

That new face on the Christmas card is Omen. He joined our family in late September (he was born in early August). He is a full blooded Welsh Corgi. And, yes, he is adorable. Most days he is a Good Omen, but occasionally he is a Bad Omen.

It is remarkable how well and how much Omen and Chromaggus play together. They go at it for hours at a time. But, there are definitely times when the old man (Chro is five years old now) has had enough, and goes hide somewhere that the puppy can't reach. But, overall, he seems happy to have the company.

Omen has certainly been keeping Debbie busy. A young pup requires a lot of attention. He provides the answer to the question "What are you going to do after you retire?"

Because, after 33 years of service, Debbie left the Federal Government at the end of August. Her friends and coworkers gave her quite the send off, and it was clear that she would be missed. But, it the new life style is suiting her well, as she has time for her hobbies and to do all of those things you want to do around the house that you put off forever.

And she and Joe have the chance to spend a lot more time together, which is a wonderful thing. It helps that Joe is still running his small consulting business (Four Point OH Consulting) as his full time "job". His flexible hours allow them to spend most days together, but see him working some late nights. After the first of the year, he may be reducing his hours further.

It's surprising we have not been traveling more, but we'll get into it (maybe we are waiting for the puppy to be old enough to be kennelled). We did make a trip to Vegas in early August. We were there for 4 days, because it was our 25th wedding anniversary! We decided to go back to Vegas, because we were married there. Of course, the chapel where we were married and the hotel where we ha stayed were both torn down long ago. But, this trip we had a very nice stay at the Excalibur Hotel, did a little gambling, and got front row seats to two great shows. One night we saw Terry Fator (the outstanding ventriloquist from America's Got Talent), and the next night we saw Penn and Teller. We thoroughly enjoyed both shows, and the entire trip.

The next big trip on the horizon is a cruise to the Caribbean on the Disney Fantasy in May. Yes, the Fantasy was one of the ships caught up in Hurricane Sandy in October. But, a cruise in October is a dicey proposition. She only sustained minor damage, and was back on the water the next week. So, we are still looking forward to the beautiful ship, the incredible service, the amazing food, the nightclubs, the pools, the water slide that circumvents the ship, the live musical productions, the exotic ports of call, and the view from our deck 6 verandah.

Nick is actually going to go with us on the cruise, though he bowed out on the Vegas trip. He is busy in his third year at Metropolitan State University of Denver (reclassified as a University this year!). He continues to pursue a degree in Business Information Systems. Basically, it is a Computer Science degree, but offered out of their Business School. He has been enjoying this semester more than any before. He has moved past the abstract theory, and into concrete classes like telecommunications, system requirements, and data base design. So, the courses have a lot more appeal for him.

He is still working part time at Walgreens, though he hopes to find an internship in his field this year.

Well, that is it for another year. Here's hoping that the holidays find each of you happy, healthy, and surrounded by loved ones.

Debbie, Joe, Nick, Chromaggus, and Omen