



Hello friends and family from the Cavin clan in Colorado! We pray you have had a blessed year and pray the New Year will be even more so. We pray the love and joy of our Savior, whose birth we celebrate at this time each year, will be with you through this season and into 2012.

2011 has not been the year we anticipated when I wrote to you last year. Susan spent Christmas in a skilled nursing facility engaged in some concentrated physical therapy. By mid-January she was making good progress with hopes to be able to return home within weeks. On January 14, after a couple of days of lethargic behavior and an increased irritation and severe itching around the area of her surgery, they took her to the ER, where she was diagnosed with shingles. Shingles is a nerve virus and it attacks your nervous system at its weakest point. In Susan's case that was where she had

surgery and radiation. The shingles literally put her on her back and she was very weak and lost all of the progress she had made in therapy.

I've kept many of you updated on her progress this year via email, so I won't go into detail about the rest of the year. But a summary for those who are new to our email list or are receiving this via snail-mail is that she had to move to a new facility immediately since the insurance would not pay when she wasn't making progress. We were able to get her approved for Social Security disability and Medicaid LTC and were able to move to a suitable facility where she could get full time care. In the summer we got approval to try **Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy**, but an MRI after the 6 weeks of treatment showed essentially no change in her damaged nerves. Thankfully there was no degradation of her condition either – so there was no indication of any tumor or any additional damage to the nerves.



Although the nursing home she was in took good care of her, it was a long drive in traffic to go see her. When it became apparent that she would be in long term care much longer than we thought, I decided to move to a facility closer to home. In October she moved to Mount St. Francis Nursing Center, which is on the NW side of Colorado Springs on the campus of a former nunnery and home to a Catholic Parish and some other Catholic agencies. It is a much nicer facility but more importantly close enough that I can visit almost every day. If you'd like to send a card or note, her address is Susan Cavin, c/o Mt. St. Francis Nursing Center, Rm 116, 7550 Assisi Heights, Colorado Springs, CO 80919.



Julie and Drew and their families visited in June and we were able to have Susan come home for a few hours, which was a real treat. We took the kids to the zoo and Santa's Workshop. It was a fun time and everyone got to visit with Susan multiple times.



I was able to spend 4th of July with Julie, Brett, and Lauren in OKC and got to play golf with my brother and several cousins – in 100 degree heat!. Had a great "reunion" cookout at Dick's house and got to visit with aunts, uncles, and cousins. I was also able to reconnect with our longtime friends Steve and Sally and see our former neighbor from Irving, Tyrone, and his family (who now live in Shawnee).

In September I rented a van equipped to carry a wheelchair and took Susan for a short trip into the mountains to see the fall colors. The same weekend our SS class had a lunch fellowship and Susan was able to attend.

In October I went to North Carolina for Drew's fall break. Julie, Brett, and Lauren were on vacation in Tennessee and came by for a few days. We went to a fall festival and took a boat ride on the lake. It was a fun time together, but we missed having Susan with us.

Speaking of the kids, Brett and Julie are still in Oklahoma City (actually Edmond), and Julie is traveling to Arkansas and St Louis a lot to visit her clinical trial sites. Two year old Lauren is growing up way to fast and is as sweet and cute as she can be. She makes a good model for Julie's excellent photo skills.



This fall Drew started his 3rd year as an Associate Professor of Outdoor Leadership at Young Harris College in northern Georgia. In August Jenny started working in the admissions office and Sam and Lucy started pre-school programs. Lucy turned 2 in August and Sam will be 5 in January! On Thanksgiving Day Sam completed his first Turkey Trot 5k race – on his bike!! Drew said he had a hard time keeping up but Sam got him a pretty decent 5k time. Jenny and Lucy also participated, with Lucy in her jogging stroller. By the way, Drew and Jenny informed us in September that we will be grandparents again next May!

As for me, I continue to work at Progressive Insurance in the Claims area of Information Technology. I still "facilitate" our Sunday School class at Woodmen Valley Chapel, which grew steadily this past year. It provides me a good support system as I work to provide support and care for Susan.

We sold our camper in April and the Durango in September so we are officially out of the camping business. It was a sad time because so many of our close friends we made through our camping groups.

In May Susan's sister Beama passed away after a long illness. It was a difficult time for Susan because she could not go to the funeral or visit with any of the family.

As I write this Susan has been doing well in her new home. My observation is that she has improved slightly from where she was last summer. Mentally she is sharper, her memory is better, and she is able to interact easily with visitors. Physically, although the physical therapist has said she was not making progress, I've seen some improvements in her strength – she is holding her head up better and is able to sit up with minimal help. All these are little things, but the nerves heal slowly and any progress, however slight, is welcome. We continue to pray that her nerves will heal and she will regain some mobility. We covet your prayers this year as well for her continued healing.

Merry Christmas from Alan and Susan Cavin.





Above, left to right – Susan on her visit home in the spring, Lucy and Lauren at the park, Drew and Sam at grandma Cavin's, Jenny and Lucy, grandpa Cavin and Lauren, Brett and Lauren, Julie and Lauren at Santa's Workshop.