



Friendly Forest, Box 501, 411 HWY 2, Christopher Lake, SK, S0J 0N0

December 17, 2012

I choose to blame it all on the month of October! That is why I am late in getting this letter written and sent out. October is the reason why my Christmas preparations are at least a week late, why my pile of unread books grows higher, and October is to blame for just about any other failing that otherwise would be seen to be due to my own fault.

I recorded the first snowfall on October 4, and though that melted and was followed by rains and additional snowfalls until we got one really heavy wet dump in early November, a glorious fall essentially ended abruptly at the end of September. I usually plan for about two weeks of work in the forest to cut, drag out, haul, split and stack firewood for a winter one year hence. This year the beaver were very active in bringing down a lot of really nice poplar trees that I did not want to just decay on the forest floor when they make such great firewood if harvested properly. The beaver had not cooperated in felling them in easily accessible locations, and that made for a lot of difficult and heavy work. A 16 inch block of green aspen can weigh between 60 and 75 pounds, and dragging this over other deadfall, slippery leaves and snow slush made for hard and treacherous work. At the end of those days my entire body ached and as I sat there pondering the totally obvious, I also realized that no part hurt more than the others; meaning that I had survived the day without injury to my aging body. That was a very good thing! Eventually the job got finished, but it was a full two weeks longer than it took me in years past.

During August and September I had taken quite a bit of time to widen and clear deadfall from my walking trails and was looking forward to comfortable winter snow shoe hiking. That first November snow had other intentions as it lay down and buried any pliable sapling or pincherry or hazel nut shrub within many meters of the open trails to ensure that they were no longer open trails. With the good work of two neighbours and my own efforts, two weeks later the trails were navigable again.

With those tasks completed I actually cleaned out my shop and started in on a few custom projects I had promised to friends and customers.

If I use a bit of self-serving math, the long delays caused by October weather and that heavy snow fall in Early November, I actually recovered lost time in a truly remarkable fashion to be only about one week late with everything else.

And since those trivial things are probably the most difficult things I had to deal with, you can see how I have been truly blessed during this past year. I grieved the untimely death of friends, and was able to go home realizing that I had relatively good health. My injured foot eventually healed, the medicines I have been studying and

making seem to have helped me in other ways. The wonderful companionship and love of my dog Edward is a constant source of delight, and the visits and table sharing with good friends at Friendly Forest enriches my spirit throughout the year.

I continue to follow my spiritual journey on the Sacred Hoop and was able to complete my Spring Fast as well as the monthly Inipi ceremonies at Friendly Forest. I have been able to enjoy the rewards of good friendships. My home is secure and warm in the winter and cool in the summer, and my pantry and freezers are full of good food. I have only one more year of payments before VW Canada turns over ownership of my car to me, and my old truck still runs and hauls heavy loads when needed. The mosquitoes came but did not present a serious issue, allowing an extension of our two wonderful seasons; the times between snow and mosquitoes, and between mosquitoes and snow.

I followed the USA election cycle with astonishment and also thankfulness that I live on this side of our common border.

What more can I say? I have been blessed in ways that delight me and make me realize the wonder of so many undeserved gifts from a wonderful Creator and giver of life.

I have not taken enough time to visit with many of you whose friendships I value, and that I deeply regret.

If you shared your time with me; I thank you. If you shared your friendship for me; I thank you. If you remembered me and said a fleeting prayer for me; I thank you. If you had good remembrances of me and smiled a bit at the remembering; I thank you.

I look forward to a truly blessed Christmas season and wish you the same. I expect another year of really good things from my God, and wish the same for you and all who you love and who love you. With the kindness and support of our God whose incarnation we celebrate at this time, we will endure what we need to endure, and we will laugh and know the joy of being loved.

Gerald at Friendly Forest