

Flamenco Romántico Holiday Letter 2010

—Another year of good things to be grateful for. Freddie’s speech and health are still improving. He has turned our library into a guitar repair studio and has started to modify a guitar he built years ago.



In September, we started to eat Healthy Chocolate, an antioxidant-rich super food. During that month, Freddie started to exercise and added the Healthy Chocolate

protein meal replacement to his diet. Two months later Freddie had lost more than 20 pounds and dropped 3 pant sizes. He does sit-ups with a non-mechanical machine, he rides the stationary bicycle while he watches TV, and he binges with the bowflex.

He cut out almost all his junk food and we have both reduced our food quantities. My weight loss has not been so impressive, but I have a lot less to lose, and I *am* losing weight too.

Since discovering these delicious chocolates, Freddie and I had enough energy and motivation to almost completely rearrange the rugs and tables and a couch in our living room. We are clearing out piles that have built up for years. I have given away more than 60 books. We are preparing to transfer our camera and VHS tapes to DVD and our audiotapes to digital. We are evaluating old negatives, copying what we want and getting rid of the rest. It feels really good.



(over)

And Freddie and I love living alone together again, the first time since his stroke. We are doing our own housecleaning and find we are much more relaxed and involved with the house. That makes us redecorate.

Our long time assistant, Rama, quit and Renee replaced her in September. We have a new gardener, Patti, who is making the compost finally work beautifully. Martin, our “everything” angel maintenance, gardener creative fixer is still working for us. He has decided that we will speak in Spanish, and so we have. I am so glad that I won’t be getting out of practice.

James still lives in the trailer next to the pool and big dance studio and he still does our grocery shopping and plays for my Flamenco classes. He has put up a lattice in front of the trailer and it supports a number of vines and flowers. It looks like a home now. Tami and Brent still rent the little cottage from us. Everything is peaceful here on the mountain.

In January, Margalit and Shlomo visited us from Israel. Then Cihlti and Ethan taught Flamenco workshops here. In February, Freddie’s mother Bea turned 91. In the early Spring Lakshmi visited with Flamenco artists from Jerez. They performed and taught classes here. We had a great time.



In May, Freddie and I returned to Spain. Freddie spent most of his time at the beach in Cadiz province, Playa el Palmar. I stayed in Sevilla to study Flamenco dance and singing and I visited Freddie on the weekends. That was the first time he was able to stay by himself since his stroke, –a milestone, which we celebrated. In Sevilla, I studied dancing intensively with

Angelita Vargas and polishing with Lakshmi. (Writings on Facebook and our website). I fell in love with Angelita and her beautiful dance material. And with Lakshmi’s help, my dancing



improved.

On our way home, we stopped off in Puerto Rico and visited with old friends.

Shortly after we returned to Santa Cruz, I flew to New York to visit granddaughter Josie and son Elun and daughter-in-law Donna. Josie is four now, very talkative and full of energy and curiosity. Of course, we had a wonderful time.



The day after I returned, Freddie's brother Timmie, his wife Joanie, Freddie's sister Dorothy and husband John, and their three grandchildren came to visit. We always have a wonderful time together.

Then came the changing of the guard of the assistants and the healthy chocolate discovery, which has given us both the extra support we needed. Freddie and I relaxed and slept without a lot of pressure and we finally recovered from our trips and guests. In September, my father Jack turned 91. He is still strong and vital.

Cihtli and Ethan returned in October and taught another Flamenco workshop. It was wonderful and stimulating. I also started doing some very effect daily ankle exercises that Cihkli taught me.

Sadly, our friend Dorien died unexpectedly in October, right before the spectacular 2-day Flamenco festival, which included her old friends Juan and Lucy.

Stephanie returned to visit for Thanksgiving and to see the phenomenal Flamenco shows and take the workshops. We had an incredible, Flamenco filled, Thanksgiving.



Thanksgiving weekend Angelita Vargas and Juan del Gastor with his wife Lucy, here on tour from Spain and part of the shows, taught Flamenco workshops in our big studio. Juan and Lucy have stayed with us many times here, but this was Angelita's first visit. We were honored. She is a lovely and gracious person as well as a Flamenco legend and a "living treasure of Spain."



Freddie and I are continuously thankful for another good year in spite of the world disasters and this awful recession. Economically we are challenged, but our hearts are full and our energy returning. We live in a beautiful place and do what we love. And, we love each other. We wish you all peace and happiness in your hearts and that the things we believe in happen.

Freddie and Marianna Mejia, Flamenco Romántico



Thanksgiving 2010