

## Christmas, 2015

Here it is at the end of another year. We hope everybody had a wonderful year.

We are happy to announce that John and Janet are both scheduled to retire on May 2<sup>nd</sup> of 2016, so this will be our last Christmas letter as members of the full time work force.

As we mentioned in last year's letter, John finished up treatment for prostate cancer and needed a stent implanted in his heart early in the year. Fortunately, neither John nor Janet have had any significant health issues this past year.

As we wind down our work life and prepare for retirement, we have placed an emphasis on finishing up the last of our remodeling projects on the house. John finished adding ceiling panels, decorative trim and an outdoor ceiling fan to the ceiling over the upper deck in the early fall. This finishes both levels of the deck.

The last two major remodeling jobs were done in the winter. All of the carpet in the house was replaced, and several old large aluminum frame windows were replaced with energy efficient triple pain vinyl. Now every window in the house is energy efficient. This is all part of our plan to minimize our utility costs in retirement.

The last major step in our retirement preparation was taken in December, as the final payment on the house was made, thus insuring we enter retirement debt free.

While we had our good times this year, our family also suffered the worst type of tragedy. John's older sister Sudie had been fighting cancer for 4 years. John flew back to Mississippi to visit with her in late July, as her condition seemed to be deteriorating. He spent a week there, visiting her daily in her room at the nursing home / rehab center, and said a final private goodbye to her as he left. The next day she was relocated to hospice.

On August 27<sup>th</sup>, as both feared and expected, the cancer took its final toll and Sudie departed this world for a better one. John and Janet left for Jackson as soon as they could get a flight. The funeral was one of the hardest days we ever had, but it was a beautiful service. Sudie was buried in Floral Hills Cemetery in Pearl, Mississippi. She was a generous and kindhearted woman whose life touched many others in a positive way, and she will be missed by all.

As Christmas approaches, we have been treating ourselves to some new toys to help occupy us in retirement. John has a Hammond spinet organ he has owned for 40 years, but he bought a Hammond A105 console organ with a separate Leslie speaker that he has wanted since he was a teenager. This classic instrument, basically the same as the legendary Hammond B3 used by rock and blues bands in all the great recordings of our youth, fills the house with beautiful sound.

We are putting together our "bucket list" for retirement, which includes a lot of travel. A trip to Australia and New Zealand is in the picture, as is China, and perhaps another trip or two to Europe before we are done. Another thing on the agenda, within the next few years, is a trip around the country in our motor home to visit all our friends and relatives.

It's exciting to dream about all we are going to do in retirement. Hopefully we'll be able to report a whole new set of adventures in our Christmas letter next year.

Pictures of our adventures are on our web site, [www.majorspain.com](http://www.majorspain.com).

Here's wishing you a merry Christmas and a happy New Year. Please keep in touch.

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