



## Kaubell Holiday Newsletter 2011

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### MORE O' SAME

2011 looked like it was going to be as uneventful as last year. We both continue to work at The University of Texas (UT) and still live in our wonderful house in a neighborhood that has become increasingly trendy and hip – we keep waiting for our visa in Hipville to expire.

### SAME OLD ROUTINES

We continue our regular routine of movie nights with friends Rob and Nancy, with a knack for picking really bad movies. Matt has lunch most weeks with “the guys” and often enjoys a break from working at home with a solitary lunch of B7 (pork, lemongrass and vermicelli) with a book at his favorite Vietnamese restaurant. Holly has a regular walk with friend Carol and occasional “girls night outs.” We are still training for the couch potato Olympics and are perennial but unenthusiastic dieters.

### HOWEVER . . .

Shortly before a planned six-week driving trip to North Carolina in July, Holly had a routine mammogram that turned out not to be so routine. She was diagnosed with breast cancer. We canceled our trip and spent the hottest summer in Austin history having cancer treatment rather than a vacation. The real low point was the day the outside temperature was 103 degrees (for the 30<sup>th</sup> or so day in a row) and Rick Perry announced he would run for president. Haven't we suffered enough? The good news was the cancer was spotted early and after an outpatient lumpectomy and seven weeks of radiation (no chemo!), Holly was

pretty much done with treatment, still had her hair, and was back to a full schedule at work by mid-October. The surgeon and the cancer specialists at Texas Oncology were amazing – very competent and compassionate. We have come to characterize the experience as “a big nothing” and are glad to have this behind us.

Matt provided emotional support and Internet research on various treatment options, and was the tour guide for our enforced at-home vacation. He got us up early most mornings so we could get in a walk before it got so beastly hot and organized a short trip to nearby “cutesyville” Salado. We also instituted our own economic stimulus package and bought some things for our house. We watched movies and read books and Holly recovered a chair and finished a quilt that had been in her “to do” pile for years.



MATT SHOWING OFF OUR ECONOMIC STIMULUS PACKAGE – A FANCY ESPRESSO MAKER

Having cancer encouraged Holly to take a look at her "bucket list" and as a result, she rented a cello and started taking cello lessons. She is also working with an Alexander instructor so that playing the cello doesn't turn into an ergonomic nightmare like playing the violin did. Having a musical outlet again has been wonderful. While her cello playing is – well, developing -- she and Matt still make music together, sometimes with Holly singing and Matt playing the piano.

## HOLLY'S WORK

In October, Holly got a promotion (to Research Scientist) and a raise. She loves her new colleagues, including an unlikely group of folks from the agricultural extension at Texas A&M. Her current projects involve interviewing people with mental health and substance abuse problems who've moved from nursing homes back into the community, and evaluating obesity prevention programs in low-income communities throughout Texas. She is finally feeling competent as a researcher and teacher. She really appreciated the support of her colleagues during her cancer treatment.



NEW QUILT AND SLIPCOVER

## MATT'S WORK

Matt continues to work on the ACL2 theorem prover, and enjoyed the 2-day ACL2 Workshop

in November. Earlier that same week he attended another conference, which was acclaimed as excellent; but as with most conferences, he didn't enjoy it much – at 59 years old he now gets it that he only likes small gatherings and talks that he can understand. So, he decided he would not go to "dog school" (actually a "Dagstuhl" conference in Germany) next summer. Currently the summer is open, but we DO plan to go away for awhile this time, and we don't plan to repeat the whole "cancer vacation" thing this year.



HOLLY CELEBRATED STILL HAVING HAIR WITH A NEW CUT AND COLOR

## OUR WISHES TO YOU!

We are grateful to be healthy, employed with interesting work, and married to each other. We wish you peace and good times in these days of social and economic turmoil. May the holidays sustain your hope and good humor into the new year.

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