

Dear Friends,

It is now Sunday Dec 17 and I take mouse in hand to pen our 2017 newsletter. In brief, we haven't been anywhere or done anything particularly interesting but have enjoyed life at home with our cat Jasmine, seen here playing her silly 'roadkill' game which doesn't fool anyone!



We are just back from giving apples to a sheep who lives alone in a pen beside John Rd, a few minutes drive from here. He always comes trotting up to the fence when he hears our car coming.

We had big crops of Spartans and Russets and for quite a while we went out almost every day to give windfalls to two retired horses, a Clydesdale and a Percheron, but they have apparently left now for greener pastures. As working horses, they used to pull Tally-Ho carriages full of tourists around the streets of downtown Victoria.



Returning from shopping trips we always go and visit 'our' farm animals and then go for a walk if its fine. All the way round the shoreline in North Saanich there are footpaths maintained by the municipality. Most of them end in steps down to a beach where we sit on logs and take selfies with the telephone propped against rocks. The scenery is marvellous and we see lots of marine mammals and birds doing their thing. This pic was taken at sundown a few days ago.

Rachel and her daughter Alice came on a short visit in January. Rachel cooked delicious meals and took photos of birds, which she is very good at. Back in Marseille, Alice works at a restaurant l'Ebénisterie, (worth a detour). Here she is behind the bar.



Rachel came again in May for Gill's birthday and we have seen all our kids and many grandkids at one time or another. In the summer, Tina came with Chris to stay at their place on Mayne Island. Chris earned our undying gratitude by rebuilding the steps down to the dock, seen in this picture with Gill mounting them after we went for a spin around the harbour in our rowboat, propelled by its mighty Honda 5 HP outboard.



Between us Gill and I still look after the house and garden with a little outside help. I cannot resist including a snap of my major lifetime achievement as a gardener - Mrs Dorothy Perkins growing rampant over our woodshed. This has grown from a piece of root with a few inches of stem that I liberated from a neighbour's hedge 20 years ago, getting severely lacerated in the process.



So long as there is breath in my lungs I will grow runner beans. Bob Meech helped me put an anti-rabbit fence around them and we had a good crop before a deer discovered them. Here, Gill is cutting them into diagonal slices. There was a big quince crop too – lots of jam and jelly.

Publication of Al's book about Kwäday Dän Ts'inchi (meaning long-ago person found) - the body found frozen in glacier in Northern BC - was a big event and a big success.



Music is a big part of my life and I get together a quartet or quintet several times a month. I have a 'stable' of players I can draw on, mostly from the Saanich peninsula, four of us in our eighties but all chamber musicians for the love of it. I have now got software for arranging music for different instruments by transposing it into different keys and clefs. I managed to convert the Adagio from Schubert's C major quintet which is scored for two violins, one viola and two cellos into a more conventional quintet by converting Cello 1 into Viola 2 and putting parts of it up an octave where it went too low for the viola's bottom string.



When we have music here, Gill often goes out with Al or one of her women friends for coffee, shopping, or checking out the thrift shops, as she is not driving her car these days.

I still have time for pottery making and have developed a new spotty glaze which I put on a set of coffee mugs for Tina, also some larger tea mugs in overlapping greens, blues and mauves, all gone now.

With love and best wishes from us both,
George

