

Yard and Garden – 12-30-2017 – Ted Griess/Extension Horticulture Assistant

*It was late in December, the sky turned to snow
All round the day was going down slow
Night like a river beginning to flow
I felt the beat of my mind go drifting into time passages*

Al Stewart - 1978

Two thousand seventeen soon ends. Allow me to paraphrase the lyrics above. It is late in December, and the sky will soon turn to snow. As the day goes down slow, here I sit, contemplating on what topic to write about to finish out the year. Having just listened to this beautiful, yet poignant, song *Time Passages* by Al Stewart, I started to reflect on this year's past events — and my mind literally drifted into time passages.

For my wife Rita and me, two thousand seventeen began quite somberly. Five months prior, I was diagnosed with acute arrhythmia and heart failure. Late in December of 2016, I underwent heart surgery receiving a pacemaker with a built in defibrillator (just in case I went into cardiac arrest). In addition, I needed two more heart stents and an AV node ablation. Due to all this uncertainty, anxiety weighed heavily on our minds throughout the winter. As I convalesced and winter turned into spring, my health improved dramatically. I soon began to worry less and began planning for my future. As spring became summer, I bounced back to nearly normal, and once again looked forward to a new season of gardening and summer activities. Summer yielded many cheerful experiences. Some highlights included the following:

- Once again being able to experience the joys of gardening.
- Watching our grandson Parker graduate from high school.
- Celebrating Rita's birthday.
- Traveling to visit family and friends.
- Having my brother and his wife from Texas visit us.
- Golfing —when time allowed.
- Attending legion baseball games.
- Participating in county fairs.
- Visiting Ash Fall Fossil Beds.
- Experiencing my very first total solar eclipse!

By late summer, sadness came knocking. After 93 years, Rita's father passed away. Although we realize that no one can live forever, both Rita and I are still finding it difficult to say goodbye. The fact remains, time stands still for no one. Soon, we celebrated a happy Halloween, then a blessed Thanksgiving. Next came my 75th birthday party and most recently, we experienced a joyous Christmas. Now, we are about to usher in another New Year.

Reflecting on my time passages for 2017 has obviously brought me joy as well as sadness. I can only imagine that each of you may have experienced similar passages. Although the past cannot be changed, it is now time we start planning for our future. My wish for each of us is that the time passages we experience in 2018 will be filled only with joy and happiness.

In closing, I wish to extend to each of you a sincere thank you for making my job at Buffalo County Extension a true pleasure. I hope that through our personal contact with each other or perhaps through this column you have gained knowledge of the joys of gardening. Best wishes to you and yours for a happy and healthy New Year!

Well I'm not the kind to live in the past

The years run too short and the days too fast

The things you lean on are the things that don't last

Well it's just now and then my line gets cast into these Time passages

Al Stewart - 1978