

*In 2022:* We sailed from New York City to England on the Queen Mary 2, visited family in Switzerland, spent 25 days on the French Riviera, visited the Italian Riviera, and saw some of Lisbon. And, **we moved** from Western North Carolina to **Cape Cod**.

2022 was the year that saw the Covid-19 pandemic end, or at least abate. It took long enough. Ruth and I had our 3<sup>rd</sup> vaccination by the start of the year and our 4<sup>th</sup> in the spring. This was Covid-19, meaning “corona virus 2019”. Wow! Two full years of lockdown on travel (during which American Airlines lapsed our 70K miles of credit), dining, entertainment and nearly everything else. Let’s hope it is truly over.

Hey! It must be. In March, we spotted the Bluebird of Happiness in our yard, perched on our sourwood tree. That augurs well for all of us, we hope. Our missive, here, is unusually long.



### **(Old) Home Improvement Projects** *No home project is as simple as one may think.*

In April we finally completed the final improvement inside our North Carolina home, the



remodeling of what had been the only bathroom in our house when we bought it in 2014 but which we had relegated to the status of “guest” bathroom when we added our own master bathroom in 2015. We’d previously replaced its tiny sink and vanity with something much better, added a decent medicine cabinet, and improved the faucet & over-sink lighting. What remained was to replace the tub. The old is left, the new (before the shower curtain was up), right.



The old tub had a soaking depth (distance from tub bottom to overflow drain) of only 10 inches. It was impossible to submerge oneself. The shower diverter didn’t work properly and half the water flow always came out through the faucet. And the drain control was broken, meaning the tub had to be stoppered to hold water.

The glass block dates to when the wall was to the outside; the master bath is now on the opposite side of the wall. In addition to all that, Ruth hated the feel of the rough floor tiles and we both hated their color. The decorative accent line on the tub tiling is our own idea. The wall tiles were expensive, coming all the way from Italy in boxes of eight, with additional long delay time and freight charges. We would have had one tile too few. Unwilling to spend \$400 for one tile, we used a stock accent strip and extra overstock/discontinued floor tiles to make the accent line. Two left-over tiles were then used to improvise a vanity backsplash.

The new tub is a whirlpool with 20 inches of soaking depth. Getting it was an odyssey. First was the search. Most such tubs cost thousands. I found one on the Home Depot web site for \$700, by American Standard made exclusively for Home Depot. The local Home Depot said it had one in stock, but didn't. A different Home Depot had one for real and would ship it for free. But its 3<sup>rd</sup>-party shipper itself used its own 4<sup>th</sup>-party shipper and the tub was lost for a month. Only my detective work and some luck located it. It had been, no kidding, sitting on the loading dock of "Joe's Shipping" with my name but no other info, written on the box. I learned that only because the only person available at Joe's that day – every other employee being out with Covid-19 – was on the dock. And, in order to get my call through the outgoing message menu, I'd chosen "driver"! Had I not, my call would have gone unanswered.

The tub fit into the alcove, but was too large to orient once we brought it into the bathroom. The contractor was baffled, and then proposed stripping out all of our bathroom walls. My solution: make a hole in the right side of the wall into our bedroom and slide the tub in. I patched the hole using an access panel, behind our dresser and painted to match the wall.

Home Depot wanted us to buy a burnished copper drain/overflow assembly for over \$200. But the drain is hidden. The plumber bought a plastic assembly for \$70 at Home Depot. After installation the cheap assembly, made in China, was found to be cracked, plus broken inside the pipe threads. He got a refund and made one using proper PVC plumbing parts, for about \$20.

When we filled the tub to test the whirlpool action, the air switch hose was missing. American Standard provided a new one, free. And American Standard then followed-up to send the missing connector for hose-to-switch. *Never again will I ever use ever use Home Depot.*

We also paved the front of our driveway into and inside our carport. But then we moved. This is the realtor's virtual tour of our old house: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZaP8l5OPn-8>

**Our new home** is in East Sandwich, Cape Cod, Massachusetts. Sandwich is the oldest Cape Cod town. Here's the Zillow page on our new home: [https://www.zillow.com/homes/11-Mill-Rd-East-Sandwich,-MA-02537\\_rb/55919953\\_zpid/](https://www.zillow.com/homes/11-Mill-Rd-East-Sandwich,-MA-02537_rb/55919953_zpid/). As you can see, it has a nice location and a total south roof solar panel array that has made the past year's monthly electric bill average about \$5. It's set up for 1<sup>st</sup> floor living, with master bedroom, full master bath, kitchen, dining room and living room, plus "mud" room with washer and dryer and attached garage all on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor. The 2<sup>nd</sup> floor has two bedrooms (one of which will become Ruth's quilting room) and a full bath. It's on a half-acre lot with the back yard entirely fenced. The optional neighborhood beach club (only \$175/year) on Spectacle Pond (EPA-rated as the cleanest in Massachusetts) has no motor boats and is stocked with trout and bass. The town also has (\$35 annually) two salt water beaches that are joined by a pedestrian boardwalk for residents (w/parking), on Cape Cod Bay south of the mouth of the Cape Cod Canal and on Nantucket Sound. Sandwich is famed for its hydrangeas, and Ruth plans to grow some. I've found music activities. Our new neighbors are very nice. I'd passed through the Cape Cod Canal aboard the USS Lloyd Thomas in 1959.

## Vacation Travel

On June 4 we finally departed on the vacation that the Covid-19 pandemic forced us to postpone in 2020 and again 2021. We sailed from NY City to Southampton, England aboard the Cunard Liner *Queen Mary 2* on June 5. We transferred immediately to a flight to Zurich, Switzerland where we were met by family and we spent three days in Neuhausen, on the Rheinfall, in Switzerland. Then we flew to Nice, France and spent 25 days on the French and Italian Rivas, moving gradually from Nice through Monaco and to Ventimiglia, Italy and then back to Nice before flying for a brief respite in Lisbon, Portugal, then flying, first class (because our travel agent got us that as a free benefit), back to NY city, then to home.

### ***Slide Shows of our European Tour Vacation: All 31(!)***

are all available at this link:

<http://www.dan-ruth-tanner.com/Travel/2022%20Vacation.html>

The photo at the right, which I took, shows left to right, Marie-Claire Tanner, widow of Max Tanner, who was one of two sons of my dad's brother Albert Tanner, her son Robert Tanner, her daughter Pamela (now a widow herself), Ruth, and (standing) Pamela's son Joel. It was taken on Marie-Claire's apartment balcony.



## Ruth's 75<sup>th</sup> birthday party

Led by Will Hamilton, who hosted it in his house at Flying Cloud Farm, my bandmates in the Flying Cloud Band threw a farewell party for me. When I mentioned it would be on Ruth's 75<sup>th</sup> birthday, the party also became a surprise party for her.

Farewell party given for us on Ruth's birthday by Will Hamilton (on right). With John Mycroft, James Kamp, Josette, Ruth, Mattie, Helen Charbonneau, Susan Mycroft.

I gave Ruth a tea mug with her name and my nickname for her "Snuggle Bunny" on it, handcrafted locally, and an earring and bracelet set that I bought for her aboard the *Queen Mary 2*.



*On November 23, the day before Thanksgiving, we received the horrible news that Will died as the result of injuries he suffered in a fall at his home. We are privileged to have known and loved him.*

## A Big Change

In mid-May we decided that we wished to leave the South. Actually, I never liked the South



except for my musical friends. \*  
Beside the aforementioned farewell/75<sup>th</sup> birthday party for Ruth, another



very nice thing happened at the Flood Gallery open mic:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jkweKleH\\_u8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jkweKleH_u8).

\* Left photo: Jack Dawson (keyboard), Sarah Jane Thomas. me. Right photo: Will Hamilton (ukulele), his son David (fiddle), John Mycroft (bass), James Kamp (guitar) Jim Farmer (percussion), Helen Charbonneau, me)

We liked some Southern scenery: <http://www.dan-ruth-tanner.com/Travel/NC.html>, and longer growing season. I dislike its “heritage”, its politics, and its evangelism and guns culture.

Ruth became increasingly uncomfortable living here ever since we lost our daughter to some combination of insanity and/or drug (kratom\*) induced delusions. The thing that triggered Ruth to say “I’d like to move away from here,” was, I think, when the wife of the neighbor behind our house bought an AR-15 rifle and began to take target practice with it right there. The noise aggravated us, and sent Moxie scurrying to hide under our desk. And consider this:

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/crime/woman-dead-after-being-shot-by-neighbor-during-target-practice-deputies-say/ar-AA11bkTp>.

\* The Mayo Clinic on Kratom: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/consumer-health/in-depth/kratom/art-20402171>

I really don’t want to live anyplace that has a “Billy Graham Highway”. Billy Scam told Ike that it was “too soon” to end segregation. And he told Tricky Dick Nixon that “God was on our side, and he (Nixon) was right” to prosecute the Vietnam War. When one considers the words and deeds of the Graham children, it is very easy to imagine the bigotry of their childhood home.

I don’t want to live in a congressional district that elected and re-elected Mark Meadows to the US House of Representatives, and later sent that nazi Madison Cawthorn there.

Black Mountain (pop. 7,000) has *seven* Baptist churches. I saw a preacher handing out Trump signs in his parking lot after services. It has other Protestant churches too, but no Catholic



church, synagogue, or other place of worship. The Black Mountain elementary school abuts a smoke & vape shop and a pawn shop with a huge gun counter, it's the town's cop hangout.

I believe that the United States will split, either peacefully or in civil war. When the split occurs, we will be living in a "blue" state. We wouldn't be safe in any "red" state.

We went through some stressful times selling our NC house. We can thank our listing agent, Rhett McCary of Keller-Williams Realty in Black Mountain NC, for doing an excellent job. First, he was the only agent of the three we interviewed who had confidence in our suggested listing price, and the only one with a well-planned and well-executed marketing plan. Plus, he voluntarily gave us a discounted commission because I'm a veteran.

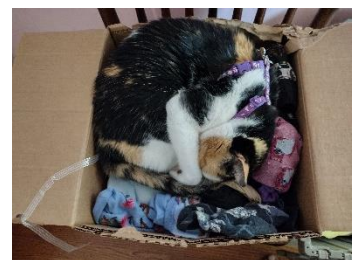
We got an offer 9.4 percent over our listing price withing hours of placing our house on the market. But the putative buyer was insincere, and reneged. That left us in a difficult spot: we'd taken a house-hunting trip to Cape Cod and committed to buying our new home there.

It was then that two other professionals came through for us while we rapidly secured additional credit we might need, and our long-time financial advisor and retirement/investment fund manager Steve Davis, of Davis Financial, Mansfield MA also secured for any back-up credit that might become necessary (but fortunately, didn't).

Not only that, but Rhett McCary landed a new buyer for us within one day of re-listing the house, again with a better-than-listing-price offer. We also were pleased by excellent service for property/liability and automobile insurance from Massachusetts agent Mark Vallucci.



Our neighbors' little girls, Josie (hugging Moxie) and Jill visited us one last time, and Coco prepared by consenting to be packed – to be opened upon arrival.



One encounters all kinds of personalities among home seller and buyers. The seller of the house we bought, Mr. John Collinson, could not have been a nicer man. He bought us lunch, showed us around Sandwich, and cooperated to the utmost to help us meet our needs. But John was a salesman, and salespersons are all a bit full of blarney. (More about that in the section following about moving in.)

But the buyers of our house we dealt with were stinkers, to say the least. The first seemed hot to trot and 48 hours later abruptly and without warning reneged on the deal, and sent a mealy-

mouthed e-mail blaming his wife's pregnancy for the change of mind and asking for 70% of his non-refundable "due diligence" fee back. Ha!

The second, a single woman, broke her word on the deal and made impossible demands, some on the day before she knew we were scheduled to leave. She probably knew (somehow, but secrets are hard to keep) that we were over a barrel with our own purchase commitment. She got away with more than she would have otherwise – but not too much. We made sure there was not so much as a square of toilet paper left in the house for her and can hardly wait until after closing when she contacts us for assistance with the house's peculiarities, and receives a piece of our minds. She had not a shred of decency. We'll give as good as we got.

## **The Move Itself**

A household move can be an "adventure". All the van lines' estimates were within a few dollars of one another. We selected Colonial Van Lines, which gave perfectly lousy service. The company gave us a "window" for pickup of August 29-31 with a promise to call us 48 hours in advance. But did not call. I called and learned it was to be the morning of the 31<sup>st</sup>. Then the van didn't show. We called again and were told that our goods would be loaded on September 1 instead. We hit the ceiling and demanded to be put up at a hotel at Colonial's expense. The company balked and then agreed, but we've not seen a cent or reimbursement yet. Moving companies have their customers at a disadvantage and exploit that fact. They've collectively lobbied Congress, with the result that they can be irresponsible robber barons. One can purchase costly, nearly worthless "insurance". Or everything is "insured for 60¢/pound.

Because no 18-wheeler (which transported several households at once) could pick up and then turn at our NC location, our household contents had to be shuttled from our home to the van using a smaller rented truck (at extra charge). The company wanted the van driver to get one from a U-Haul over an hour away (with attendant driver shuttling) but there was a U-Haul location only a mile from our home. He got one there.

After all was loaded, we had to wait for the driver to come to our house (in his detached cab; he'd returned the U-Haul truck). The hour we were told to wait became two, then three. In desperation, I called him up, because we would have to start our drive to Massachusetts. He told us that the company wouldn't at first approve of him paying the loading crew, and those three guys – thugs from Charlotte, 2½ hour's drive away were threatening to beat him up and torch the van! He finally got them paid, and I met him and signed his papers (under situational duress) on the empty U-Haul's bed.

Then we drove – well into the night, with Ruth dozing and me fighting nodding off behind the wheel – to a "pet friendly" motel in Virginia, about halfway to our friends Roger's & Rita's New Jersey home. We snuck Moxie and Coco in to avoid the pet-friendly exorbitant surcharge, ate the "Continental breakfast" of lousy orange juice and toast the next morning, and headed to NJ.

Our visit to our best friends was a pleasant break in our motor trip, which took place over the Labor Day holiday weekend. We'd thought we'd have to either drive to Cape Cod in horrendous holiday traffic, wait until Tuesday to drive, or drive up in the middle of the holiday and contrive to find lodging then, on Cape Cod! Colonial's crack "manager" told us the van would arrive during the holiday weekend, on Sunday, September 4. But the driver told us that he'd first make an unloading stop in Rhode Island and then would park his van above the Cape Cod Canal on the Massachusetts mainland for the night of Monday, Labor Day, September 5, and then deliver our household contents on Tuesday, September 6.

And, by the way, Colonial was misdirecting the van to Falmouth MA, some 25 miles from East Sandwich. Fortunately, we were communicating with the van driver!

September 5<sup>th</sup> was an eventful day for us. We ended our three-night sojourn with Roger and Rita and headed a bit north in New Jersey to visit my sister Naomi and husband Larry and stay overnight, nearly an hour closer to Cape Cod. Because Labor Day itself dawned cool and cloudy, prompting the horde holidaying at the shore to depart for New York City early, the drive from our friends' home to Naomi and Larry's involved me navigating back roads that I'd not seen in 55 years. There simply was no way to even get onto the Garden State Parkway, which was gridlocked to a halt. At least visiting my sister was nice.

September 6<sup>th</sup> wasn't much better for us. First, there was a drenching downpour, one that caused record flooding on our route through Northern NJ and in Providence RI. And, made our drive nerve-racking. The former alone caused us to waste an hour in stop and go traffic. Never were we so glad to pass NY City and leave NJ. Second, our Cape Cod realtor was being difficult, with multiple phone calls to us, about fulfilling his promise and duty to receive our household goods and supervise their unloading in East Sandwich. Third, while driving we had to make and take calls to our attorney in North Carolina, who was handling our sale closing, and between Colonial Van Lines and to soothe and coax our erstwhile Cape Realtor. We were required to authorize credit card payment to Colonial Van Lines – before the driver was permitted to unlock the van for unloading. Fourth, the van did not arrive in East Sandwich until the afternoon, to the Realtor's great annoyance and the rage of the unloading crew – more thugs, this time from over an hour's drive away in Boston MA (plus holiday traffic delays). Told that they'd be unloading in the morning, they had arrived extra early. Then they became impatient to complete their job and leave, causing them to handle our household goods very roughly and carelessly. Did I mention that Tuesday, September 6, was a horrible day for us?

Our glass tabletop arrived in the condition below, which wasn't noted on the forms I again signed under situational duress. That was after Colonial had packed it. Eight pieces of our China, which had been ours since our March 3, 1973 wedding and which had survived *seven* overseas moves, including two international moves, were broken. Also broken was crystal Ruth had inherited from her parents and some which we'd purchased in Sweden – and that had survived three. They also broke two of our keepsake pottery mugs and some garden ornaments. Somehow, Colonial Van Lines managed to break the crown molding off our China closet, the leg

off a table lamp, and the leg off a bed footboard from a bedroom set that had been handmade in Dominica. (As will be recounted following, those were repaired by our wonderful new neighbors.) They broke three pieces of the particleboard furniture Ruth uses in her sewing room. The thug unloading crew ran any heavy pieces that had caster mounts up the driveway and into the inch-high steel lip on our garage floor, ripping casters from a cedar chest and Ruth's sewing-machine workstation cabinet. They also broke the spool axle on Ruth's Singer machine.



As soon as we arrived, our realtor, Chris Crawford, shook my hand and hastened to depart. We cannot recommend him.

In the evening of September 6, Ruth and I simply *plotzed* (Yiddish, meaning "drop as if dead") onto our bed, amidst about 200 boxes and numerous wrapped items. Our unpacking took over two weeks to get 90% done. It may be asymptotic and never end.

Late in November, Colonial called and said it was paying us \$138 on our \$800 claim. Moving companies get away with such things by having lobbied Congress to pass laws that enable it. Beware if you are forced to deal with a moving company! In December Colonial sent an email final offer for \$138. We're planning to go to Small Claims Court in 2023. Colonial has offered \$600 if we changed our one-star review online to 5 stars. We told them we can't be bribed to lie.

## **New Home, Neighborhood & Neighbors (Plusses and Minuses)**

Ruth said to me over our dinner about a week after we became the official homeowners here on September 9, "We should have made this move at least a year earlier." I agree wholeheartedly. No place is Utopia, but the plusses here are many, and permanent, and the minuses are few and seem temporary.

Our neighborhood is pleasant and quiet, peaceful and picturesque. Houses and yards here are well-tended almost without exception. The people of the neighborhood that we've met are friendly and helpful. One next door neighbor gave us some gardening tips and a gift of homemade blueberry scones. Another, across the street, gave us a free pass to the Heritage Museum and Gardens. Here is Ruth there. The place is right in Sandwich and is famed for its hydrangea gardens and automobile museum.



The arts and music scene here is vibrant, with organizations and activities in every town and village. We can enjoy recreation fresh or salt water. There are good restaurants, and plenty of shopping services.

When I showed two of our neighbors our broken table lamp and bed foot board, they immediately informed me that they're both woodworkers and within days had restored both items to good as new condition. All of our closest neighbors fit our older, retired demographic. We're happy and fit in fine. **Best of all, we've not heard any gunfire!** Not even at the wild turkeys abounding in the neighborhood. Moxie loves seeing them on our walks.



Here's a fairly complete list things of what we haven't seen or heard here on Cape Cod, and certainly don't miss: The sound of gunfire. A Baptist church on every corner. Confederate flags. Trump signs. Craft beer breweries. Gun shops and pawn shops (which buy & sell guns). Fast food joints. Grotesquely obese people. Grotesquely tattooed people. Dollar General stores. Young men with ponytails and full beards wearing bib overalls and filthy baseball caps, worn backward. Billboards hyping religion or gun shows. Gospel music on the radio. Tobacco and vape shops.

## Upgrading our New Home

Before we bought our house, we knew that we would have to modernize its 1971 kitchen and replace its original windows (with new storm windows) with modern window units. But the house price was right and our budget accommodating.



*Above: The horrid old kitchen and adjoining "mud room".*

The modernization project is a slide show: <https://dantanner.jalbum.net/Kitchen%20Remodel/>. Work began on Oct. 31 and ended on Dec. 13. Of those 44 days, exactly half, 22, were actual working days. And we had waited for required permits through nearly all of October.

We purchased and I installed much-needed medicine cabinets in both the master and guest bathrooms. We have removed electrical, phone and TV and electric heat wiring and hardware around the house, all of it ugly and none of it functional. We've added an after-shower heater and shower grab bar in the bathroom. Early next year our decaying single-pane windows will all be replaced with modern 2-pane energy-saving ones, which will also be easy to clean.



Check this out! Ruth was planting crocus bulbs for next spring when she discovered that our house has a front walk. It was buried under the lawn! I started digging it out right away. We've begun some yard work: Removing two oak trees on one side of the front yard – we were sick of the mess of leaves and acorns. And this big oak



tree close to the back of the house, too. We have been battling bittersweet, a hyper-invasive vine that infests the locale and which strangles every bush and tree it encounters. A back corner of the yard had been used as a brush and leaf dump and we're also clearing it.

The HVAC for the house is a bit of a story: Originally it had electric baseboard heat, with a thermostat in each room. In 1971, electricity was a bargain. It had no air conditioning. The prior owner disconnected all the electric baseboard units, but they and their thermostats are still in each room. They're unsightly, and we shall remove them. It also had a radiant electric wall heater in the laundry room, which the kitchen/laundry remodel will remove. He also inserted a natural gas heater into the fireplace, and to move warmed air around downstairs, he placed fans into some room-dividing walls. Those will also go with remodeling. Then, he added air conditioning with vents installed throughout the ground floor. That left the seldom, if ever, used upstairs (which has our guest bedroom, a bathroom, and Ruth's sewing room) without either heat or AC. He used, and left us, two plug-in oil-containing electric radiators. The laundry room has ample space in which to two cabinets the previous owner left. The prior owner also, sensibly, replaced the water heater with a natural gas-fired tankless on-demand hot water system, and the unit also has a radiator heat exchanger in the air ductwork for heating the downstairs. (Making the remote-control gas fireplace merely a pleasure to view and mood-setter for us, though it can provide emergency heat.) He only skimmed on the thermostat, choosing a manual "dumb" one that needed to be manually switched between heat/off/cool modes. We bought and put in a smart thermostat, one that can be fully automatic in mode and settable to a schedule and temperature from our computer (or an "app" on our phones if we cared to do that).

The house has, unused and slated for removal: electric baseboard heat w/wall thermostats, wiring for land-line telephones, and cables (complete with power amplifier) for TV in every room. We use T-Mobile wireless internet and LAN, streaming music and movies. It all worked perfectly as soon as I plugged in the T-Mobile wireless receiver modem/router. It took a phone call to get help, and now the thermostat is also on-line.

The seller led us to believe that he was also selling us a complete new set of kitchen cabinetry, but it came up short. He also represented himself as the now-retired former partner of the fellow who is going to do our remodeling job. He was actually a salesman for the latter's sole-propriatorship LLC business. He left us with a natural gas 3-burner outdoor grill, which we discovered needs a grill grate and has non-functional spark starting – but we can buy a grate

and light the thing easily by hand. He left us a propane firepit on which all I had to repair was a door hinge. We'll enjoy both the BBQ and firepit once the next season comes around.

It's a good thing we planned to remodel the kitchen and laundry room, because the dishwasher (out in the laundry room!) is on its last legs and so is the clothes dryer. We've bought a new stainless-steel range with features we want (5 burners, two of them dual, and conventional/convection oven with "aqua lift" quick and low-energy self-cleaning; the original 4-burner range didn't have a self-cleaning oven), a new washing machine of the type we want, and a new electric dryer (original one was gas) too. And a new, much better stainless-steel dishwasher, which in the remodel will go in the kitchen next to the stainless steel undermount sink (replacing the tiny dual cast iron/porcelain sink – the kind that chips China and glass), where it belongs. Also, a new stainless steel over-range microwave with outside-exhaust range hood (the original exhausted into the kitchen – it was a smoke mover).

The remodel replaces a linoleum floor with tile. We included it also replacing the monstrous Samsung 3-door "smart" 36-inch-wide refrigerator that came with the house by a sleeker and more to our scale 30-inch one. The Samsung was really something. It retails for \$2,400 but slightly-used ones being offered by unsatisfied owners are going unsold at \$600. The units are overly complex ugly, intrusive, ostentatious testaments to American gluttony and "keep up with the Joneses" consumerism. We couldn't have begun to deal with its 43-page owner's manual, or its myriad screen-programmable options for refrigerator, ice-maker, cold water dispenser, freezer and three separate compartments – and door night light!

With our food constantly spoiling in the Samsung monstrosity, we moved ahead to replace it, going through the motions of adding it to the number already on sale locally at \$600. A local realtor found it on Nextdoor.com and came over to see it. We ended up agreeing to take \$500 for it, the concession only really costing us \$60, because with her having men remove it from our house once our new refrigerator would be delivered, we didn't have to pay \$40 for its removal and disposal.

We bought a desirable 30-inch 2-door freezer on top unit in stainless steel online from Best Buy. It was pretty nice, but we immediately began to have trouble with Best Buy. When the unit was delivered, the 3<sup>rd</sup>-party deliveryman rushed in and out, not even bothering to level the thing properly. After his departure, Ruth noticed that the main shelf door was cracked, and the shelf unusable. That's when we learned that dealing with Best Buy is a Kafkaesque experience. The things we heard from the company included that the store doesn't deal with parts, that the entire refrigerator could be exchanged or we could choose a 10- to 15-percent refund as compensation, that the model was discontinued and unavailable but that we could choose to return ours for a complete refund or go to a Best Buy store and select a replacement unit at no cost (even if the "equivalent") cost more.

Our "Insignia" brand – actually a brand made exclusively for Best Buy – worked perfectly well with me having used packing tape to hold the cracked shelf together. But we noticed that an

equivalent LG Goldstar (which, while otherwise identical, was advertised at 20.1 cubic feet, instead of the Insignia's 18 cubic feet) was available, the \$200 higher price would be waived.

But we forgot we were dealing with Best Buy, which was a big mistake. The company is actually only a shell-game general warehouse, not owning its "inventory". That's manufacturer-owned. Which really becomes a problem when the maker is "for Best Buy". Insignia made us jump through hoops for a week before letting us know that the part was unavailable, except, perhaps on some unspecified aftermarket.

Nor can one call a Best Buy store. All calls, even to local stores at local numbers, go instead to a network of at-home works who have no authority to do anything but kick problems upstairs while you wait on hold. All promises made on-line or over the phone are not recorded, and stores cannot access them – not even by case ID numbers. And Best Buy operators will "forget", "have no record", or simply try to renege. If you chat on-line, the transcript offered never arrives. At this writing, we're having to wait a full month to get a no-charge replacement, a better, slightly higher-capacity (with a deli drawer) Frigidaire. We received in in November and it's great. So is Frigidaire customer service. I called to mention that the plastic toe guard under the bottom front of the refrigerator doesn't fit right, and the company immediately arranged for a service technician from a local dealer to visit our house and make a repair.

*A sidebar to this: Though Best Buy on-line shows the Insignia model we first bought, and some are in stores, the company insists on the phone that none are available. And even though Best Buy says it won't swap a part for one that's broken, that is exactly what the employee at the store did, just to get rid of us, I suppose. But the part taken from the store model was broken too. Even worse, broken is such a way that I couldn't make temporary repair using tape. **Never, ever, shop at Best Buy!***

What a "move-in and remodel" experience we had on September 28! We both had a sleepless night on the 27<sup>th</sup>, because of head colds. Lowe's was scheduled to deliver our new range, dishwasher, washing machine and dryer between 11:30 AM and 3:30 PM on the 28<sup>th</sup>. We both had just managed to close our eyes around 6:45 AM dawn on the 28<sup>th</sup> when our chance to sleep was shattered by a phone call from the Lowe's delivery contractors, asking if they could deliver at 8AM. Getting the range was all right, because it was planned to let it sit in the garage until the remodel. The washing machine replaced the old one just fine. But we learned that our old clothes dryer was a gas model, and our new one was electric, requiring 220V wiring. And the dishwasher (old one in the laundry room, new one to go in the kitchen) was hard-wired the old-fashioned way (they now must be plugged into a switched outlet) and so, the crew wouldn't touch it. It now sits in the garage until the remodel. And when the crew pulled the dryer out, they broke the exhaust connection. It took me about two hours to improvise reconnection. We ended up having to deal without having any laundry facilities for nineteen days.



Lowe's also charged us for a dryer exhaust hose connector that we never received and sent a useless 3-wire/3-prong 220V appliance cord, when we need a 4-/4-. Plus, charged us for removing four appliances when they only actually removed one. We got the charges corrected.

On the positive side, the vibrant arts and crafts scene here and our lovely, tranquil neighborhood, with marvelous neighbors are definite plusses. Each Cape Cod town and even some of its villages has an arts council. Music and arts/craft fests are going on nearly every weekend. There's *beauoup* fine restaurants in the area. I've started networking and even performing a bit with some of the many, many local musicians and performing at the year-round Monday night open mic at O'Shea's Irish Tavern. Ruth has already met a neighbor who quilts. Our neighbor across the street gave us passes to the Cape Cod Heritage Museum and Gardens. Another greeted us with homemade blueberry scones.

The minuses are that some things may cost a bit more here, and that it's sometimes necessary to brave the bridge traffic and visit the mainland. We can deal with those things. The relocation process and dealing with corporations were both painful, but are independent of where we chose to live. The process of renovating our home and landscaping our yard will be difficult at times, not inexpensive, and protracted; but at the end of it all (if it ever ends!) will have been worth it, not only for the value added, but also for our satisfaction and pleasure.

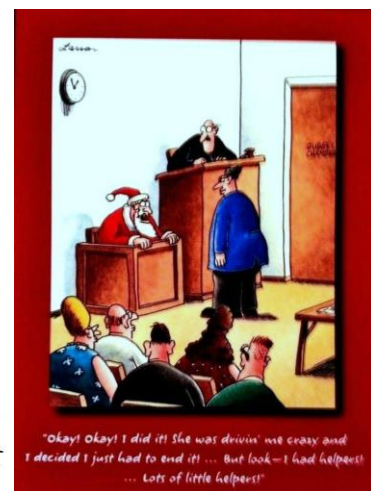
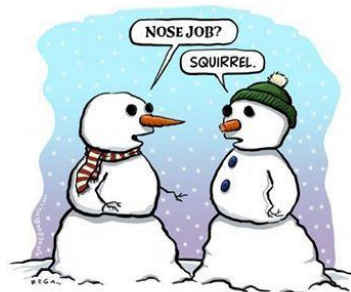
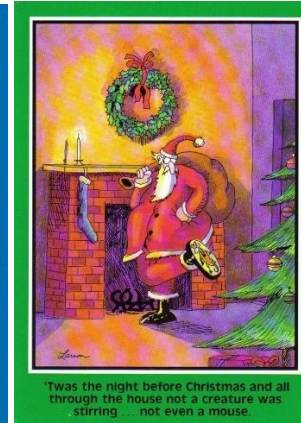
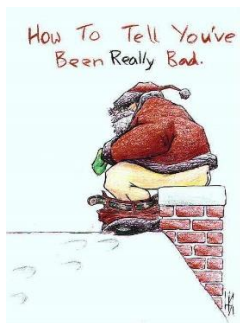
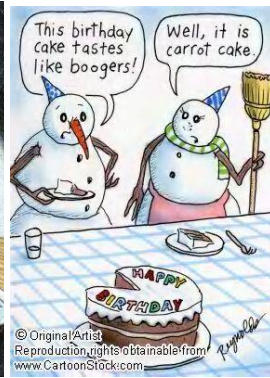
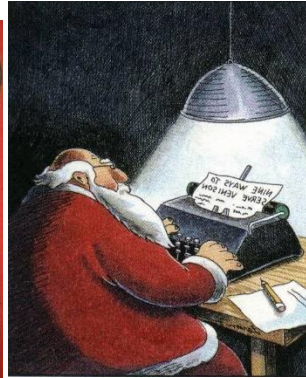
## Family News

Sad to relate, but my sister Joyce, five years and one month younger than I, passed away after a long battle with cancer, on August 11, leaving a husband, daughter, grandson, and granddaughter.

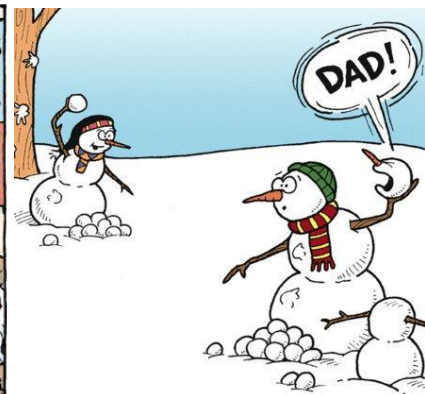
## Holiday Cartoon Closer...



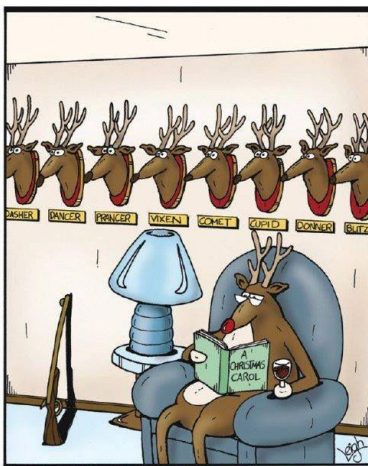
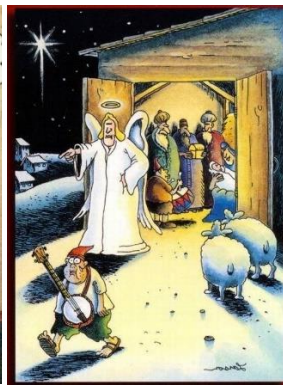
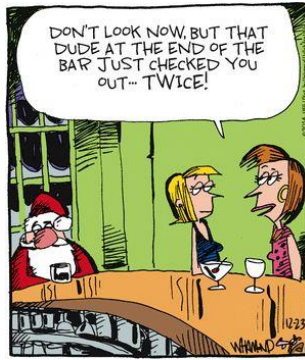




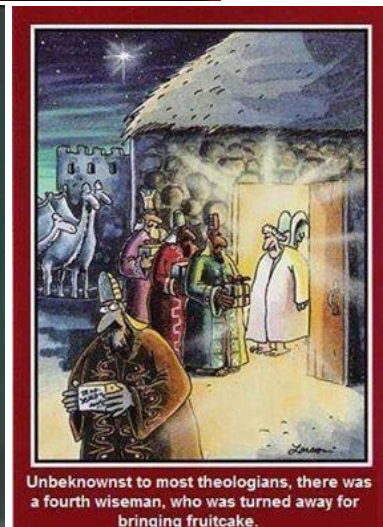




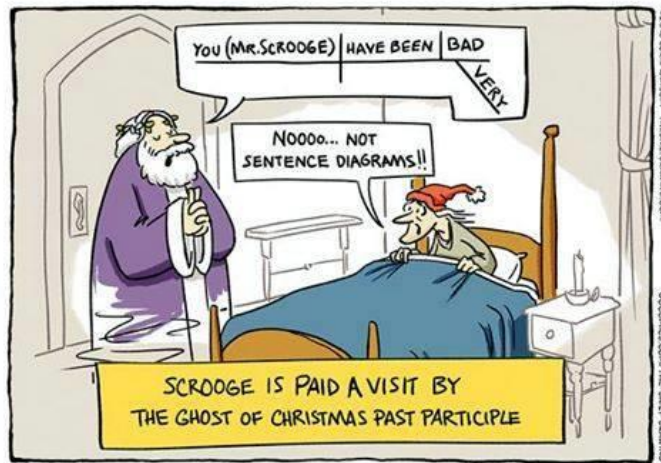
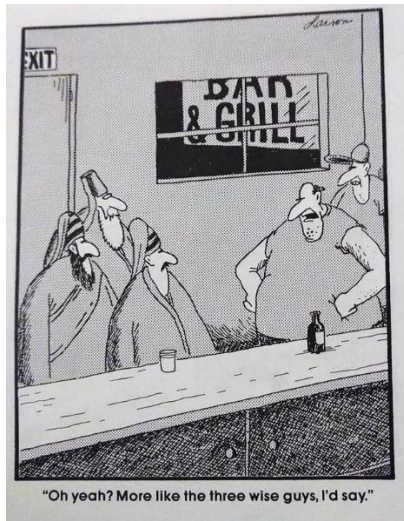




All of the other reindeer used to laugh and call him names.



Unbeknownst to most theologians, there was a fourth wiseman, who was turned away for bringing fruitcake.



*We wish you a happy season and healthy, happy 2023.*



*The Grinch wishes you the same.*



*PS:*

Three pics from Sandwich MA (Cape Cod): Community carol sing, the Griswold house in our neighborhood, and why Mr. & Mrs. Claus are still happily married after all these years - look at the size of his Johnson.



*And here's Ruth with a Cape Cod Motif locally-made sailboat tree ornament:*

