

2015 Holiday Letter from Flamenco Romántico

Marianna and Freddie Mejia



I have been too busy writing my two books to work much on our Holiday letter. I guess that explains it. Freddie spends a lot of time in his shop, sanding wood, replacing tap plates, French polishing –in general repairing guitars and building them. On top of that, he regularly washes the dinner dishes and pots and cleans the kitchen at night. I write. Of course I also see Psychotherapy clients, teach 3 Flamenco dance classes a week, facilitate my Shamanic drumming circles, cook and pay bills. In the summer I am also busy with my vacation rental business. As usual, we have been fortunate to host many Flamenco workshops here with visiting teachers from Spain. For the first half of the year we also hosted shamanic healing plant medicine ceremonies.

This year has passed so quickly, bringing many challenges. Santa Cruz is still in a drought. Airplane flight patterns were changed in March and now the sound of rumbling and whistling planes reverberates off the mountains and disturbs our tranquility both outside and inside as well. I report the noise daily on the downloaded phone app. My blood pressure is too high (perhaps exacerbated by the constant airplane noise) and arthritis has crept into my fingers and toes. In Spain, our friend Paco Lira, owner of La Carbonería,

died. We also experienced cancer deaths of other friends and mentors in Spain, Freddie's guitar teacher Carlos Heredia and my dance teacher Pilar "La Faraona" Montoya. Another longtime Flamenco friend and mentor, in the US, also succumbed to cancer, Teo Morca. Our friend musician Darioush Sami died of a heart attack. And now in mid December my dear shamanic friend Tom Snell has died unexpectedly, also from a heart attack.

On the positive side, I have been immersed in working on my books, "Becoming the Oldest Generation –A Memoir" about losing my mother, and the other based on and including my 1968-69 New Mexico journal. I am inspired and motivated by a wonderful and challenging weekly book completion class that has made my writing skill grow. I was fortunate to host a successful 4-day writing retreat here, organized and taught by Andy Couturier, my writing teacher.

In October, Freddie decided to stop drinking Tequila and substitute breath work.

Our year briefly:

January –Our friend Ricardo moved into our small trailer and spends several days a week with us.

Lakshmi taught a Flamenco dance workshop in our studio.





February- Freddie's mother Bea turned 96 and we celebrated with Freddie's sister Dorothy, his brother Timmie and their families.

March – Our beautiful granddaughter Christina (Freddie's

side) got married and we flew to Los Angeles to join the celebration. It was wonderful to see Freddie's son Mano and we missed Mano's wife Alta, who couldn't come. We also missed seeing Freddie's daughter Maggie and family who live in San Diego. While we were in LA we visited my old Jr. High School friend Gita and then our friend Cihkli and her mother. Sadly we missed Cihkli's husband Ethan, who was in Spain at the time. Later my Flamenco teacher Concha Vargas visited from Spain, performed in two shows and taught another Flamenco workshop here. Cousins Jim and wife Nancy visited from Holland.

April –Freddie had a small car accident and then decided that he was done driving, even though he was able to pass a new driving test. Freddie's sister Dorothy and her husband John visited again.

May – Juan Paredes taught a wonderful Flamenco workshop here.

June - Freddie's 76th birthday celebration and our 15th wedding anniversary –how quickly time is passing –Lots of family and friends at a wonderful party.

July- I visited my 9-year old granddaughter Josie, my son Elun and his wife Donna in Canton, NY. –Basketball, hiking, wrestling and fun



(although exhausting). Little Josie is now taller than I am! I just wish they lived closer!

August- Watching her fingers dancing on the keyboard of her new piano, we were entranced by my sister Elaine's intense playing at her recital. Brother-in-law Ken, as always, is very supportive.

September - My Dad turned 96 and celebrated with a small party. Flamenco artist friends from Spain, Jose Mendez and partner Myriam, taught a Flamenco dance and singing workshop here.



October – After a breath-work session taught by a friend, Freddie stopped drinking (*worthy of the two mentions*). We hosted two more Flamenco workshops taught by artists from Spain, Lakshmi and then Carmen Ledesma. Freddie started Hyperbaric Oxygen treatments as another part of his stroke recovery. And of course, we celebrated my 71st Birthday with a big Flamenco party. I danced all night!

November – We hosted the smallest Thanksgiving I can ever remember having –the two of us, plus Bea and James.

December - Dorothy and John will be visit again, just after Christmas. After that, another intense Writers' retreat is scheduled here for three days over New Year's weekend.

As I write this I realize that we have been busier than I thought. Freddie and I are grateful that my Dad Jack and Freddie's Mother Bea are still alive and functioning. My Dad and his wife Peggy spend most of their time in Monterey and I try to visit them when they are up for it. Bea is still in a convalescent home in Santa Cruz, so we see her more often. We are grateful for our wonderful siblings, our children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. We are grateful that our angel Martin is still taking care of us and our property, that our land-mates are still here and well, and that we live in this beautiful, peaceful place and even have year-round strawberries in our garden. And of course, we are blessed to have each other and our love.

We wish you all Happy Holidays, health, happiness and beauty.



Photo by Ricardo Diaz