

Merry Christmas
from the entire Arnold Family

Dear Friends,

Once again we come upon a Christmastide, remembering 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 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 their families.

This letter is customarily written on the Sunday of Thanksgiving Weekend. We have just finished the four day weekend dedicated to thanking God for our good fortunate this past year. Not everything has gone our way, the economy is in free fall, with the government sponsored retro-rockets pointing the wrong way, but with God's help, we will get past that. But so much has gone our way; we are all healthy, we are employed, we are free to worship and we do. All in all, we can but marvel at the good fortune we have had. This year like each year past, this has been a wonderful year. 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 to our friends and family. 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 about ten years now, though no longer monthly but about quarterly, the third Saturday of some 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 this year actually no vacation for anyone. But, all was not lost. We started out the year with a quick trip to Las Vegas to visit with members of USAF Pilot Training Class 73-03 from Reese AFB (Closed-Surprise), Lubbock, Texas. This was our first get together in 39 years. Seemed like yesterday. John Bowling (C-141) put it together, we met in Vegas because Dave "Wing" Walker (C-130) lived there and Ken Murdock (T-37) came down from Colorado. Just for the record Ken flew a bunch of really cool things, ending up in the F-15. Wing had an amazing career, though the AF never appreciated him either. John's career was short, as was his attitude, but he did very well with American, getting out before the BK! We had a great time, got to tour the Thunderbirds and see six F-22s! We resolved to meet before another 39 years. We'll see.

There has been a lot of travel on Hap's part. Hap had a trip in February to Homer, Alaska, to do an operational evaluation of a little airline. March brought the Organization of Flying Adjusters (OFA) mid-year meeting in Dallas, Texas. October brought the usual OFA annual meeting, this time in West Palm Beach, Florida with the whole family. The Coogans did a really nice job with the meeting and we had a great time. It is good timing, as Jack's birthday is then and he gets a great party of of it! Back home a few weeks, then off to Kodiak, Alaska, for operational evaluation of another little airline. Home a few days, then a business trip to Seattle, Washington. It was mostly long and some fun. All in all a good travel year.

We know this will be a major surprise to the reader, but for the twelfth year in a row our Cessna is still in pieces. Once again, it was supposed to fly by Jack's birthday, but that slipped. It is getting closer, there is an airbox for the carburetor and we are going to license it Experimental which solves some paperwork problems. God willing, it will fly before summer. Summer 2012, 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 just got back from Affordable Avionics (oxymoron, but great people) in Chino where it got another Aspen panel and synthetic vision, as well as the Radar Altimeter and ADF finally hooked up, plus its annual inspection. We should have clean oil and a new door seal next week. The engine done by Corona Engines last year after the single engine landing in Midland, Texas is doing very well.

Jack is about 40 percent done with his Business Accounting degree at Western Governors University (WGU). He is still working at the office with Hap on Monday afternoons and Fridays. Jack is still working hard on the guitar and his progress is incredible, although college has scaled back the practice time. Last year he got a new Fender Eric Clapton Signature Stratocaster which he loves, it seems to have replaced the Carvin CT 624 as the most played guitar. Jack continues with martial arts under the patient direction of Scott Berry, known around our family as Taekwando Scott.

We seem to be more in to horses this year. Jack is still riding dressage. Jack's instructor Ryan Hopkins is now part of the family, except he does not sleep here. Horse of the Sun is a thing of the past. We have moved all four horses to our place. Hap, with a bit of help from Ken Strauch (actually Ken did almost all the work, Hap just came up with the harebrained schemes) built a Horse Mahjal. The horses live in the only known stable with LED lighting and a central vacuum for the tack house. The facility is named after Hap's grandfather, Major AC Arnold, who was a member of the Seventh Cavalry. The stable not only has its own logo, but its own line of clothing! Buttercup has turned into a much nicer horse now that she has her own home. She and Jack are moving well in the dressage



The Arnold Family Update Drones on ...

field. The twins, Luke and Leia, are doing incredibly well. Luke, the buckskin, was the first to go under saddle. He rides very well is responding incredibly to training. Leia just started with a rider a month or so ago and as this is being written, she and Ryan are on a trail ride with Jack and Buttercup. The two little ones are making incredible progress. They have never even crow hopped! Liberty, the big guy, all of 36 inches tall, is doing well. He loves his new home and is pulling us all on a cart, one at a time. The biggest news of the horse year was a couple weeks ago when Hap got on a horse for the first time in 35 years. He did well, but he seemed concerned he would not be able to get his feet out of the stirrups. Not to worry, all went well. We are looking for a bigger cart so Leia can pull us all.

Dru has kept very busy monitoring Jack's college, researching the living heck out of horses, particularly the medical part, keeping the family, including horses, fed and watered, as well as helping with church. She is keeping well and keeping us well.

There is big news on the church front, our parish (www.faithfulcenturion.org) joined the Anglican Orthodox Church (AOC) (www.anglicanorthodoxchurch.org), a Bible based Anglican church with dioceses and affiliated parishes in 22 countries. We are the only parish West of the Mississippi, but that will no doubt not last. The AOC is a refreshing change, the people are straightforward Christians with an Anglican bent, low church, plain speaking and easy going; with a lot of military families and ministers. There is no political correctness, no worries about what others think, no internal politics, no fancy dress and no special powers. There is daily communication between the bishop and the flock! Send an email, get an immediate and meaningful response. The only guide is The Word; they grasp the King James Bible firmly. Our service is straight prayerbook, following all the shalls and almost none of the mays and nothing added in. Pretty refreshing. Jack is studying under Bishop Jerry Ogles to become a Deacon. He is really enjoying the course of study. All is well.

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

Sister Jacque says she is working on getting healthy.

Brother Bruce is still working in his law office. His daughter Megan is still attending La Jolla Country Day School and participating in cheer. They were at their condo in Isla Mujeres on the Yucatan Peninsula for Thanksgiving again this year.

Brother Tuck, wife Robie and daughter Alison are doing wonderfully. Ali turned 23 this year and is doing very well. Brother Tuck has had a bit less to do with the horse part of El Cajon's 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 student teaching. She and Albert are now engaged with a wedding date in August 2012; we are finding more and more he is a great fellow with a great family.

This year we had Thanksgiving Dinner at Tuck and Robie's cabin again this year. Bruce and Megan were in Mexico. Dru used her two hour turkey recipe, even though it took three hours, 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, Rory and Erick as usual, this time they were joined by Ryan. Butch brought a Pumpkin Cromwell to shoot at, then Rory showed with about six more of the Round Heads and there were hundreds of clay birds. Hap brought the electric trap. The weather was perfect and in three hours they managed to expend more than two thousand rounds.

Please keep our family members in your prayers – particularly 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 with us. 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

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