
H A P P Y N E W Y E A R 2 0 2 0



Bundoran Farm

1 January 2020

It was a (mostly) quiet close-to-home year. That's a good thing. Quiet is good. We like quiet. We are quiet. And Bundoran Farm, our home for over 8 years now, is quiet. We are happy and fortunate to live where we are meant to live.

Bundoran Farm continues to bring us peace, beauty and security. Diane worked on the committee that prepared for the transition of the *Bundoran Farm Community Association* from developer to owner control. John took over heading up the group of trail adopters that oversees our wonderful 15 mile network of trails. Diane also started volunteering one day a week at her former school, helping two 4th grade children, who recently came from Columbia via Ecuador, to learn the English language and phonics skills for reading.

Our swimming continues also, as do our annual Swim-My-Age challenges where we each swim a straight 50 yards (lap) x our age (e.g. I recently swam 50x74). Yes, this means each year the swim gets longer. I didn't really think this through when deciding some 20 years ago to make this a personal tradition. We'll have to see how long we can keep it up! Meanwhile, whether it's a day when we're looking forward to our swims, or a do-I-have-to-do-this kind of day, we always – always – feel better leaving the pool than when we arrived. We then often enjoy breakfast at Bodo's, a bagel place and Charlottesville institution or, once a week, our Breakfast Club.



Beautiful morning fog on the farm

Both of us had some medical issues this past year. Diane's right knee started bothering her about 4 years ago. Cortizone shots helped a lot, especially on our Greece/Italy/Spain trip over a year ago now. But, it has gotten worse, the shots no longer help and the x-rays show bone on bone (no wonder it hurts so much!). She fully anticipates a knee replacement in the spring.

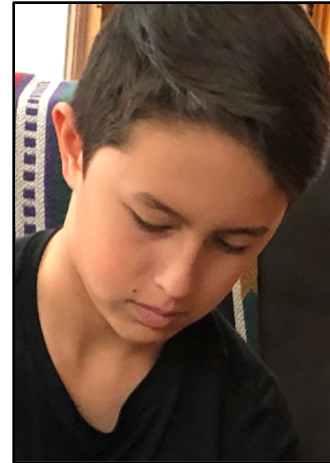
John developed a recurring afib (atrial fibrillation or irregular heartbeat). Given a few options, he chose an ablation procedure performed by an outstanding cardiologist. Recovery went well, and he's fine today.



The children and grandchildren are all wonderful, and we very much enjoy any time we are fortunate enough to share in their busy lives. A few years ago, we began a tradition of giving a donation in each of the grandchildren's names to a humanitarian organization. Last year, to our delight, the giving flipped and they began giving a gift in our honor to a cause which they chose on their own. This year, Audrey and Emma chose one goat and two chicks from *Save the Children*; Eli three flocks of chicks from *Heifer International*; and Jett *Outward Bound* for city kids to experience the outdoors. Of course, Grandmama's happy tears highlighted their gifts from the heart.



Jett (age 18) is an accomplished high school senior and looking forward to studying at Swarthmore College (early decision) in the fall. He is an avid baseball player (shortstop and pitcher) and will play at Swarthmore.



Eli (age 12) is in 6th grade, enjoys the exploration of taking things apart and putting them together. Recently, with Jason, he made a scooter for his dog. He plays baseball, basketball and developed trick skills on his scooter.



Audrey (age 6) is in first grade, learning to read and write independently (a joy to watch from her grandmother's ex-first grade teacher's point of view). She also enjoys gymnastics and loves art.



Emma (age 4) is a happy preschooler, thoroughly enjoying the task of learning to write her letters. She takes gymnastics and loves animals.



*Top l-r: Kiersten, Jett, Eli and Jason
Front (behind Woody): John, Diane, Emma, Noni, Alex and Audrey*



The faces of happiness



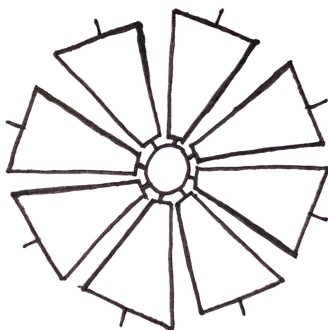
Audrey and Emma rolling down the hill on which sits Bundoran Farm's iconic Massey White Oak



Feeding new spring lambs on the farm

We are participants as well as observers in the cycles of life. Diane’s nephew, John Marshall, got married in November. Sadly, John’s brother Roger died this past summer after various complications over some time. A dear, lifelong friend has entered what he calls *The End Game* after a 2 year struggle with cancer and has written about his journey with courage and grace.

Life seems unfair at times. It’s certainly not predictable. We work, plan and hope for things, often trying for predictability, yet often finding surprises - some to our liking, some not. In music, predictable repeating patterns provide form and structure, yet music with *nothing but* those repetitions would quickly become very tiresome. Yes, we need those patterns, yet also the variations they allow, variations which provide the unexpected juxtapositions, counterpoint and dynamics which bring it to life. And, as they say on our local WVTF Public Radio classical music station, *all music was once new*. So it is in our lives. There are ups and downs and all-arounds, but overall, life is good. We are fortunate and grateful.



A few months ago, we both got happily involved in a very interesting and hopeful project called *WindFeather*. It’s a small and affordable 8 blade wind turbine designed to power a single home. It’s still under development and the *WindFeather* team is

working on and testing a prototype. It’s coming along well. Depending on the tests, the final turbine is likely to measure about 15’ from the tip of one blade to that of the other. By serendipity, we met the inventor through swimming and a mutual friend. While we don’t share the impressive knowledge and experience of the inventor or other team members, we do share their strong environmental concerns. We, with little to no expertise, are free to ask some fundamental questions which, to our delight, the other team members find helpful now and then.

We hope that next year this letter might report on significant progress. With all of the Democratic candidates for president enthusiastically supporting and promoting clean renewable energy, *WindFeather* may be well positioned to benefit from this movement. This is an open source project.



Earthrise, 24 December 1968, Bill Anders, NASA, Apollo 8

In last year's letter, we showed this *Earthrise* image made in 1968 and quoted poet Archibald MacLeish: *To see the Earth as it truly is, small and blue and beautiful in that eternal silence where it floats, is to see ourselves as riders on the Earth together, brothers on that bright loveliness in the eternal cold – brothers who know now that they are truly brothers.* And we asked ourselves if we were doing what needs to be done to care for this planet, this sacred ground, this home of ours. It bears asking ourselves again.



Charlottesville Climate Strike Rally

The one currently in the big White House has been challenging us to find anything resembling hope. Yet, always looking for the hopeful, we do indeed hope that *someone else* might soon reside there, someone with decency and a vision that might once again provide the leadership we so very need. And we must also hope (and vote) for some enlightenment in both houses of Congress.



52nd anniversary dinner

We wish you and your family health, happiness and hope in the coming year.

Diane 

Diane and John Forasté

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