

Holiday 2023

It's holiday time again, and the best part is catching up with everyone. For ourselves, our lives have focused more on keeping our bodies vertical and running. It's preoccupying and seems to take more effort every year. Yet we are not keeping up! Our social life dwindles. Entropy prevails!

Dave has had four operations in the last 12 months, one to install a cochlear implant and the other three to deal with bladder cancer. Aside from that, he re-injures his thigh now and again, yet still manages to get in 10K steps a day. He is also in line for a shoulder replacement. He has caught 502 avocado-thieving squirrels, and nearly as many artichoke-gorging gophers. His varmint list grows weekly. Backpacking is a memory as are day-long hikes, but he is still consulting, and enjoys learning new computer languages and seismic applications. He plays the guitar less, a result of his arthritic fingers. We miss the music filling our home.

Judy's seven years of ballet on a concrete floor plumb wore out her back and hip, so she does slightly less ballet these days, but has signed up for a partnering technique class, and danced in a party scene for a Nutcracker. She may have done her last recital and solo last June. Running is almost the only thing left that doesn't hurt. She does a little more critical response work, a little more with the Red Cross, and was the Seamstress and Quick-change Lady for a kids' Nutcracker, an admirable program bringing dance to immigrants who may never have seen ballet or heard Tchaikovsky. Hanging out with three grandsons here (and another one in San Diego) is a delight. Having them so close has proven to be a wise and wonderful living arrangement. Gardening, knitting, reading and biking are meditative and still doable.

Stacy and Sal brought into the world a new baby, their first: Luca Jude Gomez. We spend uncounted hours viewing pictures of him, watching him grow a little every day. Dinner conversation is down to a bare trickle as we ooh and ah over Luca. We almost feel present for his growing years thanks to downloading new pics of him daily to our picture frame--Sal's brilliant gift. Luca is a mellow and happy baby, and Stacy does her best to arrange visits. Jeff and Victoria keep a watchful eye on us and brought us through the pandemic unscathed. Their sons are sprouting up faster than weeds and keep their house bouncing. They run fast, too. Wonder where they got that. They have learned to read several years before I did. We do craft kits with them once a month--a subscription service unimagined in our childhood and great fun.

The drought has abated, for a few years anyway. Our orchard has become a part of the family as we watch the Bay Area urbanize. No owl tenants in our owl box last year, but we're hopeful -- we hear several kinds of owls some nights. The coyotes seem scarce lately, but the birds make good use of the feeders, thanks to Dave's refills every other day.

Our greatest joy is each other, hands held, walks taken, little things done for one another. A trip to Costco is a date! And the highlight is a growing and happy family close by. May the lives of you and yours be similarly rewarding. -- Judy and Dave

Pics from the past (oh, to be young again!)



Judy's first view of Dave—hanging from a rock in 1961



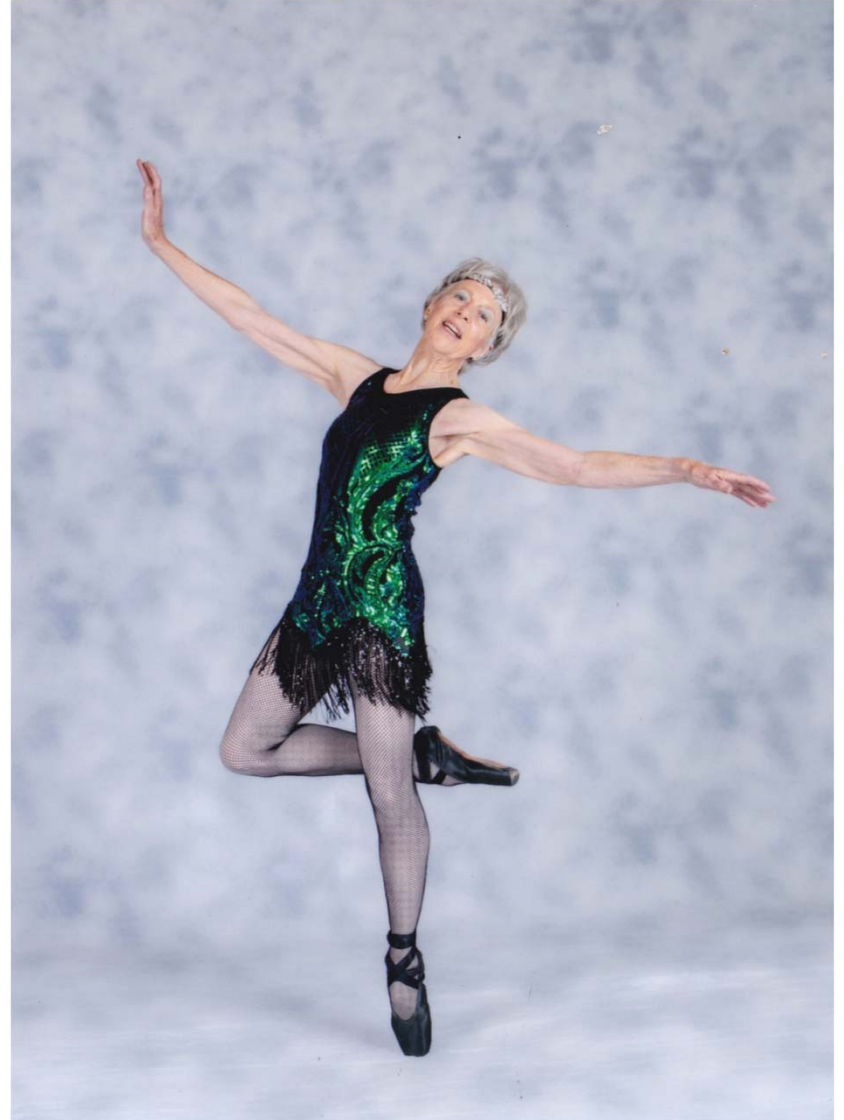
Maybe that inspired Judy to do some aid climbing (1963)



Rappelling to the base of the rock (1963)



Our cabin during the record-breaking winter, after which Judy celebrated the survival of the cabin by doing one of her signature dances at a recital in June





Luca, Sal, Stacy, the dogs (Lady and Creature), and Dave at the cabin after the snow melted



At Thanksgiving: Luca, Julian, David, Andrew, and Victoria (Jeff's knees show on the left)

At Thanksgiving: Jeff, Judy, Dave, Stacy, Luca, and Sal

