

December, 2010

My life remains garden centered! These photos from my garden in 2010 are a fraction of the photos I took, and show an amazingly small proportion of my plants! Spring bulbs were followed by a procession of columbine, iris, clematis, daylilies and many other plants. A highlight was a blossom on my yellow lady's slipper (it has survived my care for three years and seems to be prospering). In July, mine was one of five gardens on a WI Hardy Plant Society tour. Lilies were at their absolute peak bloom on the evening of the tour (many were 6-9 feet tall and very showy). Add daylilies, lots of other plants, a careful veneer of mulch and last minute lawn mowing (I do NOT specialize in growing grass) and I was pleased with the garden's appearance. Over 120 people toured the garden in about three hours (made me glad the layout follows a circular path, the wheelchair accessible walk I made for my Dad). I've been a daylily society board member this year (NOT bored with daylilies) and volunteer in the Longenecker Horticultural collection at the Arboretum. In the fall I went on field trips to the Green Bay and Chicago Botanical Gardens and enjoyed both of them immensely.

Roscoe is doing well and is a great companion and source of laughter (often when most needed!) Unfortunately, he's learning to be a bit more mischievous (perhaps I'm a bad influence). This fall he taste tested some tulip bulbs (boxes





were sitting on the floor as he'd NEVER chewed anything that wasn't his). A few weeks later, he opened a 5-lb bag of flour and spread it around the kitchen (I hadn't learned my lesson yet and had not put all the groceries away – a bag was left on the floor). Most recently, he's managed to get things off the counter that I thought were beyond his reach. I'm still working on learning to store food cautiously (and YES, he does get fed regularly).

I still have a lot more medical appointments than I'd like. A different medication this summer substantially decreased visible symptoms of sarcoidosis in my lungs, which is great news. The three-year routine checkup of my upper digestive track also showed it to be in better shape than most of the last 40 years. Good medical news is most welcome, but continuing to be extremely short of breath and getting fatigued way too quickly is still the norm for me and the cause remains a mystery.

My cousin and his family were back from Vancouver BC for his 50<sup>th</sup> high school reunion. I don't see how that could have happened to one of my generation, but it was great to gather with them and the WI Bird relatives. This fall we had our traditional family gathering at my cousin's in Menomonie



for an early Thanksgiving dinner – great food and fellowship and a good trip (Roscoe travels nicely and socializes well with his two canine “cousins”).

Graphic arts was a source of mixed emotions this past year. I had not done screen printing for over 10 years and I did not want to resume working with the solvents I had used. This past winter I taught myself how to work with water-based inks and stencils. I’ve reprinted a few of my designs from last century (!) and have done a couple of new designs. It is rewarding to be printing again but, as people mailing cards become an endangered species, it’s harder to sell prints on cards. I sold my work at three events in 2010. Sales were successful, meeting people who like my work is great, but setup and take-down = total exhaustion. Also on the + side: web design and updating for the WI Seed Potato growers, the UW vegetable pathology program and my own web site. It was discouraging to be “relieved” of working on two other web sites. For over five years, I’d done the web site for my church, but someone decided that it was necessary to pay a “professional” to do this job. Communication was very poor and it is painful to feel that I can’t give my work to my own church! I also spent effort (and \$) promoting my web site this fall. 1200 new visitors in three months was terrific, but receiving only ONE order was very discouraging. I hope to continue creating new designs but I can’t keep accumulating more in my house if people don’t buy things!

I hope you had a good Christmas season and I wish you the best for 2011!

*Vaughan James*

