

Saturday, December 11, 2010

Dear friends,

Ste. Genevieve, Missouri, is the oldest town in the state, dating from 1735 or thereabouts. We spent a lovely, though cold, Saturday afternoon there just recently and attended various festivities that were part of the 26th Annual Country Christmas Walk.



We ate hotdogs in the little town park with the local Lions and took a ride on this trolley that featured horses with decorated hooves. The town was first built at the edge of the Mississippi. Its history includes several moves inland to escape flooding, but many of the old French colonial structures remain. We passed a number of them on our trolley ride, which I'll not show. You'll find lots of pictures at <http://www.ste-genevieve.com/>.



Beyond riding past them, we didn't tour the historic buildings this time, having done that a couple of times in the past, and chose instead to spend an hour with the choir from Lindenwood University in the nave of the beautiful 19th century Church of Ste. Genevieve that dominates the town visually. Late in the afternoon we bought a nice piece of embroidered linen for our living room mantel in St. Louis and had supper in the warmth of the tavern next door to Odile's lace shop.



Here's the piece we bought in its place together with a few of Kathleen's magic things. The tiny Santa by the clock is from Zakopane, in Poland, where we were a few years ago. Kathleen has just started putting Christmas things out. Until yesterday we still had Thanksgiving pumpkins everywhere. We served eleven at Thanksgiving dinner and nine the next evening. Through the holidays we'll have friends in off and on as we have in years past, but this year those friends are more precious to us than ever—because this year has been very hard.

Kathleen is no longer chair of her department. We are thinking now about how to manage the rest of our lives in a time in which institutions we have loved (and depend upon) seem more and more imperiled. We love our house and are not inclined to think of leaving it soon; though we did visit a retirement facility in Sister Bay, Wisconsin, on the Door County peninsula, last summer. We have been in the habit of spending a couple of weeks in Door County each August for a number of years now, and of course we'll continue that. Here's Kathleen's graduate class, as they looked at our house a couple of evenings ago. We like having students over, if the classes are small enough that we can handle the numbers. Julian made the mac and cheese.

This seems a good way to end. We wish you all a blessed Christmas and a happy and prosperous new year. We'll be in St. Louis for the foreseeable future, we think. And this year, as usual, we'll spend the week from Christmas through New Year's Day in Iowa City, where we expect to have snow, visit Prairie Lights bookstore, see some movies, visit more friends, and do our best to stay warm.

You stay warm too—

Love,
Kathleen and Julian

