

Holiday 2004 from Flamenco Romántico

This year in many ways has been very difficult, a hard year. And it has also been, thankfully, very blessed.

October. It's been a week since my 60th birthday and the eight bouquets of flowers I received are still blooming and filling our living room like a nursery of good wishes. I had a wonderful celebration, masterminded by Freddie, with a lot of loving friends. I felt so blessed to be turning 60 with so much good energy. Our new assistant, Laurie, decorated a fabulous cake for me. There are photos up of our party in the Photo Gallery section of our website.

On my large, elaborate and exciting 60th birthday party, Freddie's stepdaughter Jessamy re-joined our lives with her fiancé Trigger, flying in from Nashville that day. Jessamy used to live with us at Amesti Road in Corralitos when Freddie lived there with my, husband, my son and me in community three different times. We had lost track of Jessamy over seven years ago. We had been searching periodically in the Internet hoping to be able to trace her. We had wanted to invite her to our wedding, but we couldn't find her. She too had been searching for us, and she finally found us when her mother Jenny called Dave Borson *the day after* I had spent hours again trying to find them on the Internet.

In **September**, instead of taking our annual trip to Sevilla, Freddie got off Oxycontin (his prescription, opiate pain medication) here in California. It was his decision and against one of his doctor's recommendations. An alternative doctor, Dr. Bobbi Spurr, supported Freddie in his desire to live life un-drugged with a clear and un-fogged mind even though his pain was becoming more and more unbearable. He was needing to use more and more Oxycontin and then he was foggy and sleepy and dull. We wondered how much the Oxycontin was additionally contributing to his pain.

Shortly before the fall equinox Freddie went to the Camp for six days to withdraw from Oxycontin with help and under medical supervision. At sixty-five he was the oldest patient in the treatment center. And his experience developed into a hard, and un-aided raw heroin withdrawal. It should never have been that brutal. The camp botched up some critical information and Freddie was sent home without a prescription or an acknowledged need for Subutex, the withdrawal drug that can ease the suffering of severe opiate withdrawal. He did not even have much written information as to what to expect and what to do at home. So Freddie went from feeling relatively good from six days of treatment into an intense and unsupported opiate withdrawal. Unfortunately that drug, Oxycontin, has a three-week withdrawal period, according to the camp doctor we later hired to write a prescription and to monitor Freddie on Subutex, a true wonder drug. Without Subutex, on his discharge from the Camp Freddie went through a period of classic and horrible heroin withdrawal, as we were told that Oxycontin was like raw heroin. We hadn't been expected that and weren't at all prepared. It was truly horrible. When he finally got some Subutex (taken sublingually) again, it took away his severe symptoms within ten minutes.

Moreover, it seems to be an efficient pain killer as Freddie now feels less pain in his back and foot than he has felt in years. He can even walk a little better.

Freddie said that after he was off Oxycontin it was like someone had taken a plastic bag off his head. When he returned home, to mark this passage, Freddie cut his hair, explaining that "it was like getting rid of something old".

In **November**, we flew to visit Freddie's son Manolo, his wife Alta and family in Las Vegas. For the first time in years Freddie traveled without a wheel chair or a cane or a back brace. This has been unheard of since our 2001 car accident! Subutex must be a phenomenal painkiller or it was the opiate addiction causing the pain to make my dearest Freddie need more and more of that awful and expensive-on-Medicare drug. I felt so incredibly grateful to see my beloved Freddie in so much less pain and so un-drugged (Oxycontin free) for the first time in so very long. Now he just takes, in addition to his Subutex, Aleve or a Chinese back medicine to relieve the relatively minor pain. It is the greatest holiday gift we could ever hope to receive.

Our visit with Manolo, Alta, Alta's daughter Annette, and Annette's two adorable girls, eight year old Inez and six year old Salina, was filled with Joy. Manolo and Alta have been taking care of their granddaughters for about nine months and they have done a superb job. The girls, our great-granddaughters, are happy and well adjusted and so much fun to be with. Their mother, Annette, had just moved up to be with them the day before we arrived. So we were a full family. We had a ball.

Freddie's daughter Maggie, her husband Jason and kids Kyle, Katie and Kerra moved from San Diego and are now living in Bishop, Texas – a dramatic change for them. And Texas seems so far away.

My son Elun and his wife Donna are still teaching history at St. Lawrence University in upstate New York. They love the area and are doing very well but they too are so far away from us!

Last December we returned home from three months in Spain sick and exhausted. We had both gotten the flu so badly there that at one time we didn't know if we could get it together to have enough energy to pack to leave. Then our friend Pilar took us to her Naturopath doctor and he cured us enough to get home. There is much more detail about this in the 2003 Spain Chronicles on our website.

After we returned home it took us quite a while to recover. It was even more difficult because we were faced with the unhappy and energy-draining task of trying to evict our old friends who rented the pool house from us for years. But their use and sale of cocaine and other awful drugs left us no choice. It took eight months (from the first time we nicely asked them to leave) to finally get them out. We had to use the full court process to evict our former friends who rented the pool house. It was difficult and unpleasant. But when they finally left, we, all of us who were living on the land at the time, transformed the dark, angry energy to light and love and dance and music and laughter.

In **May** we built a beautiful new dance studio in the pool house, which my Gypsy dance teacher from Sevilla, Concha Vargas, inaugurated on **June 1**. She and her nephew Paco Fernández, who is our good friend and one of Freddie's

guitar teachers, came to stay with us. He and Concha both taught and performed here in California during this visit.

We helped Paco bring his wife Pilar (the one who had taken us to her doctor in Sevilla) and their daughter Soleá with him. It was Soleá and Pilar's first trip to America. Pilar brought a suitcase full of food from Spain because she wasn't sure what she could get in America. She cooked a lot of wonderful meals in our kitchen and we all had a good time. You can read more about her and Paco and Soleá too in our 2003 Spain Chronicles on the website.

But before they came, and after Freddie had recovered some from being so sick and exhausted in Sevilla, in **April and May** Freddie appeared in the play "Duende Makes a House Call" in Santa Cruz. It was written and directed by Stephanie Golino, an extremely brilliant and talented playwright and one of our advanced Flamenco students. The play was sold out with long lines waiting for a chance to get in, every night of its two-week run but the first. It is now being revived and will play again at the Capitola Theater in 2005 March 4 and 5 and 13 and 14. Rehearsals will start in January. It is a fantastic and moving play and we recommend that any of you who can, get tickets to see it early. Please see more information on our website!

In **August** a wild Bird, a finch, adopted us for a few days and we had a magical experience. The written description and photos are in our website photo gallery section. They put a smile on everyone's face, just like the bird did in real life.

Teaching-The new studio has been blossoming as Freddie and I use it more and more. We teach there two to three times a week and we practice there almost every day. In the summer we do Yoga there, but in winter we use the cozy old smaller studio, which is easier to heat.

Our new poolside studio has two walls of mirrors, which reflect through the three sliding glass doors on the pool side – swimming pool water and geraniums, sky and white rose chairs. Like the small studio it has a white oak floor over plywood, insulation and batons. The big studio also has a changing room, sink, shower and bathroom. It is roomy and accommodates our group Flamenco dance classes much better than the small studio used to do. Kate has been teaching a lot of Yoga private classes in the small studio and we will use it and the big studio when Duende starts to rehearse here in January. Kate is our wonderful Yoga teacher whom we loved so much that we moved her into our Sunset room next to our small dance studio!

November 2004

James is our newest addition here. He and Freddie play guitar together beautifully, happily and creatively. They are wonderful inspiration for each other. James originally rented our Lavender room for a month but stayed longer at our invitation. However, sleeping right under Max's drum pad (Max lives in the loft above) had its drawbacks. Three people in our community kitchen also seemed crowded, as was the parking. So our solution was to buy an older 18-foot

Winnebago trailer and hook it up by the pool house studio, overlooking the oak grove and the back to our neighbor's metal tree house. James' beautiful guitar music will not disturb the neighbors and he'll be right next to the big dance studio where he spends a lot of time with us almost every day. It is a lovely trailer and we think that our friend James will be very happy there.

Our long time renter and good friend, Saint Max, will be moving out of the loft in January to live with his newly formed music band. He will also be near his daughter, granddaughter, and his girlfriend. We are fortunate that he will still come back to help us out on a regular basis. So we know we will still see him and continue a lot of contact and we will also benefit from his saintly and positive attitude when he works for us and helps us.

Tami and Brent, our friends and renters of our "guest cottage", got married this year in a beautiful and moving wedding. They are a sweet young couple and we love them.

November - We finally have solar energy, which we have both wanted for a long time. While it should only cut our PG&E bill in half, it is a great pleasure to go outside and see the meter spinning backwards.

Throughout all this I have continued my psychotherapy practice on a part time basis as well as my shamanic practice of doing healings and facilitating drum circles for shamanic journeying.

This Thanksgiving, our first here since 1999 (usually we are still in Spain this time of year), we celebrated with twenty people, mostly family including my 85 year old father Jack and his wife Peggy and Freddie's 85 year old mother Bea. How lucky we are. We have so much to feel thankful for. It was a great celebration.

Outside today the winds have blown the ocean view clean and clear and Monterey stands sharply in the distance of the bay. Yesterday the rains washed everything and last night and today the winds cleaned it all. I took the day off and read, just a lazy day in paradise.

There is now so much harmony up here. Paradise just gets better and better. And this year too, Freddie and I continue to empty our garbage hand in hand on Wednesday nights, later sitting on Mama's bench by Mama's tree and looking at the ocean and often Monterey in the distance. We are blessed and grateful and in love.