

December 20, 2022

My Family and Friends,

Here begins my first ever end-of-the-year summary of what Graciela and I have been engaged in over this past year. Given my advancing age, having completed my 73rd year last March, it is highly likely that not only will I forget to mention some momentous events, I shall probably also overly embellish some event as I try to retrieve them from my memory banks.

The year 2022 will be remembered by me for events personal and professional. I think that meeting Susan, Janet and Beverly Clingan, whose Aunt was also my Aunt Virginia, Cousin John's mother, was a personal highlight. I started a Saturday Zoom call back in 2021 in order to provide a forum for our extended family to communicate and maintain contact with each other and our beloved Cousin Charlie, our Aunt Mary's only child. Although it was uplifting at times and painful as well, having Charlie on those calls was wonderful. The sadness of his death was offset by the joy we felt in seeing him in person every week and letting him know that we were there with him in love and spirit. Those Zoom calls put us into contact with Charlie's children and for a while we were able to get to know them just a little better. That was so uplifting.

After Charlie's death, we have continued every Saturday to meet and share our common bonds, maladies and humor. It has been my great pleasure to learn more and more about my extended family and I hope that I can continue this shared bond with them for much time to come.

Another major breakthrough was getting Graciela's visa renewed. The pandemic had seriously curtailed embassy activities and we were concerned that it would be 2023 before Graciela could get her visa renewed and be able to return to the US. We were able to expedite her visa by means of a special exception for spouses with ailing partners (me) and she now travels freely to and from Mexico and Argentina.

On the professional side, it has been an exciting year for me as a result of being contacted by an Astrophysicist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to design and build an instrument that will fly to Venus in 2025 and measure the properties of Venus cloud droplets. We have now built, tested and proven the prototype and the coming year will be a continuing one of building the mission instrument and working with Rocket Lab, the company that will carry the instrument to Venus. I have designed and built many instruments over the years, but this will be the one that helps me wind down my career.

Graciela continued to teach, online, at the National University of Mexico in Mexico City this past year, but plans to retire next year. I will also curtail my activities at Droplet Measurement Technologies, the company that I founded 35 years ago.

In the meantime I do volunteer activities with the Taos Elders and Neighbors Together (TENT) non-profit where we help those who wish to continue living at home as they age. I am the technical expert who help with telephone and computer issues.

My son Jeremy, continues his work as Chief mechanic on a Gulfstream 300 and Keri, his life partner continues her professional career as a stain glass artist. They are almost finished building their cabin in the mountains of Colorado. My stepdaughter, Micaela, is finishing her master's degree at the University of Montreal and will continue as a physics professor at the National University of Mexico.

We will spend some of our winter holidays at our house in Mendoza but will return to snow shoeing and skiing in February next year. I include a few photos below.

Love to all,

Darrel and Graciela



