

Merry Christmas



And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but he was asleep. And his disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish. And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm. But the men marveled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him! Matthew 8:23-27

Greetings to all of our family and friends again as Christmas draws near. All of our family, except Timothy, Mia, Gayla and Bennie were with us for our Thanksgiving this year. Since, we have already begun celebrating the coming Christmas with two parties last weekend and a graduation party this weekend. It has been a pleasant and peaceful time after the rough and stormy fall.

Nicole has been going through management training from her employer and is now a qualified restaurant manager. She may switch from line management to their corporate staff soon – there's an opening that she is looking at. She still lives in Deltona but may also be moving soon – depends on

where her job takes her. Nicole comes by the house often, so we still see a lot of her.

Joy and Dave are also frequent visitors. They live south of Daytona where Dave maintains the apartment complex they live in. Of all of us, Joy and Dave had the toughest experiences with our summer storms. The first one destroyed their apartment and they had to move. Their cars were also both badly damaged. They are settled into a larger unit now and have their cars back. Dave is probably still doing repairs to storm damage at the complex. Joy is still working nearby and visits at lunchtime.

Anthony, April and Dwight have done some traveling this year. They made a vacation trip to Hawaii. This fall, April and Anthony spent a week in Minneapolis visiting relatives. Anthony spent a couple of days with us after Thanksgiving. Grandpa took the opportunity to teach Anthony how to dig earthworms and feed them to the fish in the pond. He thought it was great fun and he's always fun to have around! He's a happy little guy all the time.

Riley, Jordan, Casey, Jessy and Mark weathered the storms with us during the summer. All three boys are busy in school. Riley just finished a Christmas program for us this week. He also spent a day and night out with us on the boat – he couldn't wait to fish! Casey and Jordan both put in another season of soccer and have been playing lots of football on the front lawn this fall. Mark hunted again and got three deer. Jessy did some business traveling, working at trade shows for her company.

Timothy, Mia, Gayla and Bennie moved north this summer. They now live in Fargo, North Dakota, near many of our family there. This will be Mia and Gayla's first winter with cold and snow as they have always lived in Florida. Bennie is working at the apartment complex where they live. He also spent some time helping Brian with the beet harvest this fall. They seem to be enjoying their new home and the experiences of the Northland!



Amber went back to high school and graduated this week! She has stayed behind and lives in Holly Hill now with her fiancé, Dan. They both come over often. Dan can be found playing football with Jordan and Casey or out fishing with one or the other when he's here.

Jan and I have also had an eventful year. Carol and Mitch came to visit with their family. Shaun and John were also here for a visit with the family. My aunt Marion and Uncle Charley came to see us too! So we had lots of company. Jan's father, Henry passed away at the end of April. We all miss him as he was very close to the whole family. I didn't travel nearly as much this year as I have in the past. But Jan made one long trip to Houston for the International Quilt Show this fall. She enjoyed it and came home with lots of new ideas!

2004 was a violent year in central Florida. We had four hurricanes up close and personal! Hurricane Charley made landfall on August 13. It crossed Florida from Southwest to Northeast, crossing over Nicole's house and then going out into the Atlantic between Joy and Dave's home and ours. It passed in the middle of the night and I think the edge of the eye brushed us on its way through.

The power was out and we spent most of the night in the living room and on the front porch, which was in the lee of the house. We couldn't see much but could hear trees snapping off all around us. Three weeks later, on September 5, Hurricane Frances struck. Frances made landfall south of us and traveled across Florida from Southeast to Northwest. The eye of this storm also crossed over Nicole's home! While the eye was some distance from us, we still had sustained hurricane force winds all day long. Power went out again and more trees were broken and stripped of their leaves. By this time, our neighborhood had developed a pretty effective cleanup crew. Everyone who could pitched in with their equipment and labor. Sixteen days after Frances, on September 21, Hurricane Ivan returned as a tropical storm. We only got some very blustery weather this time. By the weekend, however, on September 26, Hurricane Jeanne

made landfall at almost the same place as Frances. It pretty much followed Frances across Florida, again passing over Nicole's home! By the time Jeanne was over, we had all pretty well tired of living without power in the heat and humidity of Florida in the summer. The experiences were exciting and we were fortunate in that God spared us from any injuries.



Happy New Year!

Jan & Al