesting; read about it here: <http://www.thebeadle.blogspot.com/>. Dru is Jack and Hap's keeper and takes care of all the details they both forget, in addition to being an Epistle Reader.

We have not seen or heard from William for about three years. We would appreciate your prayers that God's grace may keep him safe until he finds whatever he is looking for.

Sister Jacquie's big news is gastric surgery that has already resulted in the loss of over a hundred pounds! In addition, she has been working on getting healthy.

Brother Bruce is still working in his law office. His daughter Megan is doing quite well at La Jolla Country Day School. Bruce and Megan have made a couple trips to their condo in Isla Mujeres on the Yucatan Peninsula this year.

Brother Tuck, wife Robie and daughter Alison are doing wonderfully. Ali turned 21 this year and as we speak, the gang are in Las Vegas practicing being 21 or so. Brother Tuck has had a bit less to do with the El Cajon Mounted Police Unit as he spends more time with the Black and White units. Robie still seems to enjoy her job teaching Art at Valhalla High School, but we hear retirement noises. Ali now lives at home and is taking classes at both Cal State San Marcos and Grossmont College. Her boyfriend, Albert, also goes to Grossmont College, who we are finding more and more is a great fellow with a great family.

This year we had Thanksgiving Dinner at our home. Bruce and Megan were in Mexico, Tuck, Robie, Ali and Albert were in Las Vegas. Just the Descanso Rodents, Cousin Marit and Taekwando Scott. Dru found a two hour turkey recipe and we were off low carb for a day! What a great time!

Mrs. Kay Denton, our excellent friend from York, in the UK, is still pretty sick. You will never hear that from her, nor be able to tell by looking. She has been in and out of the hospital. She has neck and thumb deterioration problems, in addition to the heart and kidney problems, which require her to undergo dialysis. When you talk to Mrs. Kay, you cannot help but be in awe of her attitude. She is the most grateful person on the face of this earth and a positive joy to talk to. Thankful in all things comes to mind. Nonetheless, your prayers are appreciated.

This year the Friday after Thanksgiving Desert Shoot had great participation: Hap, Jack, Butch, Steven, Frank and Rory as usual, this time they were joined by Taekwando Scott, Don and Nick from church, as well as Rory's friends Patrick and Eric. With so many new people, things were a tiny bit more structured, but everyone still had a great time. For the first time in many years, no Pumpkin Cromwell to shoot at, but Steven brought some steel sheets and balloons. Hap brought the electric trap. Time was short, due to other commitments on Jack's part, but in two hours they managed to expend more than a thousand rounds. We are up to 327 ground squirrels since the squirrel relocation program began.

Please keep our family members in your prayers – Mrs. Kay and William Arnold

As we prepare to celebrate the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ, we look back over the past year and count our blessings: 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, and a few no longer on the list. We think of years gone by, time spent together. We wish we could have spent more time together. 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

PS: If you would like to communicate with us: Telephone (619) 659-3608 or

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The card? The cover from Jack's album, you can find cuts here: <http://www.descansorodents.com/superfluity.html>

Why is the card so small? Because the Kodak site is hard for Hap to understand and he made an error in card size selection!