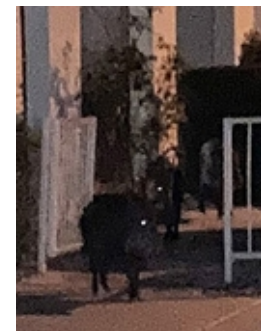




A Photo Review of Our 2023



Unfortunately, 2023 started with Smoot catching Covid. He took a home test on Jan 2 and it was positive. We moved to separate bedrooms but luckily I never had symptoms or tested positive. His cough lingered for weeks. Our Bougainvillea was blooming on Jan 12. On Jan 17, Smoot met with a reporter from the AZ Republic about our HOA issues and on Jan 25 Smoot and his attorney took part in a legal hearing on those issues.



We had lunch with Julie and Marshal on Jan 30 at Cooper's Hawk in the Promenade. On Feb 1, the choir held a ritual remembering the members who were with us before the pandemic and were no longer and had a discussion about Covid masking policies. On Feb 4 our neighborhood had a family of Javalina visit. They ate our neighbor's cactus but didn't damage any of our plants. They did leave a strong smell.



UUCP celebrated Benjie's 10th anniversary as Music Director and Choir Director on Feb 5. Smoot and I had our pets blessed (by photo) on Feb 19 at an outdoor service. We celebrated Joan's birthday with Bill on Feb 24 with a photoshopped candle! The storm in California had delayed her family visit there.



There were more choir members than family members at Ruth Thistlethwaite's memorial service on the afternoon of Feb 25. Paula had arranged everything. That evening we had an Indian dinner with Bonnie & Ed then used Julie & Marshal's tickets to attend the 50 Years of Rock & Roll concert.



UUCP's stewardship kick-off party was held outside on Sun Feb 26. Rev. Christine, Katie & Benjie celebrated. On Mar 4 Joan hosted a dinner with Eric and us to welcome Linda & Gary back to town.



Marshal broke his leg in Feb so lunch was at their house on Mar 9th. In Dec 2021, Dave & Barbara got some Eucalyptus wood from the tree we'd had to take down. He turned some of it into a beautiful bowl. Photo of them & bowl on Mar 11 at UUCP. Lee & Bob hosted a St. Patrick's Day party on 17th.



On Mar 19 UUCP honored those who had led the Neighborhood Groups during the pandemic. (I'm in the blue sweater.) After the service there was a lunch with tables by Neighborhood. Above those in my Neighborhood H.



On Mar 26, we went to UUCP/UUF's Family Picnic at the RR Park. Smoot tried the bounce house with Rev. Christine! On Apr 2, we went to the Donor Appreciation event at the Phoenix Herpetological Sanctuary and had a nice visit with Katelyn Garcia, the Education & Outreach Director.



Charlotte at the huge Red-eared Slider turtle pond at PHS. We had lunch with Bob & Lee on Apr 3 before they returned to Canada. That evening Kat came over for a consultation with Smoot.



We went to the choir party at Bill & Joan's on Apr 8. The UUCP orchestra joined the mostly unmasked choir for Easter on Apr 9.



We joined Julie and Judy to visit Ellie at the Beatitudes on Apr 13. UU singer and songwriter Jim Scott joined the choir at our practice on Apr 19 ahead of his service on Apr 23. We had coupons for our dinner with Joan & Bill at California Kitchen on Apr 20.



We had lunch outside with Marshal & Julie at the Culinary Gangster on Apr 22. The choir sang at Jim Scott's Save the Earth service on Apr 23.



We had a picture taken with Jim Scott after his service. He's tall! We went to Josh & Jim's going away party on Apr 30. Smoot was honored at the volunteer party at Maryland School on May 4th. He's shown with his teacher, Jessica and fellow choir member and Maryland School volunteer coordinator Cathy. We had breakfast with Smoot's former colleague Gail on May 9.



The choir provided the Community Night dinner on May 11. We made a rare trip to the theater to watch Guardians of the Galaxy 3 on May 12. We had lunch at Luci's with Julie & Marshal on May 13.



We attended the recital of Connie's students on May 21 then joined Connie, Richard & Connie's sister Barb for dinner. Patriotically attired golfers, Smoot, Jim & John on Memorial Day, May 29.



We had breakfast with Barb, Richard & Connie on Jun 3 & lunch with Julie & Marshal on Jun 6 in the Star Wars room at ComicX in Desert Ridge. On Jun 11 Smoot joined continuing members Sarah and Marshal when he was elected to the board of the UU Foundation. He was asked to be president again.



We had lunch with Ed, Bonnie, Julie & Marshal at Wildflower after the service on the 11th. We had lunch with Bill & Joan on Jun 15 at Cook & Craft. Smoot took Bobbie for a walk on Jun 20.



Smoot's birthday is on Jun 20. He got his free burger at Red Robin and had cake and gifts at home. Marshal & Julie gave us nice water bottles at our lunch on Jun 27 at BJ's.



We took three of our four cats to our vet at Desert Tails Animal Clinic on Jun 30 for their annual check-ups. The three carriers filled the back seat and vet office with unhappy cats Rocky, Shadow and Griz. Joan & Eric came to visit on Jul 2. Bobbie sat in Joan's lap. Little did we know that pictures of him that day would turn out to be the last ones we had of him. He died overnight July 11-12, 2023 while we were out of town at Smoot's family reunion. He was cared for by our neighbor/cat-sitter Faith.



My geese were in their patriotic attire for July 4th as was Smoot for his golf game. Bill & Joan, Bonnie & Ed, Madelyn and Dale joined us at Red Robin for our traditional July 4th milkshakes. We celebrated our 50th at the Mitchell family reunion on Whidbey Island outside of Seattle on Jul 12.



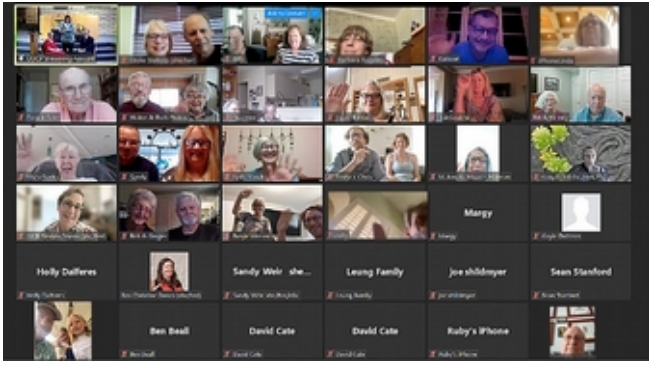
There was a big group of family at the reunion that took place from July 10-13. Joe came by on July 24th to talk about our solar plans and got to see my collection studio. He came back on July 26 with two vintage items to add to my collections.



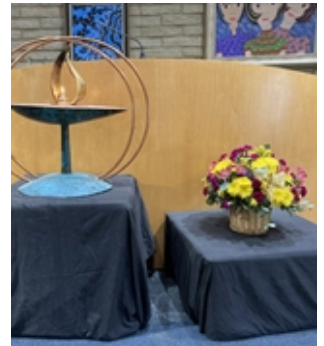
Janet picked up Jency at the airport and we took them both to supper at Manuel's on Aug 1. Smoot spoke at Dan Roberts' funeral on Aug 3rd. Jency, my maid of honor at our wedding, treated us to dinner at the Talking Stick Resort on our actual 50th anniversary on Aug 4.



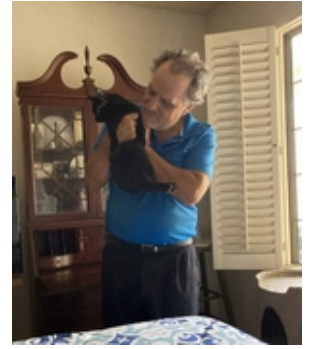
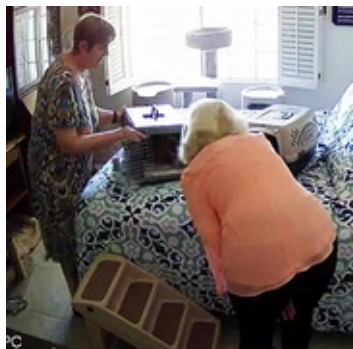
Jency took a picture of us in our wedding outfits. We barely fit in them! Rev. Christine officiated at our 50th anniversary renewal-of-vows celebration at UUCP on Aug 5. It was preceded by a slide show of photos of our years together. Sam sang "Longer" by Dan Fogelberg accompanied by Connie.



Leslie, our Chat Chaplain, captured the Zoom image. We were joined by family and friends from as far away as the East Coast and Finland! We got a standing ovation from our community. (A recording of our 50th anniversary slide show and service is at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m4trBAmXPsk>.)



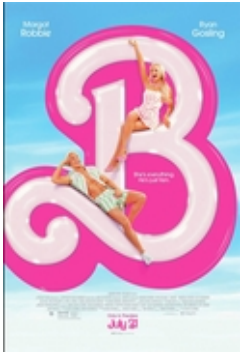
We had a party afterward. Jency helped prepare and serve the food. Janet served the punch. The party leftovers were served after the service on Sunday the 6th and our flowers were by the chalice.



Jency returned to Austin on Aug 8 wearing the ankh necklace I'd given her in 1973 for being in our wedding. Dave & Nancy, the only other ones to come in from out of state for our 50th celebration, came by for a visit later that day before driving back to CA. Joan came by on Aug 12 to see my 5 new fosters. They were shy but by Aug 14 Smoot was able to pick one up.



Christine & Karen took us out to dinner on Aug 17 for cat-sitting their sick kitty Malcolm in 2022. Smoot took this beautiful photo of a full rainbow from the golf course on Aug 18.



We went to see Barbie on Aug 21. I added the cute picture frame the Leungs gave us for our 50th to our family photo table and a 50th montage to our anniversary wall.



Joan came for another kitty visit on Aug 25 and got to hold a foster and play with Griz & Rocky. I celebrated my 73rd birthday on Aug 26 with a free breakfast at Denny's, free lunch from Schlotzsky's, and tea at the English Rose Tea Room.



Then cake, cards, flowers and gift (camera bird feeder) at home. We went to a Labor Day party at Christian's on Sept 4. Madeline & Billy's 50th gift, a Vermont Wish Bowl, arrived on Sept 6.



Lunch with Julie & Marshal at Randy's on Sep 7. Smoot met with a Scottsdale Water Conservation rep on Sep 14 about our landscaping plan that was being blocked by the current HOA. Jonny's 50th birthday party and roast was held at UUCP on Sep 16.



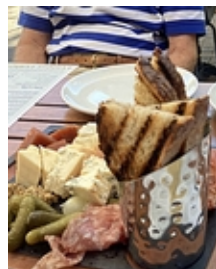
We got our flu shots and Covid boosters on Sep 19. That night we had supper with Joan & Eric at Babbo's and saw Sherwin there. We went to Brad's talk on AI at the Humanist Center on Sep 24.



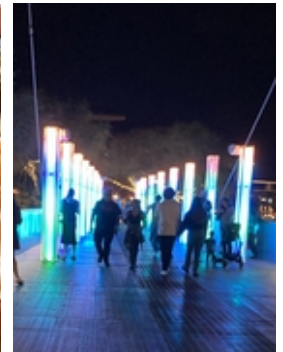
Back in Aug we got this scary warning in our Prius. I didn't take a photo of it until Sept when it returned. Turned out to be a glitch in the system, not an actual imminent disaster! The super Harvest Moon was dramatic on Sep 28. We visited Bill at the Terraces Rehab on Sep 29.



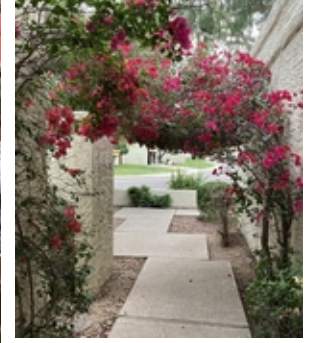
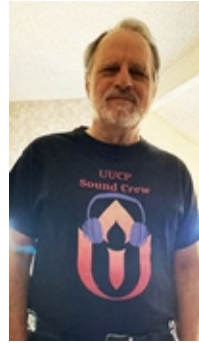
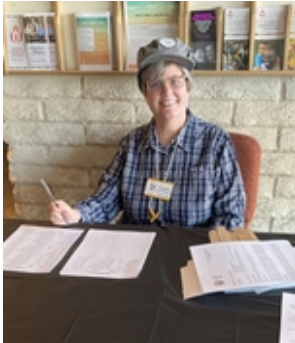
We had breakfast with Joan & Eric at Butterfields on Oct 13. We went to Dr. Crever's Taco party on Oct 14 and had solar panels installed on our roof on Oct 17.



The choir was back up to impressive looking numbers in Oct. Our lunch at the Vig with Julie & Marshal on Oct 24 came with an impressive and free appetizer. Smoot and I joined other UUCP choir members who made up half of the choir at the installation of the new minister at Valley UU on Oct 28.



Choir members dressed up for Day-of-the-Dead at practice on Nov1. We had dinner with Julie & Marshal before taking in the displays at the Scottsdale Convergence on Nov 6.



Smoot did the audio & video for UUCP's railroad-themed auction on Nov 11. I worked the pre-registration table in my RR hat. Smoot again wore his Sound Crew t-shirt when he did sound for the service on Sunday. We joined Sharon and Peter at Connie & Richard's for a fun dinner on Nov 18. Our bougainvillea formed an arbor over our front walk.



We had a fun and tasty Thanksgiving dinner with Joan & Eric on Nov 23. We attended the choir's Deep Dive Discussion on Nov 29. We had a big and colorful group for caroling on Dec 2.



With Dec came our holiday lights, our minimal tree, the festively dressed Agnes the Flying Cat gargoye and my geese.



We had dinner with Joan & Eric at Babbo's on Dec 5th then had a picture taken with UUCP member Sherwin who eats there every night. Marshal & Julie joined us at the amazing Orpheus concert Dec 10.



After the concert we had our picture taken at the RR park. On Dec 12 we watched Benjie receive Channel 3/5's Pay It Forward award at UUCP. The news aired on Dec 14.



On Dec 15 Joan came by for a visit. That evening we went to the UUCP/UUF boards party at Karen and Christine's. On the 16th we joined Julie & Marshal and Bonnie & Ed to see the ATC play Scrooge at the Tempe Center for the Arts.



Ginny and Ger came by on Dec 20. They brought gifts and went away with a Christmas cactus. That afternoon we went to the holiday get-together at Lee and Bob's with Gracie and Margot in attendance. We made 25 stockings for the Maryland School 4th grade class that includes the students Smoot tutors.



Smoot distributed the stockings and post-it note packets on the morning of Dec 22. Dominique made a surprise visit later that morning and we remembered Lucienne.

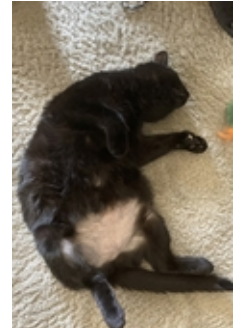
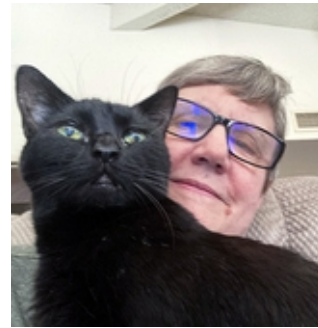


The evening of Dec 22, Bill & Joan hosted the choir holiday party. Sam presented Laurel and Benjie with the Visa gift cards and signed greeting cards from the appreciative group. Joan took a photo of me since I'm not often in photos but instead take them. Little did I know what was coming. I felt sick on Sat and Sun, Dec 24, I tested positive for Covid. That upended all our plans for the end of Dec. For the first time in years neither of us sang in a choir for Christmas. I was too sick to open presents on Christmas day. That had to wait until Dec 28 when I was finally feeling better.

Our Pets, Fosters and Wildlife

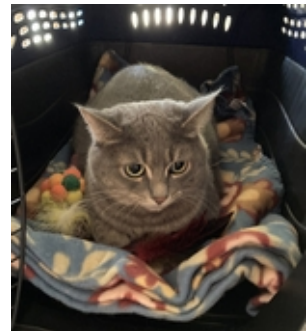


It was so hard to lose Bobbie this year. He was a very special cat. A stray we adopted, I hope we gave him a better life than he'd had living on the street. That left us with Griz, Rocky and Shadow, below.





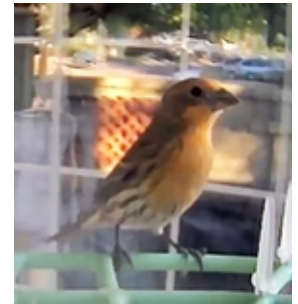
And my turtles and fish.



Fosters - I got Roomba from Paw Placement Animal Rescue to foster on Feb 16. She had tested slightly positive for Panleuk so since I'd had Panleuk kitties in our house and could keep her away from our cats, we took her. Her tests were eventually negative and she went to the center on Mar 19 & adopted that day. I got 5 kittens on Aug 12, Bagel, Biscuit, Flapjack, Muffin and Waffles, the breakfast kitties. They too had Panleuk issues but by Dec 29 all were adopted. On Dec 9, I got Caroline. She had been in foster homes for over a year and returned from an unsuccessful adoption. She settled in.



Wildlife – We had a hawk visit us on Jan 27. Some javalina came by on Feb 4. Our surveillance camera caught some raccoon on our front porch on May 28. A quail family came by on Jun 6.



I got a camera bird feeder for my birthday and after Smoot set it up for me I started capturing photos of the birds that visit us. These include a Mourning Dove, Pigeons, Peach-faced Lovebird, House Finch



Gila Woodpecker, Eurasian Collared Dove, Curved Bill Thrasher



and Quail. Sadly, even though the feeder is supposed to be rodent proof, mice found the seed which I now remove at night.