

## Christmas, 2000

Greetings, as the year comes to a quiet close. I didn't know if I should get a holiday letter out or not, but knowing most of you, I'd hear about it if I didn't.

It was a wonderful year for me. I wasn't in the hospital at all, so that's a plus. Although, I just found out this week, that I have torn the cartilage in my right knee somehow...and I suspected it months ago because of the pain, and I will undoubtedly have surgery on it after the first of the year. I am looking forward to it, because the pain at times is so bad, I don't even want to get out of bed.

Carlos and I have been seeing each other for nearly 2 years now and for once in my life, I have found peace and happiness. That is not to say I wasn't happy married...but I am, for once, comfortable and content with myself, and I think that is every human's right; to be happy with themselves for who they are as a person.

We travel frequently, as he has earned MANY miles on his Delta Sky Miles, so it doesn't cost us anything to go places every now and again and to get away for an extended weekend. He travels for his work as an educator / consultant for a software firm, dealing with schools and children. When he has the opportunity to get away for pleasure, it's a welcomed change.

January found us in Ft Lauderdale for my birthday, just relaxing in the warm winter Florida sun, and seeing things I have not seen before. It's always nice to get to see "how the other half lives....." And oh, all those old people in Florida...you know, the ones with the orange hair and jewelry, the snowbirds from the cold north. In February, we went to Guernville and Sausalito for a few days. Man, was it COLD! Carlos is one of those people who feel that if 1 is good, 2 is better, and 3 is best. Consequently, when it was 20° in Guernville, he put not one, not two, but THREE logs into the wood burning pot bellied stove in the room...and it was everything we could do to shut off the fire alarm. I mean, I thought we were going to burn the place down. Its funny now, but sure wasn't then! ☺

April found us in Portland for a few days, not doing much because of time restraints, but just getting away. We went to Maui and Oahu in May, and of course, up to Haleakala Crater, where it was 30° compared to the 75° in the city...and of course, we in our shorts.... But, what a nice get away for a few days. In the heat of the summer, in July, we went to Las Vegas (something is dreadfully wrong with this man.....) where we sweltered in temperatures exceeding 120°. We splurged and spent over \$100 a ticket to see "Eau", a water version of Cirque de Soleil. I would do it again in a heartbeat.

In October, it was off to the Balloon Fiesta in Albuquerque, where the weather was not favorable...rain, wind and cold...and consequently, no balloons flew. We spent the weekend in the hotel room, him watching football, and me going to Wal-Mart. Thanksgiving weekend found us in Chicago for a few days of doing nothing. My leg was bothering me, so we didn't do too much walking. He has a friend he used to work with, who lives in Milwaukee, so on Saturday we drove up there and had dinner with her, then Sunday, back to Chicago for the trip home.

We are leaving for London on December 29, and home January 2, so that will conclude our numerous trips for the year, and I hope we continue to enjoy each other's company like that for a long time to come.

God, I'm tired just WRITING about them!

The children are wonderful. Katie just turned 21, Scott will be 23 in March, Georgia and I are best friends, and Kristy, our baby, just turned 2, and is such a joy in our lives.

May the warmth of this holiday season be yours now, and into the New Year. I think back through all the years and am so humbly grateful for all I have...for all I am...and I wish the same for each and every one of you.

Merry Christmas

Michael