

Happy 2008 from Somewhere to Go

My friend Abi's song has been in my mind a lot this year. When 2007 began, my plan was to buy a house so I could stop renting seedy, drafty apartments and earn some equity. But I didn't want to live alone, so I started shopping for larger places that I could rent rooms out of... and the larger places I could afford needed a lot of work, and they just didn't feel like the right investment.

Then the folks at Abundance Ecovillage started talking about building their common house this year and making an eco-hostel – a long-term dream of mine – part of that project. So I got on that bandwagon and continued renting in the meantime. Weeks turned into months, and what started out as a reasonable estimate doubled, and long story short the project's status is now uncertain, and my part in it is even less certain, and I'm more or less back where I started a year ago, housing-wise, which is where the song fits in.

The prospect of being chained to a hostel desk next year allowed me to rationalize a lot of travel this year. Most notably, I accompanied my parents on a trip to Singapore – truly a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for which I am very grateful! I also took my friend Leela's wedding as an opportunity to visit friends and family all up and down the west coast – a three-week adventure involving not only planes, trains, and automobiles, but also buses, bicycles, ferries, and horses! My grandfather's memorial and uncle's wedding occasioned two trips east, and I even made it to my cousin's Fourth of July extravaganza for the first time. So it was a very good year for traveling.

I spent the summer helping out on the community-supported farm at the Ecovillage, volunteering with Habitat for Humanity and the Jefferson County Trails Council, developing my first contribution to an open-source software project, and attending workshops with the sustainable-living interns, and as the year wound down and temperatures began to drop, I suddenly realized I'd been so busy I'd forgotten to work for pay. Just when I started to feel well and truly anxious, a position opened up at *Smartphone and Pocket PC Magazine*, so I'm now working a regular job for the first time since... well, ever, really. I'm also keeping my part-time job for the district Unitarian Universalist Association, so it looks like I'll be spending a lot of time with computers for a while!

Saving the best for last... I met someone wonderful. Her name is Jessica Woolhiser, and she lives in Omaha, but we spend a lot of time on the phone, and we visit each other when we can. I met her family at Thanksgiving, and she will meet most of mine at Christmas, and it all feels so right that we are determined to keep each other, so stay tuned.

I'm also still in love with Fairfield, and I do welcome visitors. I can promise you the best bed in the house, but if you don't want to move the cat there are two terrific new B&Bs within walking distance. Finally, to see more of my photos from the year, please visit <http://www.benstallings.name/Photos>.

So come on inside,
I've got nothing to hide,
But I don't have much to show.
What there is to be seen,
It ain't pretty, it ain't clean.
I'll admit that I've started slow,
But at least I've got somewhere
to go.

-- Abi Tapia

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P.S. No, the little red gypsy wagon is not my apartment ... though I can't guarantee I won't wind up living there at some point! It's intern housing, made largely of reclaimed and sustainably grown materials, that I helped to finance this spring.