

JOHN & CHAROLETTE SWEET

HCR 4, Box 305

Mustoe, VA 24468

Phone: 540-468-2222

FAX: 540-468-2223

E-mail: char@johnrsweet.com

jrs@johnrsweet.com

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This year has been jumble — busy, busy, busy with a dizzying variety of events. At least it wasn't dull.

We've both been awash with community endeavor this year — John with the continuing saga of Rt. 250 and looking into the merits and drawbacks of wind farms and Char with art in the schools. Budgetary problems in the state have effectively put any big project on US 250 on permanent hold, so there is a much more favorable climate for discussing small scale improvements. Wind farm development has reared its head (no adjective, you will note) here in the county. We really want to be in favor of this technology, but there appear to be hidden pitfalls and it's harder than you might think to find out what the scope of any of them are. Renewable energy is a great idea but we are concerned about bats and migratory birds and raptors and ice forming on 90-foot blades as well as the visual impact of a large industrial complex along the ridge tops in a totally rural area. What to do??



Char & Clarence share a quiet moment . . .

before he can get the tractor out.

Oh, yes — five cows. Our herd has increased (the neighbor's bull jumped the fence — yet again). I wish Beth would let us know when these things happen! Imagine our surprise in June when this calf appeared, skipping merrily along with the herd. It took an inspection to figure out who her mother was. I can't think why we don't have three calves instead of one. I guess the Humphreys discovered the bull was missing and dragged him back before he bred the whole herd. All other animals are in status quo and all are in rude health.



Our pond after a recent snowfall — December 2003

The Arts Council's art-club project of 2002/3 was pretty successful and has continued on this year. The big gain was the reintroduction of the art program in the curriculum this year — a half-time teacher now with the intention of expanding it to full time when funds become available. Let's hear it for the Highland County School Board!

This year's building project is a tractor shed near the house. It is attached to the tool shed, which required that building to be reinforced, a job that needed to be done anyway. It isn't finished, quite, but it is under roof and now John can plow snow without beating his way up to the equipment shed and shouldering aside five cows who are trying to get in



while Cleo seeks refuge in a packing box.

John's mother became progressively weaker last winter and spring, culminating in a fall that resulted in a broken hip in July. She made it through the surgery quite well, but could not recover and died July 15TH. We had her memorial service in August with an exhibit of some of her art collection and Chinese artifacts at the local library. The exhibit stayed up for a month. We are still s l o w l y dealing with her furniture, bric-a-brac, art, etc. It's amazing how many hoops there are to jump through. A lot of photos, her obituary, and the program for her service are available on our web site at:

<http://johnrsweet.com/Personal/MHS/>

There will be more to follow so please bookmark this site and come back again later.

Speaking of the internet, we would like to encourage its use for the exchange of greetings. This letter is posted on our web site at:

<http://johnrsweet.com/PDF/ChristmasLetter-2003.pdf>

It can be read there or downloaded and printed. You need to have Adobe Acrobat Reader installed on your computer to do this. If you would like to participate please send us an e-mail message. We will send out the URL [web address] for next year's letter when we have it posted – or maybe even a mid-year letter!

We are looking forward to 2004. Char is taking a sabbatical from positions of responsibility (going off any boards of directors and not agreeing to any positions that require calling people and asking them to do things). Those activities are to be replaced with riding more, weaving more, and playing more music, not to mention finishing the disposition of Mary's goods and chattels. And John is contemplating retirement. A possible buyer for the business has presented himself and if a meeting of the minds can be made we'll probably take him up on it at some point.

Come visit with us, stay in our cabin, and enjoy the glories of Highland County.

Love to all,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Char & John". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the "Love to all," text.