

WHEN A CITY GIRL *goes country*

By Annette Bridges

A Decade of Many Changes

My country boy and I are in our fifth decade together, and that sounds like forever when I write it. I am thankful for our many years together, but these days I wish I could shake the feeling of time as fleeting. I am doing my best, however, to accept the progression of time as part of the miracle of life and focus on living each and every moment to its fullest potential.

Our past decade has been one of many changes, but maybe all decades are like that. Some changes we want, some we do not. Some we create ourselves, some when we have no choice other than to accept them as part of life.

I admit I have not been super happy with myself in recent years. I am carrying the extra pounds I promised myself I would not gain back. I still struggle with sadness and regret so deep that at times takes my breath away.

With the beginning of another new year, I feel happier, dare I say lighter, than I have in years. I am discovering a new me, or maybe it is the me that always has been that I just have not given a chance to be.

I see her now. The girl that loves all things simple and care-free. The girl that only wants to have fun and laugh a lot. The girl that can be happy wherever she is, as long as it is with her country boy.

I anticipate many more changes in this next decade. No doubt there could be some I do not want or like, but I envision many that I intend to make myself.

In fact, I have already begun



The past decade has been one of many changes for Annette Bridges and her husband. (Photo courtesy Annette Bridges)

making some changes. Hopefully my better food choices and exercise routines will result in a smaller and stronger me. I certainly intend to make my new lifestyle improvements permanent.

As we move forward into what some describe as the Autumn season of our lives, my husband and I are becoming more and more focused on what matters most to us.

Actually, I had thought when I turned 65, I was entering the winter season of my life. It turns out I was 20 years too soon to think so.

In fact, age 65 actually marks the official beginning of the Autumn season of life, and I love Autumn. The cooler temperatures are always a welcome relief from the hot Texas summers. My husband and I both relish in the beautiful leaf colors, and we look forward to road trips to appreciate the beauty.

Autumn leaves of red, orange and yellow are stunning as they blanket their surroundings with the promise that winter is not yet here. We intend to do everything we can to embrace and enjoy this

lovely season of our lives.

One ranch revision on our horizon will no doubt include some herd downsizing and likely the hiring of more help if we are to continue keeping some sweet bovines around here. Asking for help is a change that is difficult for my country boy, but I think he is realizing getting help can delay some changes he does not yet want to make.

Sometimes you simply have to do what you have to in order to do what you want to do.