

FRITSCHEN'S 56<sup>TH</sup> CHRISTMAS MESSAGE      DECEMBER 2014

Well, once again the annual Christmas note from Bob and Hazel has arrived. It's interesting that when you remove the issues of health and travel from the discussion the message shortens up considerably. So, yes they visit medical facilities much too frequently and no, they haven't really gone anywhere of interest.

I am sure you are anxious to learn that Bob still mows his own lawn with an occasional assist from Annette. A new sprinkler was installed this year but with frequent rains the sprinkler was redundant. On three occasions Bob and Hazel had to take shelter because of tornado warnings. One was very close to town and the Weather Alert Radio said it was stationary two miles north of town. After about an hour Bob slipped out with the camera and took a picture with lighting as a backdrop. The picture confirms that it was very close and then made a turn to the east and destroyed several farms as it moved on. The Weather Bureau confirmed six tornados on the ground from that outbreak with 68 farms in Cedar and Dixon being partially or totally destroyed. The news media mostly ignored it since there was a spectacular twin tornado destroying Pilger, Nebraska 24 hours earlier. Truly inspiring how the churches came together to coordinate cleaning up, food, etc.

Bob still goes to South Dakota for the annual all-school alumni gathering. Since the little town of Farmer where he schooled is gone they meet five east at Spencer which is Hazel's home town. Not much left of Spencer for that matter since it was nearly destroyed by a tornado in 1998. So he and Hazel attended this year. There were four in Bob's graduation class of 1953. Three still live. Bob and Hazel enjoy driving around the Spencer, Farmer countryside. Bob can remember who lived where, who married who and in some cases, why! The first Fritschens settled in that area in 1881/82 and Hazel's shortly after.

Hazel started a bit of a tradition some years ago when she stopped giving candy for Halloween trick or treaters and instead gives out children's books. During the year she finds Libraries that have surplus book sales and stocks up. Interesting that that some kids remember her as the 'the book lady' and are happy with another book. There is a positive message in this. Of course the older kids who should give up trick or treating anyway, go away disappointed. One group of older kids numbered 14. Bob thinks they are busing them in from Omaha!

Grandkids are all doing well holding their own. Susan is Education Coordinator, Advanced Medical Imaging at Mitchell Technical Institute. Lori is with the Principal Financial Group, Lincoln and Amy is a Junior at the University of South Dakota in Dental Hygiene. She is President of the local chapter of The National Society of Collegiate Scholars. John and Aleta live in Grand Island where he is site manger for a regional building contractor and Aleta teaches in the Grand Island School System.

Randy and Annette had a good year on the farm with a near miss on a twister or two and some hail. Harvest was late but the weather near perfect. Annette has her Insurance business officed in two towns and stays very busy keeping the elderly going.

Well, that's a thumbnail of the year. We hope everyone had a reasonable balance of positives and negatives in their life. There seems to be an awful lot going on in the world so for the New Year praying for peace, tolerance and understanding is well worth the effort. Blessings on all for the season and New Year.