

Christmas 2008

Doug & Sherry's Holiday Newsletter



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Seasons Greetings from Aiken, SC

It's hard to believe that another year has passed already, although it certainly has been an interesting one from a political and economic standpoint. We know we've said this before, but it continues to hold true: We're thoroughly enchanted with our Aiken community, and keep patting ourselves on the back for having found this place.



Travel and Activities

Despite the all-too-numerous temptations and opportunities from living in our lovely Woodside Plantation golf community and all that entails, we've managed to stay as busy as we desire, and so far have avoided becoming over-committed,

Sherry, as a S. Carolina Master Gardener, and with Doug as an assistant, designed the new Bell Camellia Garden at our County Historical Museum, which the Aiken Master Gardeners have now planted and are maintaining. Sherry also stays busy with her Women of Woodside activities, Town & Country, a couple of garden clubs, and the neighborhood book club she organized. Doug continues with his volunteer activities at the Timeshare Users Group (www.tug2.net) where he administers the bulletin board and generally helps with the servers and site maintenance. For several years we've enjoyed taking classes through the Aiken Academy for Lifelong Learning. In February, Doug took over as editor of the Academy's monthly newsletter, *The Spiral*, giving him a chance to keep his word-smithing skills up to snuff.

We had our first chance to use the timeshare we purchased at Spicebush on Hilton Head Island this past January. We love going there in the deep off-season when the crowds are gone and the golf courses and restaurants are uncrowded.

The winter basketball season was really exciting as both the Men's and Women's teams at University of South Carolina's Aiken campus had good squads that were lots of fun to watch. And the pre-season reports for this coming season sound good too. We already have our seasons passes.

In April, even though we are only a few miles away from Augusta, GA, tickets to the Masters Tournament are scarce as hens teeth. So once again we got tickets to the Heritage Tournament at Hilton Head Island for the following week. Sherry managed to find us a timeshare there for the week.



The high point of the year may have been in June, when we fulfilled a decades old dream and took a cruise from Vancouver BC to Alaska, with our Aiken friends Doug and Kathy Cook. After disembarking in Anchorage, we rented an SUV and bummed around for a week, visiting Denali, the Kenai Peninsula, and other points of interest, just the two of us. Thank heaven for digital cameras – if all the pictures we took had been on film we'd have had to take out a second mortgage just to pay for the processing.

In August we took a trip north to see friends we've missed greatly since becoming Southerners (y'all). We started in Michigan with a wonderful visit with Ron and Joan Wallace in Lake Ann, then came on down to Midland. It was especially good to be able to spend an evening with our former next door neighbors Jeff and

Terri Alcott, and meet with Joe and Sandy Powers and Ron and Millie Gage. We were even able to throw together a last-minute gathering with about a dozen other friends at a watering hole in downtown Midland the next day.

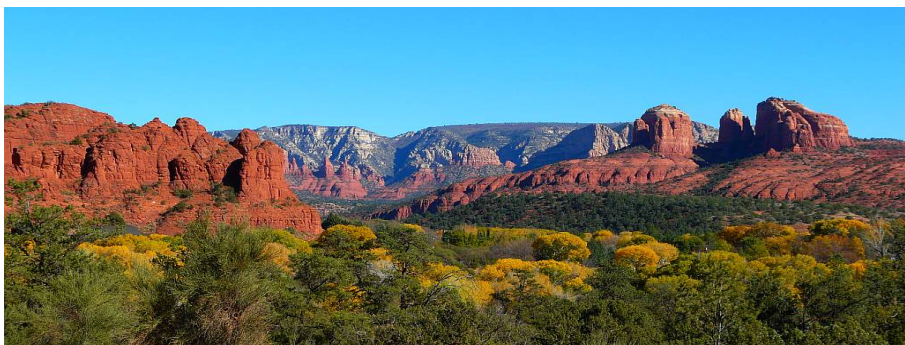
Then it was off to Ohio, for the wedding of Bob and Lynne Russell's daughter Jennifer. Jen got married on our 39th

anniversary, and we thought it was really gracious of Bob and Lynn to throw us such a nice anniversary party. But before that we had a timeshare week at Apple Valley Resort near Mt. Vernon, OH, which we used as a base of operations for seeing our Ohio friends. Mark and Liz Danner were able to come down from Chardon to stay with us a couple of nights, and one day the Russells and John and Sandy Brenner came over for a day of golf and dinner just like the old days. Bud and Sally Kennedy invited lots of Sherry's Ohio Lincoln School teacher buddies over for a nice evening, plus Sherry was able to see some of her old, er, former Home Economics associates as well. In addition we managed to visit with Bruce and Anne Metzger, have a quick visit with Jim Patin (couldn't catch Chris, darn it), and meet Marshall and Kathy Thompson for dinner. Unfortunately, there are only so many hours in a day so there were lots of other folks we couldn't get to see in either state, but there's always the *NEXT* trip ...

We managed to get together in September with Mike and Deb Husk for a delightful weekend of golf, food, and hot-tubbing in a rustic cabin outside Brevard, NC.

South Carolina has an official State Dance, the 'Shag'. Sherry lined up four other couples and we all took shag lessons *en masse* this fall. It was lots of fun, but Doug managed to fracture his foot two days after the last lesson (in a freak golf accident – don't ask) so we weren't able to put our new skills to any use for a while. But finally we were able to break out the dancing shoes at our Woodside Country Club's Christmas party, to great effect.

We hadn't been out west in quite a while, and we could hear the red rocks calling to us. For our final trip of the year we returned to Sedona AZ before Thanksgiving. We love this place dearly, and keep going back every few years – in fact, this was our 6th timeshare exchange week there. We were somewhat hampered by *somebody's* bad foot, but made the best of it and had a great time.



Kathy Cook and Sherry keeping warm on the Alaska cruise



Cookie is almost twelve now and is hanging in there pretty well



"Balloon Glow" event in Aiken last September



Our Perennial Open Invitation

We had visits from some good friends this year: Bob and Lynne Russell, John Pedrotti (one of Doug's very best friends from growing up in Pittsburgh, and one of the Groomsmen at our wedding), and Mike and Deb Husk. We'd love to see YOU, too.

If your travels bring you down Aiken-way, we'd love to see you and catch up on events since our last meeting. We love to show off our little corner of the world, and we've got a cozy guest room all made up and waiting for you, so give us a call!



As we look forward to the New Year, we hope this letter finds all our friends healthy, happy, and enjoying the Holiday Season.

Best Holiday Wishes to All,

Doug and Sherry Wilson (and Cookie too)