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Happy Holidays Everyone,

It's been 2 years since we have written you, and a whole lot of changes have taken place in our lives. The biggest thing is that we have permanently moved to South Carolina!

If you had asked me in early 2012 about moving I would have said, no way! But by March we had picked out a house and were set for closing at the end of May, 2012. Michele has been here for about ten years teaching at the University of South Carolina-Sumter. We had explored staying in a motel, getting an apartment, staying at her place and had even looked at houses a few times. But I think Julian and Mitchel and the promise of warm weather convinced Helen the time to move was now. I was getting tired of taking care of the 5.5 acres and didn't love the cold weather either so we did it.



Two problems immediately appeared. First was a significant downsize and second, many projects needed to be done to our West Virginia home.

Downsizing was hard and we are not really done yet. We all accumulate “stuff”. Our new house is about a third in size as the West Virginia house. So we had to go through all the “stuff” piece by piece and make a decision what to do. (Throw away, give away, sell, or keep.) Most of Helen's “stuff” consisted of books, medical periodicals, paintings, stained glass and pictures. She gave away about a thousand books! My problem was the 5 car garage and 24 x 16 foot barn that contained 20 years of

apartment tools and materials and yard tools. The diesel Kubota tractor and all its parts went to auction early. But I kept the John Deere tractor to give to Michele,

We all procrastinate working on our home projects but there is a day of reckoning. Our real estate agent said, "Remove all the wall paper". The foundation in part of the house was cracked and needed to be shored up. Sun room roof leaked, oven needed repair... It seemed that I never ran out of something that needed to be fixed at least once if not twice. We never seemed to run out of downsizing materials. It got quite depressing.

Just after we closed on the house in Sumter I took a trip to Alaska with Kirill (our exchange student from the Ukraine now living with his family in the Netherlands) for a couple of weeks. We had been planning this since 2011. We met in Vancouver, Canada and returned home from Anchorage, Alaska. The first part of the trip was on a cruise ship then we went by bus, sea plane, train, and paddle wheeler exploring the Yukon and Alaska-- a fun trip. The cruise company made it seem like every side trip was going to be arduous, but it turned out to be relatively gentle. We had fun and I got to claim that I have been in all 50 states!

Severe weather hit West Virginia a couple of days before I got back. And yes there were lots of branches and trees blown down and a limb knocked out the electricity to our house. Also some roof repairs to the garage were blown off. Michele and Helen left with a couple of car loads of supplies for the house in Sumter. In about 4 days I got the electricity back and started cleaning up the mess. The last part of August we loaded a moving van box truck of household goods.

A year later, In September, 2013, we got an offer and settled on a price that included taking the house as is. We closed on the house in October and took our last load of "keep" items.

The old project list is DONE and that is a great relief. I still dream about the list (nightmare), but less and less. Now I am working on a new list! First big item was putting up shelving in the garage. Need to store the "un" downsized stuff somewhere. Someday we'll see if I can get both cars in the garage? We are making headway.

Helen has connected with her church but says no a lot to opportunities to volunteer for this and that. I have got myself into an exercise program at the YMCA. I am the youngest member of our racquetball group—playing at least three times a week for an hour and a half each day. Also I have joined the local genealogical society. I enjoy the research, contacts with my kin, and doing fun computer stuff. Check out the web page at <http://www.cjreese.name/> I am going to try being a volunteer in our genealogical library. We will see what mischief I get into. Saying no to Rotary for now. The kids I dealt with in youth exchange had fantastic experiences and I still think it is a great program.



We will always miss our friends and home in West Virginia. We lived there for 37 years and the last 23 in Vienna. We will miss the deer, turkeys, turtles, skunks, ground hogs, moles, chipmunks, squirrels, foxes and all the fantastic birds that lived there with us. Every day had a magnificent view from our sun

room. Every season was different with the winter being the most challenging. From Google Earth you can see our Sumter house—the one with the SUV in the driveway-- has a simple yard, one tree, and a small lot. (We pay somebody to take care of it! I should have learned to do this year's ago.)

We still have our aches and pains, but the warmer weather minimizes their impact. In my college days I went to a co-op school where you alternated study and work. Every job was in a new place so I got to go to a completely new place 7 times. I will practice the skills I learned in this new place. We hope you are happy and healthy at this time. Reply to the email so that I know you still remember us. Include your address and phone number too.

Have a great New Year

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