



It has been a really big year. Johnny Damon moved to NY, cut his hair, and shaved. Dick didn't.

Dick's dad died in March at home in Key Colony Beach. He was 85 and mostly healthy until he went to bed one night and simply didn't wake up. Every one of his friends remembered him to us as being fun. Anne's "Auntie Em" died last month after a few years fading into Alzheimers. She was 91. She had spent 27 years as a cloistered nun before becoming a teacher. Dick is still tied up as executor in Florida's "expedited" probate system. That's court action #1.

Lots of time away from home. Anne, Dick, and Kris all went to Florida in March; Dick stayed for a month. Dick went back to Florida in October and stayed for two months. Anne flew down for Thanksgiving. She flew to Wisconsin on Thursday and is now in Illinois having Christmas with her folks and her sister. We'll celebrate "present day" with the kids next weekend.

We (finally) held a service for both of Dick's folks at Uncle John's in Downingtown in September. Friends came and told stories all afternoon. It was good. We sprinkled their ashes at Westtown, at Rosedale, and later into the Atlantic.

We took his folks offshore at Thanksgiving. It was snotty out there, not with mere Small Craft Warnings flying but instead a strong statement that small craft stay at their berths --with the seas running about 5' and going in every direction. We ran out in *Coco Joe* anyway, about 7 miles to blue water with six coolers and a cardboard box, and told some more stories. The ashes made a long brown swath across the sea. Friends Joe and Willy gave us two yellow roses which we dropped with them. Joe circled back on the flowers; they had closed in tight together and were moving northeasterly with Chan and Mary on their last grand circumnavigation.

Three hurricanes ripped through the Keys this summer. Katrina and Rita surprised everyone. Wilma scared us. Dick was there (but evacuated to the Kiefners) for Wilma and was remarkably lucky. The storm which so devastated Cancun for days passed by quickly. Marathon was under water but most spots on the Atlantic side, including Key Colony, were spared. 680 lost a few branches and some pebbles off the roof.

Another hurricane named Toth (NOAA ran out names) came through Vermont when we rebuilt our garage and our neighbors decided to sue us in two different courts for trespass. Eva and Mary Toth had inherited the camp next to our barn in 1995. We think they may want to sell and have decided to bully us into giving them a grand circular driveway right of way across our driveway. We had to hire a shark. That's litigation numbers 2 and 3. *Anybody* can go to court.

Anne had 15,000 medical tests this year, looking for why she has so much abdominal pain. The docs spent a lot of money but found pretty much what one would expect: she has an



abdomen with stuff in it. They didn't find the cause of her pain. Dick's docs looked in his head but found nothing there either. And he passed his stress test despite forgetting to study for it.

We finally bought a truck after obsessing for months.

Other than Manly Truck which the State of Vermont refuses to allow within 100' of a public highway, North Puffin has been a truck-free zone for several years. Understand that we don't need a truck very often but sometimes there is simply no substitute.

Immediately after gasoline went to \$12/gallon, Dick decided we needed a vehicle that gets 12 gallons to the mile. He filled it with stuff from here he needed in Key Colony and loaded it there with stuff he thinks we need up here [Dick notes: 19.2 mpg to Florida except when

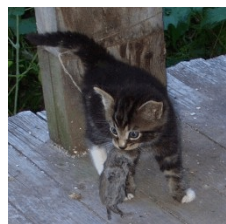
Posty was driving.] Rick Brown has named this the Gurrly Truck because it is pretty and has none of the rust holes of Manly. The porta-potti in the photograph came to visit during Wilma.



People also came to visit. After 28 years of trying to have company in Vermont with limited success, Dick spent his weeks in Florida this fall with a long to do list and had non-stop company. Some of the chores got done, especially after Anne came down. The "office" has moved to the sunroom, the living room is now uncluttered, and the refrigerator replaced. He did some electrical upgrades, fixed some plumbing, and built a new storage enclosure.



Kris and Jim have presented us with a grandpuppy and Dick has a new and very large wastebasket. The two statements are not related. We are teaching him to bark at the drop of a hat. The puppy, Lazarus made \$15 a few months ago as a process server. And we had Trouble. Some kind soul left her on our doorstep this spring. She was cute, black-and-white, and pregnant. She and two of her kittens were adopted out by the local Animal Rescue; Kris and Jim took the other two, now named Ham and Cheese.



We are still under the renovation flag. Murphy finally returned to finish the upstairs walls and ceiling so we should be able to paint that space and move some of the clutter back where it belongs before Summer. Unfortunately, Dick brought back another ton of stuff that he promises to find homes for around the house up here. (*Anybody have any spare shelving?*)



Jobs progressed all year. Anne lived through the GM promos and Dick developed a couple of new clients. Off-site IT and webwork are a growing part of the bidness.

And little things have irked us: BellSouth wants \$29.99 to suspend and restore phone service in Florida. DirecTV did it with a single phone call for free. The Miami *Herald* can't deliver only a Sunday paper. One must take Thursday-Friday-Saturday to get Sunday. The local *Keynoter* called to offer the Sunday only *Herald* if we would take the *Keynoter* for free. And an oil industry spokesman announced that gas station owners need to sell their current inventory for the expected cost of the next truckload. Or maybe the one after that. Next thing you know car dealers will charge the 2007 sticker price for their 2005 cars and gas will cost \$3/gallon. Oh. Wait... Meanwhile Verizon's current DSL offer trumpets, "High-speed is now for everyone." Except everyone doesn't seem to include us.

Wanna join our class action? That's litigation #4. Sheesh. Anybody can go to court.

Merry Christmas, my friends. Please drop in soon to help with the leftovers.

Anne and Dick Harper