



Happy New Year, From the (Grapeland) Coldirons!

As 2006 goes bye-bye and 2007 looms large, we're finding lots to look forward to. Hope you are, too!

For us, discovering new people and places ranks high on the list of things to do this year. We are fairly settled into the new digs in Grapeland, Texas, and are really enjoying country life. Our family now consists of Kip, Dianna, Addie (8), and Carmen (5), a rabbit, a goose, five ducks, nine chickens, and a rooster (I'll spare you all the names). We also share our little piece of the continent with deer, skunks, rabbits, coyotes, hogs, turtles, fish, a family of bluebirds, an assortment of woodpeckers, several types of snakes, and a host of other animals.

In addition to fresh eggs, we were pleased to have lots of other homegrown food on the menu. We put in a small garden immediately upon moving in, expanded it before a fall planting, and will expand it again before spring. Anyone interested in pickles? The cucumbers, among other veggies, were incredible this year, so we have more than a few pickles on hand ... sweet, bread-and-butter, spiced, dill, etc. Want a gallon or six? ☺

Kip is a regular Farmer Coldiron, having mastered the intricacies of tractor driving and chicken coop construction. He's been a busy guy ... he has dug a lovely fire pit, re-roofed the stables, cleared quite a bit of brush, and has a list of projects as long as his arm.

Can you imagine Kip as a chicken farmer? It's not that intense (yet), but he has become quite fond of the birds, especially the ducks and geese. He's also found a church he really enjoys, and has joined the men's choir.

Dianna has been busy, too, what with home schooling, gardening, canning (did I mention we have a few pickles?), and normal moving-in stuff. She also volunteers at the Grapeland library a couple afternoons a month, which has been a fun way to meet folks.



Addie continues to earn her nickname of the Well-Read Farmer Girl, reading without let-up. In fact, she and Dianna are planning to start a reading / word-game club at the library in 2007. Earlier this year, Addie took an acting class and performed in a couple of roles, one of them a rooster. It was exciting to see her brave and strong on stage, crowing and strutting, and reminding us how far she's come since the days of hiding from waitresses. She's also been working on a quilt sewing project, helping Dianna in the kitchen quite a bit.

Carmen, who has never hidden from a waitress in her life, is as full of life and boisterous as ever! That neighing sound you hear in the distance from time to time? It's probably Carmen, playing "quietly." Actually, she does cool down occasionally, usually with a book or CD in hand. She, too, has already found a love of reading and of math ... when it's her turn to choose games, you can count on them being math games. Otherwise, look for her wherever dogs, horses, chickens, or any other living thing can be found.

-more-



One benefit of living “in the boonies” is that we can share get-away-from-it-all time with visitors. We were thrilled when our good buddies the DeVoucallas invited us to join them in the annual Grapeland Peanut Festival parade, and when Dee and Bryan camped out with us for a few days.

Kip’s mom and Miss Ellie, the golf-cart riding Chihuahua, visited between Thanksgiving and Christmas, and Dianna’s family and second cousins Rick and Claudia came in at Thanksgiving. A visit from Uncle Paul and Aunt Joan also brightened the holiday season ... now, how ‘bout the rest of the Coldirons, eh?!?

We’ve got room, friends ... we’re ready for company!

Time moves on, doesn’t it? Dianna’s niece Samantha started college this fall at St. Edward’s in Austin; her grandmother moved back to Kerrville, Texas; and Kip’s niece Lauren graduated high school. Both sides of our families are fairly healthy, and we’re glad for it!

As for us, we’ll see what comes. One of these days, maybe we’ll start another small business. Right now, we’re happy to gather eggs, walk the trails, make new friends, visit with old ones (well, you know what we mean!), and generally enjoy this new lifestyle we’re experiencing.

Have a terrific 2007, and please keep in touch.

Kip, Dianna, Addie, and Carmen

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