

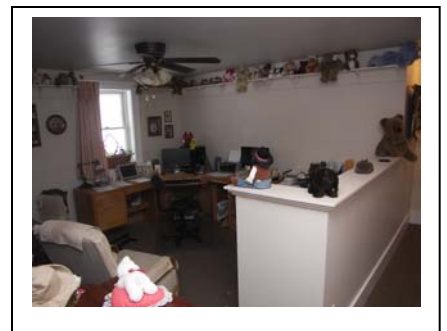
Dear Friends,

Welcome to the 2009 Christmas 'newsy' letter. As I mentioned last year, we were about to purchase a new home. Well, the deal was finalized on January 12<sup>th</sup> of this year! We now have a new 'bungalow' in Wray, Colorado, with a population of 2000, no super stores and only one grocery store. We are located in the eastern plains of Colorado, just 16 miles west of the Nebraska state line.



By the first week in February, Bob had gotten things prepared for me to do more packing of our goodies in Loveland while he 'moved' to Wray to start on the construction and preparations of our new home. Construction? – yep! Back in December, Bob traveled to Wray to get complete measurements of the house, so he could plan what we were going to do. Drawings were made and design discussions followed. He was going to demolish the closet end of the master bedroom and take half of the garage to make four new rooms – a walk-in closet for me, a bathtub room

(using the restored original old claw foot bathtub that was stored in the basement), an office for me and a room for the hot tub. Mid February Bob located a couple of workers, Horacio and José, to help him with the construction. So for several months, the three of them worked on the construction six days a week. Bob would travel back to Loveland, to take RCIA classes and help me with the Loveland house and packing. Then he would travel back to Wray with a trailer full of packed boxes and construction supplies (he had purchased a small trailer to drag behind his little Suzuki).



In April during the Easter celebrations, Bob was accepted into the Catholic Church as a full and new member, after over nine months of studies and classes. I'm so proud of him!

After many months of construction, packing, and preparations (too long for me), I decided it was time to make the move. The major construction on the main floor was pretty much complete. Only basement construction was left to do and would be completed after we moved. So Bob, Horacio, and José came to Loveland on June 15<sup>th</sup>, rented a big truck and made two, or was it three, trips between Loveland and Wray. They took all the remaining boxes, furniture and the like to Wray. They left only enough for me to sleep on for a few days.

On June 17<sup>th</sup>, after several days of being very sick, Inky, our little black poodle, was 'put to sleep'. Fifteen years just finally had caught up with him. We planted a nice juniper tree on the north side of our new home in July and was able to include Inky's final resting place under the new tree.

June 22<sup>nd</sup> was the final move day, so we all traveled to Wray and I traveled with them to our 'new' home. Boxes were everywhere, furniture piled all over the place, but we were home!

Early in the morning of June 24<sup>th</sup> I got up during the middle of the night, with lights off (I still didn't know where all the light switches were) and tripped over a large box and took a header right into the shower stall in the bathroom. My left arm was severely banged up, so by 4 AM we were at the local hospital to see if I had broken anything. Nothing was broken except my pride, but my arm had swollen up and made me look like Popeye the sailor. Many weeks passed before my badly bruised arm was usable, back to its un-swollen size and almost a normal color.

July found Kim (Bob's brother) and Marcia here for a four day visit. They happened to be with us on the 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> of July, which was a celebration in town called Wray Daze. There was a parade that starts nearly in front of our home and continues up the street then back down Main



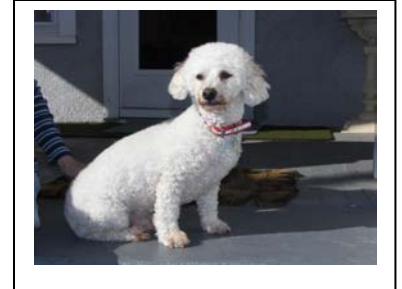
Street (two blocks away). Then there were lots of activities, games, and competitions. It was all very enjoyable. Kim said he wanted to come back next year for Wray Daze.

On the 8<sup>th</sup> of August Bob was overseeing a garage sale at our place and I went a few blocks down the street to a local farmer's market that we have here in Wray during the later summer months. While there I 'tripped the light fantastic', fell, and broke my kneecap right in half. So, we took another trip to the hospital (only six blocks from our home), to verify that my patella was broken and separated. It was, and there were no

local surgeons that could put me back together again. Bob loaded up the RV on Sunday, stuffed me in bed in the back of the rig and drove us to Loveland for an appointment with my orthopedic surgeon on Monday. Yep, sure was broken and, yep, sure needed surgery. The surgery was performed on Thursday to wire me back together. I guess Humpty Dumpty didn't have the right surgeon, like I did. While in the hospital recovering from the surgery, the doctors also found that my lung function was not sufficient. They determined that I would require oxygen all the time. On the 17<sup>th</sup> Bob loaded up the RV with a bunch of oxygen equipment, medical doodads, and me and we were off to Wray and 'recovery'.

The next few months were a blur of recovery, travel to Loveland every two weeks for more tests and inspections; then return to Wray for recovery, and a little bit of physical therapy. We had planned to head out to travel to 'The Alamo' the last week of October for Bob's birthday, but because of the kneecap incident, we had to cancel that trip. My birthday in September and Bob's in October were both quietly celebrated here in Wray. On one of the trips to Loveland and after many tests, consultations and the like, one of my doctors also let me know that I had diastolic congestive heart failure, but medications were available that would help (not cure) the condition. Thank God for Drugs, both for the heart and the pain in the knee!

On our August 25<sup>th</sup> trip to Loveland for medical appointments, we stopped at the Greely animal shelter and found what they called a 'White Poodle', a lovable little guy that really looks more like a Bichon Frise, a cross between a poodle and a water spaniel. We adopted him, took him home and now call him Inky-2.



Mark, my son, who is still a respiratory therapist at St. Anthony Hospital North in Denver, joined us for a quiet Thanks Giving celebration that included way too much food, a 22 pound turkey, and lots of leftovers.

December 5<sup>th</sup> was the closing date for the sale of our Loveland house! Hurray! We were able to sell the old homestead, even in these hard economic times.

So here it is December all ready, I am still on oxygen, but off the walker and just using a cane. My physical therapy is continuing twice a week and I'm up and about most days! Bob is back to construction in the basement with all the 'technical' upgrades to the house, still occasionally unpacking boxes, and taking our new family member Inky-2 for his constitutional walks.

Life is good in Wray; the neighbors are friendly, even bringing us food, dinners and flowers during my recovery. We are happy!

Bob and I wish you all: God's blessings during this Christmas season and next year.

Oh, be sure to have a Happy New Year, too!

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