



Merry Christmas



from Bob & Monika Marks

Christmas 2009

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all y'all! 2009 was another blessed and exciting year of changes, with many ups and downs for the Marks family.

- In January a cold blast of snow hit Leslie and I as we were in Chicago where she was auditioning for her opera singing. We had a lot of fun meeting the snow and audition challenges together along with wonderful mall shopping.
- Jeremiah earned his C.P.A. after taking 5 grueling tests of which he did extremely well. We are so very proud of him. He also passed them the first time! He moved from Price-Waterhouse to significantly increase his take home pay and is now working for Dean Foods. He plans on going to graduate school next fall for his M.B.A.
- In April, we got to go to Leslie's premier solo performance in opera for her masters finale. She was so beautiful as well as very talented. We were so proud of her and amazed that her voice just gets better and better.
- In January 2009, I was sad to have one of my favorite cousins, Dick Lane, pass away. I went to the memorial service in Corpus Christi. While there, I got to see my brother Rick and wife Tammy. I came back to find out that my best childhood through high school friend, Peggy Marshall died from lung cancer. I tried to get her to stop smoking 10 years ago, but, I guess I should have tried harder.
- Joshua has been working all this year, and is very excited to go back to Baylor in January. Josh was in 2 weddings this year, one in Dallas and one in New York for his Baylor friends.
- Marilee has been enjoying her Senior year at Baylor. She has held a leadership position in her Business Fraternity, AKPsi. She also was able to get one of the few internships available through Baylor at a company called 360 Solutions. This job was a big stretch for her and we are amazed at how she stepped up to the plate, overcame her fear, and has ended up doing very well, while learning a lot.
- During Spring break, Tashlie, Marilee, Sarah and Stephanie went to Florida for some fun in the sun. Unfortunately, they were hit by a semi on a large bridge during a tremendous rain storm. They were extremely lucky to have the car stop when it was flipping over the rail of the bridge. All of the gals were injured but none were killed and so we are very grateful! My massages are helping her to get better and better.
- As soon as the spring semester was over, Marilee and I flew to Seattle to celebrate Tami and David's wedding. Marilee loved being the Maid of Honor. She had so much fun helping with a personal Bridal shower and planning the bachelorette party. The Michaels's wedding was very beautiful and special to



Figure 1: LEFT: Ginene Ferrell and me in Leavenworth, Washington, RIGHT: Me in Seattle at Lucy's.

us. It was great to see Tami's Dad, Craig Ferrell, be the pastor. So many of our friends were there, since Trudi was over the elegant dinner reception. Many of my home school friends were volunteering with the dinner and many of my church friends came and a lot of Marilee's SCCS friends were there too.

- In April, I flew to Seattle to help Signa with a Bridal Shower for Tami. I just love all these wonderful reasons to go "home" to Seattle. In August, I got to go again to see Signa's son, Tim with his bride, Leslie to witness a very Christ honoring marriage ceremony. It was so wonderful to see the happy couple and I got to once again see a lot of my Alderwood Church friends. I also enjoyed going to Leavenworth with Ginene (see Figure 1) and of course I loved going out for a boat ride on Craig and Ginene's new boat. The weather was fantastic and we had so much fun leaving from Edmonds beach and exploring the coastline. Craig would rather be fishing, but we preferred to sight see. Seeing friends like Alice for lunch and Lucy at the peacock farm was great. I especially enjoyed seeing Karen Higgins and her family too. It was hard because I didn't get the chance to see all of my friends, as the time goes by so fast. It was great to go explore West Seattle with Signa and see Tim and Leslie's new home. Signa and I always find some time to scrapbook and shop at stamp stores. I think one needs to get away from home to relax, as I seem to work too hard when I am home on River Ranch.
- Bob got to visit Seattle and give a short course on Intelligent Design at the Discovery Institute. There he met George Montañez who he knew only over email. George came to Baylor and is now working with Bob as a graduate student. He and his lovely wife Luz stayed with us for a short time while waiting to move in their apartments.
- This year, Ray and I built an incredible raised up, fenced in fortress secret garden with 26 large metal water troughs. We have been working for months to finish it and we even had help from time to time from Josh and Jeremiah. It is almost done and I have loved having a spring and fall garden in Waco. With 2- 3 seasons, it seemed worth it to have a garden. However, you also have to have luck that we don't have a late spring freeze, which we did, and you have to hope the August sun doesn't kill all your new plants and you have to cross your fingers that the fall frost will come late, for if it comes early your crop will be ruined. Organic is the best and ideal way to go, but some of the bugs in Texas really are bigger and may need extra help. My pumpkins were over taken in one day. I am actually growing a few winter vegetables, such as carrots, cabbage, broccoli, brussel sprouts, garlic, onions and various salad greens. I am trying to ripen about 100 green tomatoes on my dinning room table. Some are red and ready to eat. Bob and Ray loved my cucumbers and Charlie liked my green peppers. We are also composting more now and we have a lot of help because of my new horse, Esperanza! Take a look at us in Figure 2.
- My dream came true of owning my own horse!! I had this dream when I was 8 and had to wait until I was 55 to see it come true. She is a little chestnut Paso finno. Esperanza ,which means hope, is just



Figure 2: Esperanza and me!



Figure 3: In West Virginia. LEFT: On the four wheeler in front of the barn. Bob's uncle Gene Marks has fixed it up with new siding. He found the **MARKS** in the barn. Bob's Grandad Jim had made it. Pictured are Bob, Ray, Marilee, Jeremiah, Leslie, and Joshua. RIGHT: At our cabin. Marilee, Leslie, Jeremiah, Joshua, Monika and Ray.

my size and I am having a blast riding her all over our property. I also joined a riding club. I love to go with them on trail rides and training rides. Because I don't have a truck with a trailer yet, I am limited HOW much I can go. However, I was lucky enough to go on a trail ride to Lake Whitney. It was such a blast and a little scary. So far, I have managed to stay on her back every time I ride. My friends Lesa, Reeba, and Betsy and been so very helpful. Other adventures on the ranch include raising chickens and California meat rabbits. Ray is building me a deluxe rabbit hotel for my next batch of kits. We also have enjoyed having beautiful dalmatian puppies! Several friends have come over with their kids and grand kids to enjoy playing on the ranch with all of the animals. We especially enjoyed Walter and Ann Bradley's grand kids and my friend Lesa's boys, Drew and Chase.

- In July we loaded up the family and drove to our cabin for a family vacation in West Virginia .
- We are grateful that we got to stop and see Aunt Justine and Junior, especially since Justine passed away this fall. Bob, Ray, and Josh were able to go to the funeral. We all loved and admired Justine so very much and she will be very missed. We are so glad she knew the Lord. Bob was able to spend time with his cousins at Justine's funeral. See Figure 4.
- I stayed home, to take care of my dad, Charlie and the animals. Charlie just had a very dangerous aneurysms surgery. He is now home and trying to recover. We are glad that we can help him. Ray and Charlie spend almost every afternoon eating, reading the paper and working on crossword puzzles at the famous Mc Gregor coffee shop.

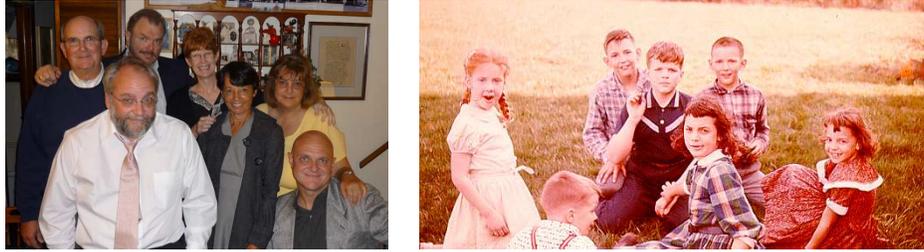


Figure 4: At the funeral of Bob's Aunt Justine, Lane Hersman, Mark McHenry, Bob Marks, Jeanne Hersman Evans, Brenda McHenry Barnes, Karen McHenry Boggess. On the right, there are some of the same cousins, circa 1960. We'll put an asterisk by the doubles. Ann Hersman, Mark McHenry*, Brent Hersman, Bob Marks*, Karen McHenry*, Lane Hersman*, and Brenda McHenry*.

- For fall break Marilee went with a bunch of Baylor friends to Las Vegas. She had a blast and actually stayed on her budget. This was a fun trip, but of course nothing like the Baylor trip to Europe that she had all last summer. We loved seeing her in England while we visited Hal and Kathy Phillip.
- This year we went to San Antonio Conference for IEEE Systems Man and Cybernetics. Bob gave 4 papers. It was a very busy and successful conference for Bob and rest and fun for me as I always love to walk and shop at the River Walk and eat out with Bob in the evenings. We enjoyed an evening out at a great Jazz restaurant. Bob spent almost an entire evening talking with his graduate student Don Wunsch who now holds an endowed Professorship at Missouri University of Science and Technology. Bob and Don not only have similar technical interests, but both are Christians and like to talk about our Lord.
- Bob continues to work with William Dembski on intelligent design. Bob's web site was shut down by Baylor a couple of years ago because it dealt with intelligent design and Bob became a movie star in Ben Stein's *Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed*. The web site is now off Baylor's server and is now at *EvoInfo.org*. This year he has published three papers that were on his banned web site! Two of the papers were at the San Antonio conference and the third was in an IEEE journal. And there are more coming. Bob has a new graduate student, Winston Ewert, who presented one of the papers in San Antonio. Winston came over to our house for Thanksgiving. The men watched movies until the wee hours.
- I am continuing to be very busy with my massage business and enjoy working out of our own cottage on our river. I am also continuing to mentor some college gals.
- This summer we got to celebrate Leslie graduating with her masters degree in vocal music for the University of North Texas. That's her and Jeremiah in Figure 6. Leslie is continuing to audition for opera singing, and is in New York as I write this letter.
- This September Grandpa Charlie celebrated his 80th birthday. Jeremiah and Leslie came down and we also celebrated Bob's 59th and Leslie's 30th. Take a look at Figure 7.
- This fall Christina Charles came to visit Marilee and Josh and us at the Ranch. She was on her way to New York. While in N.Y., she got to go to dinner with Leslie and to a Broadway show. I wish I could have gone.
- Ray and I worked hard on the new hay barn and were very lucky to get the hay cut, baled, and in the barn before the first frost. We love to have our own hay for Esperanza. See Figure 9.
- Ray's good friend from Cleveland, Mike Bittinger and his wife, visited us at River Ranch for a few days. Among other things, Ray and Mike used to fix houses and DJ together. They are by our river in Figure 8.



Figure 5: In San Antonio at the IEEE International Conference on Systems, Man and Cybernetics. The top two photos are on the river walk. The strolling mariachi bands are fun. The bottom two pictures were taken while we visited the Alamo.

- As you can see in Figure 10, Genesis and Revelation, our dalmatians, had a litter. We sold them all.
- For the culminating highlight of the year, Marilee Marks is really graduating from Baylor University in Business with majors in marketing and real estate. We are so thrilled and so very proud! As I write, tomorrow is her last final and then I will take her to a celebration lunch. Tuesday Marilee and I are going to have a spa day.
- This Wednesday, Joel and Aaron Newhouse are flying here to help us celebrate her graduation. Jeremiah and Leslie are coming down. It is astounding to know that “my Baby” is really graduating. She has matured into quite an amazing young lady!
- God has been so very good to us and he has been so faithful to be with us through all the ups and downs of 2009. We do not know what the future shall hold, but we are confident in this one thing, that God is always faithful and He will never leave us as we put our trust in Him.

May God Bless YOU in the coming year.

Bob & Monika Marks



Figure 6: Leslie's Graduation



Figure 7: LEFT: Leslie's Graduation from left to right are Marilee Marks, Monika Marks, Leslie Marks, Jeremiah Marks, Bob Marks, Lou Marks and Ray Marks. RIGHT: My dad Charley Jewett turned 80, Bob 59 and Leslie the big three oh.



Figure 8: LEFT: Marilee, Christina Charles & Joshua. RIGHT: Mike Bittinger and Ray.



Figure 9: Making hay!



Figure 10: LEFT: Marilee and Rorschach. RIGHT: One of Rorschach's brothers born this year in a different litter. Next to him is a watermelon grown in our garden.



Figure 11: Speaking of melons, here's Ray on the left with some of the fruit of our labors. I have no idea what Marilee is doing.