

Dear Friends and Family, we wish you a

Happy Hanukkah, Merry Christmas,
and especially a
Very Happy New Year



Here we are doing what we hadn't planned on doing: writing an annual letter and sending it by email; something we have done about ten years in a row and thought it was time to stop. As we have been in touch with almost everyone throughout the year by phone, email, in person, through our web site (www.chandlerbates.net), and more-and-more via Facebook (www.fb.com/chandler.bates), we thought you'd know everything that you wanted to know, afraid or not to ask. Or maybe you've been caught in a bean-bag chair or had something else that kept you from your computer. And yet... it only took the arrival of annual letters from several distant friends for us to admit that it made sense. And so herewith a round-up of our 2012.

In January, 2012 we said goodbye to London and our nearly 13 years of journeying by flying to Newark, NJ, arriving at the very same airport where we began our travels back in June 1999. But instead of rewinding to Red Bank, NJ we headed north 40 miles to Scarsdale, NY to spend time with our friend Ann and from there to touch bases with all of our other friends in the NY/NJ region. Three weeks seeing friends and eating and eating passed quickly; finally we said we must go look for our own home.



We moved 250 miles south (about Darlington to London) to the DC area where we began our house hunt, or rather apartment hunt, sheltered first by Karen and Walter and then in a basement sublet. We got to know several parts of DC proper but weren't looking where we lived. The "light" was better elsewhere. We were determined to have the security of an apartment so that we could travel easily and so that we would not need to move again when age made climbing stairs and the like too difficult.

By the mid-February, to our astonishment, we had not only found the place of our dreams, but we had closed on it. It had what we wanted: a great balcony, greenery out the door, a pool (open summer only : (; and bicycling nearby, fairly convenient public transit, and, as we'd quickly learn, a lot of friendly neighbors who are fast becoming our friends.



Having given the seller until mid-March to move out we went off 150 miles to Ocean City, MD where we had found a winter condo-rental. It was only months later that an old photo reminded us that about 20 years ago we'd spent a few hours there. The weather gods smiled on us and we spent a delightful month in a cocoon of beach walks, good food, and sunsets over the lagoon. Much of our time was spent working our fingers to the bone translating from French to English a philosophy of science book; that

was a bitter sweet chore, like doing an impossible crossword. But it will more than pay for our visit to our nephew Liam's coming wedding in northern England in September, 2013.

At Last! At last, in mid-March we moved into The Templeton, 250 S Reynolds, #1305, Alexandria, Virginia 22304. (This will be on the final exam.) We kept having to pinch ourselves that we were home owners once more. The rest of March and on into April was a whirlwind of shopping expeditions to equip our kitchen, bedrooms, and bathrooms. Included was a wicker patio set that doubled as living room furniture for the first few weeks of our residence. Never have so few spent so much on so many little things.



In spite of Jan's fervent wish to have new furniture for once, the urgent need to have a minimum of furniture pushed us once again to Craig's List where we found a guest bedroom suite, a dining room suite, a living room couch and easy chairs, and a suite of office furniture. We did a good part of the carrying ourselves and it told on our bodies. The reward was that we could say "Wow! We're furnished!" The patio set and still another found its permanent place on our double-length balcony; in the now-gone warm months we'd sit at opposite ends reading, and look up with smiles at being "*chez nous*". The table inherited from our seller – in a photo above showing us with our realtor – also found a place outdoors where we took advantage of the warm weather and ate most of our meals until mid October.

During the month of May, we started to settle in and explore our surroundings. We started to make regular visits to the think-tanks of downtown DC and to get re-acquainted with the museums along the Mall. We also had our first visitors, Moshe, Cris, and Uri came down from Jersey City to be greeted by our first 90F+ day.

In June, we finally had enough time to head up to NJ to retrieve some of our belongings from our storage locker. Our aim was to bring home our rugs. We had stored four room-size rugs and five or so smaller pieces. We wondered if they had survived and were delighted to find that indeed they had. We also found trunks of clothing and a treasure trove of Jan's business suits. Would they fit? Would she ever want to wear them? The answers are mixed. Some fit and some don't. Now we are no longer limited to two choices. Jan loves to try on something new almost every time we go to town.



Also in June, we served for the first time as election officers, at different polling places. The day was long and mostly boring for Jan with very few voters interested in the primaries; Gerry's precinct for unknown reasons was busier if not overwhelming. In November we again served, at the Tucker school where Jan first served; there we went flat out for 16 hours. It was tiring but exhilarating. We were so exhausted when we got home that we didn't even have the energy to wait up for the true low point of the day: Obama's re-election.



At the end of the month we had our second visitor, our niece Donna from California, en route to the NEA Teachers' Conference in DC. With her we celebrated the fourth of July sitting in a small park on the banks of the Potomac across the river from the Mall where the fireworks were located. In spite of very muggy heat, we found a great spot for our chairs, had a great picnic, and got a great view.



July brought our first visitors from abroad when Jan's brother Dave and his wife Jhap flew over from England for Jhap's first trip to the USA. After ten days of hectic activity trying to see everything the capital can offer, they flew off to Atlanta to spend a week with Jhap's brother and family and then stopped over for a couple more days on their way home. We took them to Manassas, the nearest Civil War battlefield, for an anniversary celebration; subsequently we enjoyed going even farther to other battlefields.

With the end of August came Jan's birthday treat: more than 20 years after we last sat in Flushing Meadows Gerry gave her a gift of five days of live tennis at the US Open tennis tournament. It was amazing and made possible by our friend Ann's hospitality again. On our way home we again visited more friends and then picked up more clothing and stuff from our NJ locker. Going and coming we got a taste of the horrors of holiday driving, something we'd not experienced in many a year.

September and October were filled with more think-tank activity and yes, more museums, and more Civil War visits. And last but not least another visit to the storage locker just the week after Superstorm Sandy hit the East Coast. Our locker is on the coast and the building could have been flooded but wasn't. We stayed with our former neighbors, the Daggets; they lost some tree parts but otherwise had little damage.



At the locker, with the Daggets' help, we retrieved the last of our 20-odd trunks; they contained all of our sentimental souvenirs, including our collection of slides and prints that document the years of our married life up to 1999 and even some of Gerry's life before our first meeting. Left behind are a handful of precious things, like our Chinese Tang-style horses and our Indian carved screen, and a mountain of boxes of books. We spent a whole month unpacking the trunks. We could only manage one every few days, because it took us that long to digest what was in each one, find a place for it, or decide to part company with it. After all, there is a lot less room in a 3-bedroom condo than in a 4-bedroom house with attic and basement. As we went through the trunks Jan kept hoping “this” would be the one with her jewels. Not finding them, we feared they may have been hidden in what we thought was trash and threw out. But with #20 we hit the jackpot. Now besides wearing sharp “new” suits Jan gets to sport some necklaces and other items dear to her heart.

With November and the really short short days and the leaves more than seriously falling from the trees we had to definitively abandon balcony eating. In came the table, now serving us for breakfast.

December was taken up with preparing a real Christmas at home for the first time in 14 years, i.e. since December, 1998. First we found our Christmas music collection on CD to get the atmosphere going. We were surprised to find at least 20 CD's of Christmas music! Then we bought a new table-top pre-lit Christmas tree (there were no pre-lit trees back in 1998!). And finally we dug out our Christmas decorations saved for all these years, full of memories of where we bought them or who gave them to us. Now we await St Nick.

Here in Alexandria we have also celebrated Hanukkah, for only the second time in our married life (our first was a year ago in London) and the first time in our own home. We didn't have a Menorah (candle-holder), so Gerry improvised. On the first attempt, the candles burnt through the holder and almost set us on fire. Second time we found better candles and a better holder and so the rest of the week went off

splendidly. Each night we read the prayers from our Nook e-reader and even got our friend Marina from downstairs to join us one night.

We'll close out the year by celebrating our anniversary with a play at famous Ford's theater and a good meal. Then, too far from Times Square, and not interested in trying Trafalgar Square as we did last year, we'll cuddle up before the TV and for 12 hours watch our old haunts from Australia to Hong Kong to Athens to Paris cheer in the new year. When it happens here we'll stir ourselves to put ourselves to bed.



So, be of good cheer, have a great life in 2013, and keep in touch.

Love,

Gerry and Jan