

hanks to those who have already sent letters – cyber or regular – the arrival of each one creates additional pressure including “the look” and the enquiry from Cheryl – “How’s the letter coming?”.

Biggest news of the year is Lauren’s engagement to Donovan on December 3rd and I was planning to use that as my excuse for the late letter but that was two weeks ago! Donovan asked Cheryl and I whether he could propose late in October so we had to keep the secret for over a month. He had an elaborate plan for the proposal and it all went according to plan, and of course, she accepted. They plan to be married sometime next year. Donovan is a personal trainer and is finishing his degree to support that career so he will still be at college for a little time. We are delighted to be welcoming Donovan to our family. During the year that we have known him we have been impressed with his values, integrity, good humor and all of the great qualities that you expect in a fine Texas gentleman. And, of course, he has demonstrated extremely good taste in his choice of partner. Lauren has grown into a wonderful, beautiful and talented young lady who has already achieved so much more than many her age and who makes us really proud every day. May God’s blessings continue to pour over them! Lauren is still working at United Airlines in the payroll department and seems to enjoy it despite the fortnightly payroll run pressure. She has scaled back her church activities but has recently joined a new church started by her best friends from New Covenant.

Ryan has had a change this year as the game development company he was working with closed its doors at end of July without paying their final check. Fortunately United Airlines was looking for mobile application developers to put together their Smartphone and tablet apps so he joined them in September as a Senior Developer and, after a period of assimilation, seems to be enjoying it. That means the whole family now has flight benefits! He just turned 30 this year and celebrated with a successful party. Mer has put her Doctorate plans on hold as it would have meant a move from Houston so she returned to her job as a teacher at the Gifted and Talented program. However, she is continuing her studies by studying for an additional qualification in Education Administration and will be qualified to be a school principal once completed the middle of 2013. They are still living just south of the Houston downtown area.

Cheryl had a promotion to Manager earlier in the year and now runs their recruiting group for Field /Airport Operations both Domestic and International. She travels to Chicago regularly and also occasionally to other stations but seems to be coping with the extra work and pressure. She attended a conference in Paris earlier this year and spent a few vacation days afterwards seeing the sights.

I made two reasonable size sales with mcaConnect but then had to withdraw from several sales due to a lack of pre-sales and support resources. However the company has been recruiting aggressively and I expect a far better year next year as long as the government doesn’t get too involved in restricting the oil and gas industry. The restaurant has had a good year and although still not at breakeven we can see that occurring by end of 2013. Based on my chats with other restaurant owners in the area we have done better than most.

We made two trips this year. Cheryl and I went down to Puerto Rico for a long weekend and really enjoyed it. We had a hotel right on the beach and spent a day in the Old Town

soaking up the rich history. Had some challenges with flights on the way back but made it after an extra day coming through New York and Memphis!

In September we had 6 days in England to meet up with our niece Karen – from South Africa – she was keen to see where her mother (my sister Carol) lived and so we visited our house in Greenford and took the trip across to where Grandma's house was. Then we were able to get up to Northampton to visit with Aunt Joyce who is my late father's sister and she was able to fill in a lot of the family details for Karen.

It looks like 2013 will be another tough year in the USA with uncertainty over taxes etc. However, we continue to enjoy living in Texas, have wonderful friends, the family nearby and life is still good.

Perhaps there will be a get-together later this year with Lauren's wedding if some of the family is able to visit from South Africa and the United Kingdom. Another cruise has also been mentioned but nothing set in stone yet.

We wish you and yours a very Merry Christmas and Happy and Peaceful New Year.  
Lots of love  
Tony and Cheryl