



THE HODGE-PODGE GAZETTE



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A ROLLER-COASTER YEAR FOR THE HODGES

The year of 2009 was, as is usual for most families, a matter of ups and downs. For Jack it was a year of focus on health issues. Dealing with congestive heart failure is an ongoing concern, exacerbated by his second hip replacement surgery on March 31. When his pulse rose to 200 the night after surgery, a frantic medical team took immediate care to normalize the heart rate.

Adjusting medications took many months after bouts of severe imbalance and insomnia. Because preventative meds caused severe insomnia, a defibrillator was implanted in September. He did okay on the Nov. 12-30 trip to SE Asia.

For Jean there were a trips to New York (with Jack) and Washington, D.C. for PFLAG Board meetings and an amazing trip to Utah to participate in a "Love Rally" for LGBT graduates at their commencement at Southern Utah University in Cedar City. In October while in D.C. she was excited to join the Equality Rally on the west lawn of the Capitol.

(A commentary on the experience can be found at HodgePodgeGazette.com). She announced in May that this would be the last year for Jack and her to be treasurer and president of the local chapter. She promised not to disappear, but she is eager for new leadership to emerge. Probably the biggest challenge of the year was to write and produce a play to help First United Methodist Church celebrate its first 150 years. For a separate heart-warming story about outcomes of the play, go to HodgePodgeGazette.com.

Ben has just received a raise when he was selected for a special detail in Washington with the IRS to work on Internal Communication for IRS employees across the country as part of his job as an IRS Senior Web Specialist. He and Wayne had a wonderful week in Italy in October while Wayne visited a trade show. They were able to slip in a few extra days to visit

Rome, Florence, Milan, and Santa Margherita Ligure on the Northern coast. They ate their way through each city and pronounced it all delicious!

Beth, still uneasy about lay-offs at Staples, is holding tight to her position as Telecommunication and Network Specialist. Kris loves being a ninth grader in high school "where they treat you like an adult". He has declared a Visual/Performing Arts focus and is happily a member of the

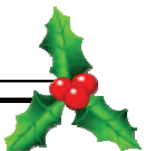
Men's Chorus. He went to two Homecoming Dances, the second with a girl friend from sixth grade. And yes, he's still absorbed with his video games.

Rae (Jonna prefers her middle name now) is also in ninth grade at Nederland Middle-High School and is on the Junior Varsity volleyball team while sister Kate returned to public school as a fifth grader at Nederland Elementary. Her claim to fame is that she is a "Dating Doctor" which means she gives advice to classmates about what they should do to win favor with the opposite sex. She vehemently adds, "But I don't date, I just give advice!" Katie is a little vague about what it means for fifth graders to "date".

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Angkor Wat, vast 12th century temple, celebrates Hindu and Buddhist mythologies



This has been a sad year for John's family. Over the past year Liz decided to live separately and in September their divorce was final. After twenty years together, the whole family is sad that it had to end this way. They share custody of the girls. John keeps his mountain cabin, three horses, Sally Ann the mule and continues his Mountain Country Plumbing and Heating business. Hopefully lessons learned will lead to personal growth for everyone. Good news for Liz is that recent tests show no sign of cancer!

Hodges Family Reunion Celebrated



A happy throng of some 23 Hodges family members related to Jim, Jack and Jo spent the Fourth of July weekend together in Milwaukee. Hosted by Linda and Mark Keane in their spacious 3 story home overlooking Lake Michigan, they found places to sleep from laundry room to attic for nearly everyone with one RV in the driveway.

Activities were provided for all levels of energy. Constant badminton battles in the front yard with the cousins. Kayaking in the lake, which was too cold for much swimming, was a new experience for Colorado cousins Kris, Kate and Rae. Even Grandma Jean rode with the bicyclers to see some architectural models in Mark's office at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. A trip to the beautiful Milwaukee Art Museum was a treat for another carload. We became bystanders waving flags and cheering for Ariel who marched with her friends at the Shorewood Fourth of July parade and later we all settled on blankets that evening at a nearby park to watch fireworks. Cooking cooperatively, eating voraciously, talking furiously with one then another, watching joyously to see how the younger generation is growing into maturity, we can all mark this as one of the best reunions ever.

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Couple Visits South East Asia

Jean and Jack just returned from a tour of Thailand, Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia where more than ancient ruins came alive for them. "A rich experience on many levels," replied Jean who is still sorting through over 800 photos she took. "Asian food twice a day was a stretch for me," added Jack. "Give me a Wendy's hamburger anytime!" The Overseas Adventure Travel Tour took them "off the beaten path" for visits to a Hmong village in Laotian mountains, a school visit and home-hosted lunch in a Cambodian village, and local guides in each country shared stories, such as the atrocities of the Kymer Rouge years in Cambodia and took us to visit the Cu Chi tunnels in Vietnam, an underground network built by the Viet Cong during "the American war." More than anything the trip was a spiritual journey where we learned about Buddhism and observed the faithful in every temple and ruin we visited. To read more detailed commentaries from the trip, go to the website.

Original Drama Celebrates Church's Birthday

A stagecoach was the metaphor for the rocky ride of First United Methodist Church's 150 year-old history in a play written and produced by Jean Hodges on Oct. 24 and 25 after several months of research and writing. The Gold Rush in 1859 was also the beginning of Boulder, Colorado. Over fifty people, both on stage and behind the scenes, chose to be part of the company that created *Rolling Back, Growing Forward*. Besides 40 people in the cast, there were easily another ten or fifteen who worked behind the scenes to provide sound, lights, set design, ushering, poster designs, advertising, slide projections, as well as those who offered help with costumes, the loan of wheels and provided bits of research and personal stories for the script. To read more about the play visit HodgePodgeGazette.com.



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