



CHRISTMAS 2009



Where to start? Many of you know we took Grandpa Sheppa to the emergency room the morning of January 3. He was examined, tested, admitted and operated on the afternoon of the 4th! Following surgery, his doctor told us that they got everything they could, but his bladder cancer was terminal. Daddy stood the surgery very well and came home within 24 hours on Hospice care. A week and a half later, I got a phone call telling us that the tissue reports had come back revealing that he had prostate cancer, not bladder cancer. He was given a very mild dose of chemo—one pill a day for 3 weeks and later a hormone shot that will be repeated every 4 months as long as he lives. He progressed very well and was removed from Hospice care the end of April. Because he hears so little, we aren't sure he even understands he has cancer! That is just as well, for the cancer has been totally put to sleep and will not take his life. He still eats whatever he wants, walks on his own around the apartment and often sits in front of the computer wishing he could see enough to make changes to his book! He is not as strong and willingly rides in his wheel chair now whenever we go out. Nothing more can be done for his eyes or hearing. He has the sweetest spirit and is grateful for being taken care of. Never complains, though his days must seem boring now.

Our hearts broke in March when we had to put our beloved Cee Cee to sleep. She was the best dog anyone ever had. We still tear up remembering things she did. Even Grandpa still misses her--when he was so sick she stayed right by him.

We officially moved out of the 4-plex and into 610 N. First on May 28. With lots of help from our friends, it is all fixed up—comfortably old fashioned! Definitely not an office now! Had house guests twice in May and most of July. My sister came in mid-February and again September 16-20 for Daddy's 104th birthday!

In June we got a care giver for Daddy and flew back to Leesburg, Virginia for 6 days to attend Jean's 50th class reunion. Visited a number of dear old friends and even met my sister and her family in Arlington VA to attend a Sunday morning service at Cherrydale Baptist, the church where we grew up. Trip was great, the reunion exceptional--Jim really enjoyed it too!

July 9th Jim had his carpal tunnel reopened and also scar tissue released from his elbow where the nerve was previously rerouted. Both surgeries healed very quickly and brought real relief.

Got our care giver again for Daddy, and drove to Wichita KS, via southern Illinois and southern Missouri, between October 14-19 for Jim's 50th H.S. reunion. Put 5100 plus miles on the car in that short time, visiting all but one of Jim's siblings, many nieces and nephews and their spouses, as well as great nieces and nephews.



We also were able to visit cousins in Boise and a number of friends and HHFC supporters. The visits were all short. Still, time kept us from seeing many of you. Next trip you come first!

On October 26 Jean had the cataract removed from her left eye. On Nov. 6 she began coughing and hasn't stopped yet. The second cataract surgery had to be re-scheduled for Dec. 21, but may have to be cancelled again if she is not a whole lot better than she is today. Dr. has no idea what is wrong—it is not flu, a cold, bronchitis, a sinus infection, pneumonia or whooping cough—cough is prolonged, productive and debilitating: keeps her sleep-deprived and short of breath. She has been out of the house for short periods only 6 times in 6 weeks! Pray God shows us what to do soon--thanks!

Jim has been Daddy's sole care giver since I got sick. Taking care of two of us must be tiring him out! November 10 was our 48th anniversary. Celebration postponed! I cannot see except VERY close up because I cannot wear my glasses till after the second cataract surgery. This letter is getting done because we figured out a way to get a computer right up to my face! You'd laugh to see me typing with sun glasses on because the bright screen makes my eye water and hurt.

A quick family catch-up: Jamie divorced Rena this spring after 27 years. Julie married Michael Evans on June 13. Andy (25) bought his first house; Julie, Maria (24), Charity (17) and James (24) are all college students (Charity in Running Start); John (22) and Tabitha (20) are working; Beka (17) is still in high school, busy in sports and Driver's Ed; and Isaiah (15) is recovering from a badly broken collar bone—can't wait to do tricks on his bicycle again!

Jim continues to work part-time in Hard Hats visiting projects, those who need encouraging, and members and friends when he can. He's still culling files, working on a CWCf history, trying to keep up with birthdays and anniversaries and meeting with Dave in the office once a week.

In spite of some sad events during the year, our hearts rejoice as we celebrate the birth of our Savior, the Author and Finisher of our Salvation, the Risen and Coming King of Kings! Have a very Merry Christmas! Our redemption is closer than ever!! Trust the Savior while you can. Come what may, we pray you'll know Him--so you can rest in the peace He gives throughout 2010 and beyond.

Jim and Jean Hodges

