



The east side of our house with its fresh coat of paint.

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Dear Friends and Family,

Sorry to be so late; we'll explain further down the page. Rereading last year's letter, 2010 is going to sound a lot like 2009. We built a lot of fence, painted the house, and bought a new car, along with all the usual projects like maple syrup and hay making. That is a slight edit of the lead

sentence from last year but they were different projects. In 2009 we painted all but the east end, which is the side that takes the most weather. This year's project involved more than painting, as we took off most of the siding for repair and restoration, upgraded the electrical circuits, and installed insulation. Each board was repaired and primed before it went back up and the whole thing got two coats of finish paint afterward. We also built an extension on our porch, which is hidden by the bush in the lower-right in the photo. Note the solar collectors on the roof.

We built a new road up Stark Ridge in order to install high-tensile fencing to replace an aging temporary fence that contained our herd of cattle. This also opened up a few acres of additional pasture and allows vehicle access along the entire fence for maintenance. Previously, all maintenance was done on foot over very steep ground and a lot of work was needed due to the rag-tag nature of the fence.

Char flew to Washington in April to visit her two sisters and other family on Orcas Island. Daughter Kathy went out with her and stayed a week. Char stayed for a month, had a great time, and arrived home in mid-May. For Char, this was not enough excitement, so she totaled the car. Drove it off the road and rolled it over onto its roof. Mashed it all up. With amazing talent she came through with no injuries. We replaced the 2009 Subaru Forester with a 2010 model and the insurance paid for the new one.

Then in August we hosted a family week on the farm. Daughter Stephanie and her son Kevin drove from Minnesota to pick up her daughter, Julia, at Penn State. They all came here for nearly a week, during which time Kathy and her fiance, Jeff Smith, came up from Roanoke. That's right – *fiance* – Kathy is getting married!! All of us but Char hiked up to Piney Point overlook with some friends, photo at right by Shane Wiseman. The wedding will be in October in Roanoke.



John, Jeff, Kathy, Julia, Stephanie, Kevin, Ed and Jaime.

We took three other trips this year and each involved an overnight away from home, the first for John since 2006. Char took the train to Philadelphia in July to visit Beverly and her daughter Lynne and our great-grandsons. She was there for several days, then John drove up to Lancaster (Lynne's home) to pick her up. In September we went to Maryland for a reunion of members of the U.S. Whitewater Slalom Team. This was a great opportunity to visit with old friends. We stayed with Bill Bickham and his wife. Bill is one of John's first paddling buddies. Finally, in late October we went to Latrobe, PA, to visit Tom and Paulette Irwin at their home and Barb and Rick McKee, who drove out from New Jersey. Tom is another of John's long-time paddling buddies and Barb was his doubles partner for many years. It was beautiful fall weather and a wonderful weekend.

Char did not feel up to playing with the orchestra in Covington this past year. (I was pretty much a waste of space in 2010.) She did start taking lessons from a wonderful teacher who has moved to Monterey (much less travel needed) and played in a recital in December. John's caving activities picked up in the fall, when one of our more ambitious digging projects finally hit paydirt. The entrance series in this cave is very tough going before it opens up into larger passage. The surveyed length is now nearing three miles.

Then at Christmas, Kathy, Jeff, and Stephanie came back and eldest daughter, Beverly, drove down from Pennsylvania, so all three sisters were here for several days. It was cold the whole time they were here. We did a little snowshoeing but mostly we stayed inside and ate. This gathering is our main excuse for the lateness of this letter.

For more on most of these things, please visit our web site at <http://johnrsweet.com/Personal/> There you will find links to details on our house projects, caving and other activities, and an archive of older events. In particular, there is a page with more details and lots of photos of events in 2010 at <http://johnrsweet.com/Personal/2010.html>

Love to all,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Char & John". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.