

Family Report

We are using a new format for this year's report, relying on PDF documents rather than web pages. This eliminates much cursing by Jim. All these photos and more are in the album [2023 Family and Friends on Google Photos](#). Except for the cartoons, all photos are linked to the online version, which is larger. Just click on the photo to see the larger format.

Here are our traditional cartoons stolen from the web, and a #Big Tree Photo from Brazil.



Linda's Critique of Jim's behavior may take longer than expected.



Jim and Linda by Big Tree in Manaus



People:

Jim and Linda.

Jim:

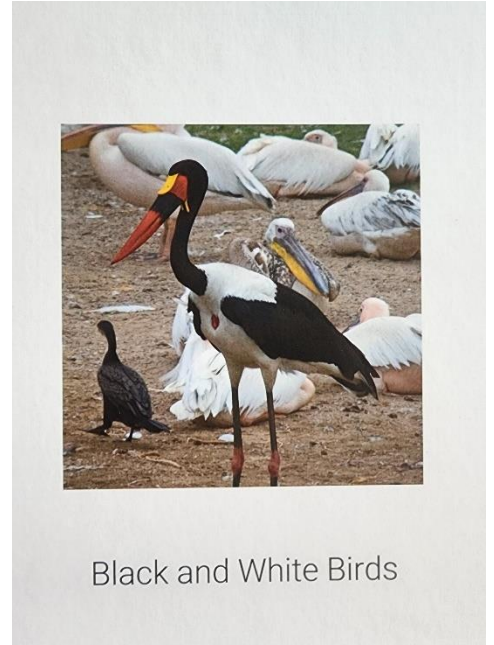
- Life in General.
 - Our last year as septuagenarians.
 - Tennis: Still at it, but most of the people he played with have left the game. Most of the time, he plays in the "Challenge Court," where you just show up and play with others who also show up. Many of the players are the same from week to week. Jim has had to resort to mnemonics to remember all the names.
 - Morning ritual: Wordle and the Spelling Bee — before actual work.
- Philo.
 - Really looking forward to the new place, especially kitchen
 - Making list of stuff to outfit kitchen
 - Ready to head toward carbon neutrality.

Linda

- Book Clubs
 - Three, including one in Oakland.
 - Book of the Year Recommendation: *This Is How It Always Is*, by Laurie Frankel.
- Birding
 - Put together book of Black and White Birds we've seen and loved.
 - Celebrated our 52nd year of birding together.
- Camp Mather
 - Joined Claire, Scarlet, Nico for a week in July
 - Camp near Yosemite owned by City of San Francisco
 - Watched Ropes Course
- Yosemite
 - With sister Leslie
 - Two-day tour
 - Hottest part of the year



Ready to try Ropes Course



Black and White Birds

Book Cover

Charles and Amy

Charles:

- Children's Librarian
- Fencing

Amy:

- Teaching Zumba Class
- Has delivered more than 1000 Babies
- Contra Costa Chorale

Scuba Roatan

All four went there.



Scuba Divers in Roatan, Honduras

Alaska

The family also traveled to Alaska



Chugach State Park near Anchorage, AK

Claire and Ron

Claire

- Self-employed
 - Mostly Dental Offices
 - *Per diem* at CHO
- Mentored Scarlet on GS Cookie sales
 - Bring Your Own Big Wheel race, Easter Sunday afternoon.
 - Outside local Whole Foods

Ron

- Hybrid Work
- Music, looking forward to completion of the Entertainment Center in Philo
- Family Photos

Travels

- Ron and Claire's Annual Trip for [Grateful] Dead Concert in Mexico
- Spain with the kids
- Vermont with the kids to visit Ron's family.
- Skiing in Kirkwood with kids, who are fearless by all reports.

Grandkids

Kai

- Fencing
- Playing Piano, performed Rhapsody in Blue with partners on dual pianos
- College applications. Yes, he's a senior in high school this year

Kiera

- Aerial
- Nature Photography
- Jazz Dance Recital

Scarlet

- Middle School
 - Math problems
 - Writing books
 - Acting
 - Fractured Fairy Tales
- Skylake Camp
- Crocheting
- Girl Scouts

Nico

- Long Hair
- Games: Soccer and Video
- Skylake Camp

Events:

Nepal

Charles and Kiera accompanied us on a birding trip to Nepal. [This is covered in a separate report.](#)

Halloween



Halloween: Ron, Linda, Claire, Scarlet, Nico

We really liked Nico's costume this year. Here's everyone except Jim, who wore his *curmudgeon* costume for the nth year.

Thanksgiving

We had company for Thanksgiving, which we spent at the house in Philo. Pete and Sophie Stoddard, who sometimes inhabit the house next door in Philo, along with Pete's brother Marc and wife Fulong.



Thanksgiving Dinner in Philo. Clockwise from lower left: Marc, Linda, Jim, Pete, Ron, Claire, Amy, Kiera, Sophie. Others were at the kids table in the other room.

Christmas

We had a dinner on Christmas Eve for all the California branch of the family, including Mormor, Amy's mother. We took a photo of us and all the grandkids.



Grandkids with L&J on Christmas Eve: Scarlet, Kai, Kiera, Nico, Linda, Jim

Christmas Bird Counts

One way we celebrate Christmas is by taking part in Christmas Bird Counts. This year, we repeated two we did last year: On December 17, we birded part of the Hayward Shoreline, which means Coyote Hills RP for us, one of our favorite birding locales. We hiked on a trail paralleling the water of the Bay. We saw lots of interesting species in the morning, then switched to some local city parks before heading home. One of the highlights of the day was this Hooded Merganser that we saw on a small pond.



Male Hooded Merganser

Then on December 30, we joined a group of birders on the Richmond (CA) count. The area we birded is what we used to call the “dog park,” an area near Costco populated by lots of dogs and friends. We hoped that the rain would have ended, but we had light mist and showers in the morning. Nonetheless, we had lots of fun, and got these photos of two Burrowing Owls.



Iron Chef Party

Charles and Amy hosted their Iron Chef party again this year, and once again, we wound up with a strange ingredient, [mangosteen](#). We actually ate some of this fruit in Cambodia. Our local guide, known as *Eagle Eyes*, brought some for a field breakfast one day. She explained that she always took some to her parents whenever she visited them. “It’s good for old people.” The fruit is delicious, especially when fresh. Unfortunately, the season does not include December in the Bay Area. Jim pushed for the “Best use of ingredient” prize for the Mango(steen?) lassi. He argued that you could not taste any of the mangosteen in the resulting dessert.

Scarlet participated this year and produced Rose-flavored mini ice cream cones. This won the prize Jim coveted. Here’s Scarlet with her prize, which she cannot drink for at least 10 years.

Here’s what the dining table looked like.



Scarlet with Iron Chef Prize



Iron Chef Dining Table

The Project

The new structure in Philo is “almost complete.” We hope it will be finished for a late birthday and anniversary celebration sometime in the spring, after our trip to Texas. It’s still a work in progress as you can see in this photo.



View of the ADU and stage/music/pool room. This view shows the main door to the ADU and scaffolding for the final stucco application.

The new structure has been designed to be carbon neutral, using solar panels and batteries. We are still connected to the grid, which we use when we have to, but can go without it when necessary.

The solar panels currently produce more energy than we use, especially as we still spend most of our time in San Francisco.

The [ADU \(Accessory Dwelling Unit\)](#) is built using electricity for all energy. For example, it uses heat pumps rather than wood burning fires, and induction cooktops in the kitchen. The size of these ADUs is regulated and can be no larger than 1200 square feet. Our unit is 1182 square feet, about the same size as our condo unit, but organized with an eye to entertaining. A spare bedroom is tucked in the area between the two halves of the building, and there is “storage space” where people can put sleeping bags if they are young and nimble.

So, if you’re in the area, give us a call and come visit in the hinterlands.

