

Christmas 2007 ~~~ Happy New Year 2008
Alliance, Nebraska

Ah friends, Dear Friends,

I continue to play the piano for Eastern Star and other groups who'll listen. I've retired from piano playing several times. <g> I attend PEO, United Methodist Women and other organization meetings here in Alliance.

Bob Howard Sr and I attend the United Methodist Church, then we meet other Methodists at Arby's for lunch. We eat at the Nutrition Center at least once a week, usually on Thursdays. There we see other old friends who've lived in Alliance for many years.



Bob keeps busy at his apartment in "Chimney Town" in Alliance.

We all miss my brother Mervin, who passed away last year. He was a great brother and good man. He's buried in the McPherson Military Cemetery near North Platte. His wife Dorothy still lives at home in Chappell.

In May, our friends Bruce Mitchell and Rosemary McKenry (from Castlemaine VIC Australia) came to





Alliance to see me. They'd been in Italy, England and eastern US before arriving in Lincoln, where they visited Greg and Linda, Jann and Hannah for a few days. They passed through the sandhills between Broken Bow and Alliance. Rosie and Bruce stayed overnight with me on Duncan Avenue.

We dined at Alliance Country Club; Bob Howard Sr. joined us. We toured Alliance briefly. The next day Greg drove Bruce, Rosie and myself to Chimney Rock and then on to Hudson Colorado where John Craig (Linda's

brother in law) took our friends on the next leg of their world-wide journey.



In mid-July we (Greg, Linda and I) drove from Alliance to Laramie and into the Snowies in southern Wyoming. We stayed overnight in Saratoga, then drove back through the Snowies in daylight, enjoying the lovely mountain scenery and fresh air. We stopped at the Brush Creek Visitors Center, chatted with the volunteers there and watched the humming birds flying around their nest.

My birthday was at the end of July. Many well wishes from family and friends were read with thanks.

Harry Rochlitz, my late husband's brother-in-law, died this year in Oshkosh. He and Madelyn farmed in Deuel County for many years. Kelly, their youngest son, lives with his mother on their farm north of Big Springs. Harry and my brother Mervin were World War II vets; their names appeared on the NET Veterans program in November.



In October, I hosted our trip to Omaha to see André Rieu in concert. Jann, Harvey, Linda and Greg joined me on this Nebraska Public Television (NET) fund-raising event. André's music, including six Strauss pieces, was wonderful.

Another highlight of the year was when Jann, Hannah, Calvin, Abbie and Zack came out to Alliance in the fall for a short trip. We went to the Black Hills and spent the night at the Bavarian Inn near Custer. It's always fun to spend time with the great-grandkids - they grow up so fast !



A few days before Christmas Greg came out to Alliance to get me. We returned to Lincoln for Linda's birthday, Christmas and New Year's. We've heard from many old friends at Christmas, for which I'm grateful.

We even heard from David Clark, whose family we exchanged homes and jobs when Byron was a Fulbright Exchange teacher in 1957-8. We had Christmas at Jann and Harvey's and another Christmas in Fremont with Linda's family.



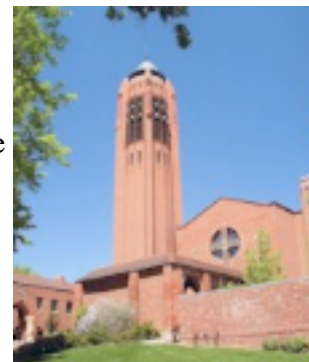
Right now I'm reading Bill Bryson's *The Life and Times of the Thunderbolt Kid* which is lots of fun. Before that, I just completed *A Year in Provence* by Peter Mayle - wouldn't living in France be fun?

We ended 2007 after the wonderful Plymouth Brass concert on New Year's Eve in Lincoln. We chatted with Jack Snider and also with Nebraska's Poet, Bill Kloefkorn, who'd written a poem about kids playing in the Poudre River, which my brother and I used to do many years ago.

In a few days I'll return to Alliance to begin another year, full of hope and challenges. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you all !

*Accept our gratitude, O Lord, for all the blessings, Thou does give.
Direct and guide our daily paths and teach us how to live.*

Love from



(MarieChristmas07)men 05 Jan 08