



A Photo Review of Our 2024



The year started with us getting together with the old gang, Joan & Eric on Jan 16 at Manuel's and then at Olive Garden with Linda & Gary, in town visiting on Jan 19. Then on Jan 28 we went to the auction cook-out at Vince & Kathleen's where we were told to come with stories of our hometowns.



We had a post-holiday dinner at Julie & Marshal's on Feb 1. On Feb 5, we took Ginny flowers and a cake for her birthday. Smoot checked out Joe's old tools and amazing garage.



The choir singing on Feb 11 under our Benjie-sabbatical leaders Jessica Elder, director and Christine Kyhn, accompanist. And the choir on Feb 21 celebrating Ellie's birthday.



We had lunch with Marshal & Julie at Sophie's Kitchen on Feb 24. We went to the auction Finnish Evening of Hygge on Feb 24 at the Stephenson-Brown's. We met with Rev. Christine on Feb 26.



We celebrated Smoot's election to our HOA board on Feb 27 at Babbo's. We had dinner with Eric & Joan at the Cheesecake Factory on Mar 3. We attended the Lead Donor event at UUCP on Mar 4.



We celebrated Julie's birthday on Mar 11 at Pinnacle Grill. We caught up with Toni and Simon at the Village Tavern on Mar 14. The choir sang at Brigitta's ordination on Mar 16.



Us with Brigitta and at the ordination meal on the 16th. As president Smoot gave a report on the UU Foundation at the Chalice Keepers event at Bonnie & Ed's on Mar 24.



We had lunch with Ellie M at the Beatitudes on Mar 25. That evening the new HOA board met at the Via Linda Senior Center. The choir was very colorful for the Easter service on Mar 31.



After the Easter service on the 31st we celebrated Marshal's birthday at Wildflower. Smoot controlled the sound at Nicole Pesce's concert at UUCP on Apr 6. We had brunch with Susan & Duke on Apr 7.



Us at Over Easy with S&D. We watched the solar eclipse through Smoot's telescope on Apr 8 and then had a going-away lunch with Lee & Bob at the McDowell Mountain Golf Club before they went back to Canada. We had the battery replaced in our hybrid Prius on Apr 9.



We had supper at Babbo's with Joan & Eric on Apr 10. The UUF picnic was held at UUCP for the first time on Apr 14. Smoot and Suzanne visited Rick in Virginia Beach Apr 18-23. The 3 Sibs on Apr 20.



Sean, Margaret, George & Owen joined the family gathering on the 20th. Susan Morris organized a women's choir performance with Connie on piano on Apr 21.



Jency was in the Valley staying with Janet. They came by to say hi on Apr 22. Smoot was with 4th grade teacher Kalia Kraushaar at the Maryland School volunteer thank you on Apr 25. We treated Jency & Janet to lunch at Comic-X on Apr 27. Julie and I shared a big chair at The Parlay on Apr 29.



Smoot presented his landscape plan to the McCormick Ranch Architectural Review Committee on May 1. Free Comic Book Day was May 3. Istvan had comics ready for me and Kai. We went to the Orpheus concert on rock music on May 5.



We had breakfast with Eric & Joan on May 10 and shared some of the goodies Bob & Lee had left with us. The next day I shared some of them with Faith. On May 15 we met at the Sugar Bowl with Ta-Lung Lin, Director of Development for Principal Gifts at UT Austin to talk about UT.



On Sunday, May 19 we had lunch with Bill & Joan and Marshal & Julie at Wildflower then later that afternoon we drove to East Mesa to take part in a music video that Benjie's Bad Cactus Band was recording.



Wayne McD was in town so we had lunch with him at Honey Bear's Barbecue on May 24. We attended the memorial service for Leroy Michael on May 25. Smoot wore his patriotic shirt for golf on Memorial Day, May 27.



We were back at Babbo's with Eric & Joan on June 4. Susan & Elizabeth Leung were in town. We had breakfast with them at Chompie's on June 8. Smoot gave the report on the UUF at UUCP's annual meeting on June 9.



Barbara Cervera was in the Valley for her son Alex. We had lunch with her on June 13 at Que Sazon. The car was full of carriers when we took all three of our cats to the vet on June 15. Marshal & Julie had early bday gifts for both of us when we had our monthly lunch on June 18 at Cooper's Hawk.



I got a cat towel from France and Smoot got beer! On Smoot's bday on June 20 he got his free giant burger at Red Robin for lunch and then we celebrated with Joan & Bill at Andreoli's for dinner



Then we all went to the play *The Last Romance* at the small Don Bluth Front Row Theater near us. I had remembered to bring my shawl but Joan didn't!



After the service on June 23 we joined Bill & Joan and Marshal & Julie at Sauce for lunch. Dale, Joan & Bill and Madelyn joined us for our traditional milkshake July 4th celebration. Megan gave us a Groggu bed for our kitties on July 5.



In the middle of our brutal summer on July 6 Smoot created a better way to hang black plastic behind our curtain. Mike & Cindy came over to see my collections on July 11. They were amazed of course. Then we had supper at Manuel's.



Eric & Joan joined us at Red Robin on July 16. I had wanted a piece of their Strawberry Lemonade cake since seeing Joan G have some on July 4th! On Aug 4 Smoot and I celebrated our 51st anniversary at the Coyote Cafe at the Talking Stick resort and had more cake.



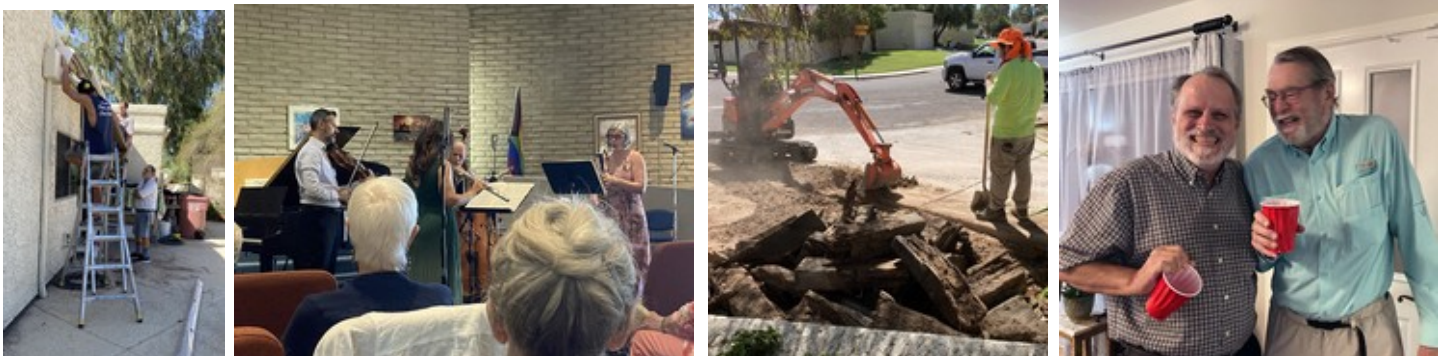
On Aug 7 I took pictures of the damage the previous night's storm caused. We had Eucalyptus limbs come down and branches of Bob & Lee's tree ended up in our pool. But the Monsoon storm made for a dramatic sunset. As part of an early b'day celebration we joined Bill & Joan on Aug 23 to see Twister & then had supper at Pita Jungle. They gave me a cute geese card in honor of my plastic geese.



On my actual b'day, Aug 26, I did my usual freebie thing – free breakfast at Denny's, free lunch sandwich at Schlotzsky's under the Austin Born & Bread sign, free sundae at Culvers, free burger at Red Robin and then cake, cards and roses that evening.



The choir was back on Aug 28. We had a double celebration – Benjie was back after his sabbatical and we honored the summer b'day folks – Smoot, Anna, Peter, me & Bud. The UUCP program year started with Homecoming on Sept 7. The UUF folks were supposed to greet people. Dale led a tour of room changes. On the 8th we had lunch after service with Marshal, Julie and Shirley at Wildflower. We were thanked in the Sept Maryland School newsletter for our contribution to their music program.



We had our awning replaced on Sept 12. We attended Glenn's concert at UUCP on Sept 14. Our landscaping project started on Sept 25, after a 2 year wait. Smoot and Brad at the choir party on Oct 5.



The Welcome Back to Choir party was held at Bill & Joan's. Our landscaping project was finished on Oct 9. We were back at Babbo's with Joan & Eric on Oct 15. We had a belated birthday celebration for Ellie M at the Beatitudes on Oct 24.



Ellie was 98 years old! After lunch Julie & Smoot hung a picture for her in her apt. At the Participation Event at UUCP on Oct 27 Smoot had a display for the UUF with fake bills and candy coins. I had my histories and timeline on display for the Archive.



We met with Ta-Lung Lin from UT's development office with his colleague Deidra Garcia at The Vig on Oct 29. Mickey & Christina came to see my collections on Oct 30. I wore my full Jedi outfit with lightsaber to join other choir folks in costume at our practice that night. Jacob F's memorial on Nov 2.



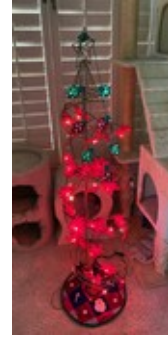
On election day, Nov 5, I again put together a bowl of candy to take to our election workers. Little did I know that the election outcome would not be sweet at all, quite the opposite. Trying to cheer up, we had supper with Eric & Joan on Nov 8 at Manuel's. Smoot controlled the audio for UUCP's auction on Nov 9. I came in my full Jedi kit and helped with decorations, costumes and items to sell.



On Nov 13, the Wed after the Sun after the election, Smoot and I celebrated our 20th anniversary at UUCP. On Nov 24, Janet took me to my first Mayflower Society meeting at the Orange Tree Golf Resort. We hosted Joan & Eric for Thanksgiving on Nov 28.



Smoot was ready to get his colonoscopy over on Dec 2. Our 2009 dishwasher started not working well so Smoot took it apart and fixed it, saving us a lot of money! We were dressed in holiday attire for caroling on Dec 7. The other singers were too.



Our holiday decorations with cards from the White House, Prez and Vice Prez, and our little tree.



Our holiday lights, a full moon and our landscaping growing in. We attended Benjie's concert at the UUJAZ fundraiser at UUCP on Dec 13.



On Dec 15 we treated Joan & Eric to the Orpheus Men's Chorus holiday concert then they treated us to dinner at the Cheesecake Factory. We wore our Grogu and Minions Santa hats they gave us in 2023! The Maryland School principal thanked Smoot at their first concert in 7 years for our donation that helped re-start their music program.



We were included in the group photo after the Maryland School concert on Dec 17. We put together the holiday stockings for the 4th and 8th grade classes Smoot tutors on Dec 18 and delivered them on the 19th. First to the 4th grade class of Ms Kalia Kraushaar.



And then to the 8th grade class of Mr Tony Smith. That afternoon we had lunch with Julie & Marshal at the Biltmore, hoping to see some nice holiday decorations. This was the most interesting one.



We went to Karen & Christine's party on Dec 22. Lee & Bob had us over on Dec 23.



We sang in the choir on Xmas eve, got into gifts Dec 25 & celebrated New Years Eve at Talking Stick

Our Pets, Fosters and Wildlife



Our three cats are orange and white Rocky 13; black Shadow, 13; and gray Griz, est 4 years old.



We had a tragedy in our turtle family in 2024. Lady Turtle, second from right in the photo, that I had had since 1998, died. I found her on July 17. She'd turned herself upside down and couldn't right herself. I decided to open the atrium door and let the remaining turtles have access to the back yard and pool. Two daughter turtles eventually went into the pool, the other two went into the yard leaving Mr. Turtle alone in the pond.



I continue to have Goldfish in my aquarium. They were originally feeder fish for the turtles but the turtles are too lazy to catch them alive so they only go into the pond when they die. Meanwhile they make a colorful display.

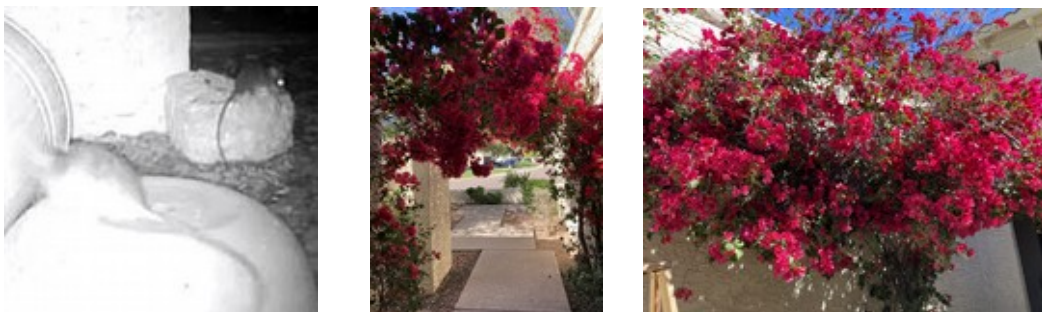


We started 2024 with Paw Placement foster Caroline who we'd gotten on Dec 9, 2023. She had been Lee's foster but was returned by her adopter. We had her until Feb 7 when we took her to the adoption center. She was adopted on Feb 22. On Feb 8 I got a request to foster Hershey Kiss. She had been living in a crate in a car while her owner was trying to find placement for her. We got her on Feb 9 and took her to Petsmart on Apr 23. She was adopted on Apr 27.

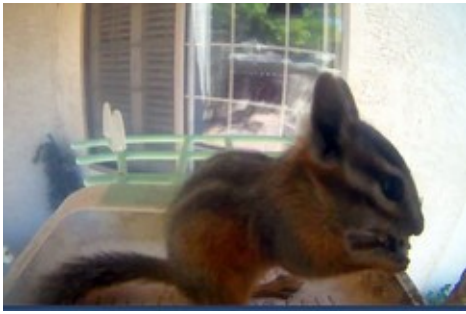
On May 24 we got Mango and Sebastian. They were given up because an elderly relative was moving in. They were both very shy. I took Sebastian to the center on Oct 9. He was adopted on Oct 20. We took Mango to the center on Nov 13. He is still waiting to be adopted. On June 11 we got Dreamsicle. She had been my foster in July 2021 when she had 8 kittens in my guest bathroom. Her adopter had died and a friend had her with a group of cats and dogs in a hotel. She was traumatized when she came to us but gradually came out of her shell and settled into our household becoming another diva! We took her to Petsmart on Nov 5. She was adopted on Dec 11.



On Mar 11 we had javelina visit our birdseed block. At first we covered the block with a metal pail but they came back on the 13th and knocked the pail over. That's when we started picking it up at night. We had kept loose seed in a container outside but they figured out how to get in it so it came inside too.



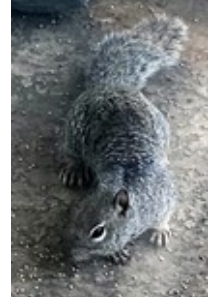
At the same time our camera caught rats eating the seedblock as well, another reason to bring it in at night. But on a happier note, our front Bougainvillea made a beautiful arbor.



My birdfeeder camera caught what certainly looks like a Chipmunk on May 16. And a White Wing Dove on the same day. My Amaryllis from holidays past amazingly bloomed again on May 19.



Our neighbor Lee was going to throw away her holiday Poinsettia but I took them and thought they looked pretty against our front wall in May but sadly they didn't survive. But we got a lot of tomatoes from her Tomato plant. On May 30th Smoot saw a Bobcat on his bike ride. On June 3rd we were visited by our Quail family with 8 babies.



On July 14 a Flicker visited our back yard Hummingbird feeder. We had our very own tumbleweed on Sept 2. A Peach-faced Lovebird and Quail came to visit my camera bird feeder on Sept 5. We've got a squirrel who likes to eat bird seed, climb up our stucco walls, stomp on our roof like a herd of elephants and taunt our cats!