

N'Djamena, Jan 01, 2008. The Tamlyn-Serpa family celebrates the season in the pleasantly cool temperatures of wintertime in Chad. Evenings are particularly enjoyable with a light wind passing through, gently shaking the lime trees in the garden. The insect season has passed, so the chorus of crickets and cicadas is muted, but you still feel as if you are in the country. When the city power is on it is very quiet at night. Few cars venture out after dark, and most residents retreat inside their compounds after the last of the evening prayers. When city power stops, however, the noise of the generators sends a hum through our neighborhood, and drives us indoors from the screened veranda to the more insulated comfort of the living room.

Just before Christmas day we finally managed to get out our Christmas card (see below), having been unable to summon the organization and drive to repeat last year's effort of designing a card, having it printed locally and mailed through the Chadian post office. (I wonder if everyone, like us now only receive real Christmas cards from schools, institutions and your mail carrier?)

On Dec 26 the saga of the French would-be do-gooders of Zoe's Arch came to an end and they have all now been sent back to France. I imagine Chad is once again off the evening news! We'll see for how long!

New Year's Eve was livelier than most nights. The main shopping street in the more "westernized" section of town was crowded with cars, and would-be revelers and gawkers jostled for space on what passes for sidewalks. A local nightclub had reopened and the 20,000 Franc entrance fee (approximately \$45) appeared not to be holding back business, even in a country where the average wage (for those in the cash economy) is about \$40 a month.