

Happy New Year 2013! We hope it's a happy one for you....



Dear Friends and Family,

We hope that your 2013 is off to a good start. Allow us to share a few lines about our activities of the past year 2012, and our hopes for the new year.

Thaddeus, Andy, Anna, Tchapo, Abagaile, and Rosemanie grace the photo above. Tchapo's been seeing Abagaile for quite awhile now, and we're pleased to have her in this year's photo. Abagaile was able to join us at our Cline family reunion in Pigeon Forge, TN, and hasn't run screaming away – so she must be a keeper. Tchapo is now working at Citibank, as a customer service agent, and enjoys that. He's still doing music as a hobby, and performs occasionally in the Cincinnati area.

Thaddeus has many hobbies: reading, reading, reading, reading, reading, and making paper airplanes and domino trails (that he wants to film as they fall). He hopes to become famous on Youtube that way. He won the 2012 geography bee at his school, and was briefly famous for that. He's doing great at school, is in cub scouts, and several gifted programs that he enjoys. He wishes that he were closer to his cousins Ben and Thomas, so that they could play their fantasy games.

Rosemanie has had a good run on the stage: she was the starring squirrel in "The Magician's Nephew", performed in November and December of 2012 – but then there was only one squirrel. Rosemanie enjoyed that experience, and I hope that she'll be able to get into more of the same. She's also performed with the High School chorus, although she tries to hide in the corners.... Rosemanie

became a citizen of the United States in May, just a day before Thad, Anna, and I left for Togo. Fortunately we were able to expedite her passport, and get her over to join us. Rosemanie bravely flew unaccompanied, and was joyfully welcomed to Togo. She was able to impress her African cousins with her soccer skills, and then returned to the United States to impress folks on her high school soccer team.

Anna continues to work at a local nursing home, and finds that very rewarding. She was delighted to be reunited with her family in Togo this year, of course, but it was a bittersweet time (because her older brother Seidou is not well – on dialysis in Lome, Togo). Nonetheless, it was a great trip for all of us, accompanied by friends and former Peace Corps volunteers Craig Haas and John Leahy (as well as John's daughter Ceili). On another positive note for our family, Anna was no doubt extraordinarily proud to see her younger brother Kpandja graduate from UC in 2012 and head off to Atlanta with his bride Djamilia to work at the Center for Disease Control, in their Epidemiological Intelligence Service. It speaks volumes that Kpandja was able to land this prestigious position. Anna has been working out a lot, and getting very fit. This was partly in response to her discovery that she's diabetic, but she is managing to keep her diabetes and high blood pressure under control.

Andy has not been working out, and not getting particularly fit. He sits on his duff a lot, working at a large electronic rectangle. He is eagerly chewing at the bit to get to his sabbatical experience in Mattawa, Canada in 2013-2014, when he will spend far less time at electronic rectangles, and far more time wandering around in forests and fields. The focus of the sabbatical is the impact of climate change on our northern forests. Sad to say that this sort of sabbatical is necessary, but it is – and I look forward to helping to contribute to any solutions to the problems our forests face as the climate destabilizes. In particular, it would be nice if we could convince them to slurp up a lot more carbon dioxide....

Our family enjoyed a fantastic two weeks in Mattawa, Ontario, in early August, at "The Rendezvous", or the Long Family Retreat Center. Thanks to my mom's generosity, we were able to obtain a farm and approximately 400 acres of primarily forest just north of Algonquin Provincial Park, and that will be the base of our operations for the sabbatical year. To the north of our farm is the Canadian Ecology Centre, and that will be the focal point of the sabbatical. Thad and Rosemanie are a little nervous about school, but we're certain that they'll be fine. Thad's in charge of our rabbit operation, and Rosemanie is in charge of the chickens, and I'm sure that they'll learn a lot about life on a farm. Anna and Rosemanie are nervous about the dog(s) that Andy insists a farm needs, and Anna is not sure about living so far from neighbors. The place is rather isolated, but we've been impressed with the friendliness of our Canadian neighbors. And there's a huge beautiful sky awaiting us up there....

So realize that you'll be welcomed by all when you come to visit us in Canada. As I write this it is 8 below in Mattawa, so you may want to come in "the warmer times". But please come, and we'll have a few laughs, and share the good times that make a year a truly happy one. Hope to see you soon!

Love from the Longs of Ft. Thomas, Kentucky