

My dear friends

Christmas, 2002

It astounds me that this time of year is upon us once again. Why, it seems like only yesterday that I was sitting at the computer thinking of what to tell you all, and before I knew it, a full page was written.

Let's get the health crap out of the way first....As all of you know, I continue to suffer from the effects of being diabetic going into my 47th year. For the most part, things are stable. Nothing new, but those ailments that plague me plague me GOOD! My hearing loss has been diagnosed as permanent, and I have therefore had to say goodbye to the chorus I love so much and was part of for over 10 years. It's like accepting the death of someone you love...you never get over it, but you adjust. I am doing the best I can.

New Years saw us in London again, and a side trip to Bath and Stonehenge. It amazed me to think that I visited these historical grounds that are over 5,000 years old. I took some pictures, despite the freezing weather and snow on the ground, and the desire to get back into the bus, but who knows when we will ever get there again. Thank God for Delta SkyMiles and the Meridien hotel certificates for a free room!

On a picture perfect day on July 6, my daughter Katie was married in a beautiful yet casual ceremony at the church where she grew up. My granddaughter served as flower girl, and the biggest hurdle of all, was for me to sing at the ceremony. A song I have sung to her all her life, "The Best Gift" was, I'd say, my swan song. It was emotionally difficult to do, as well as physically challenging. Katie is now 23, and adjusting to married life very nicely (do you remember those letters of years gone by saying, "well, Katie just turned 5...").

Scott will be 25 in March...and this man...this beautiful person...is doing well in school, ready to graduate Cal State Northridge, and working in marketing as a sales manager. His presence in my life is what keeps me going. One of the greatest thrills I have is not only being a father to these two magnificent people, but also, being a dad.

Georgia lost her job after 11 years with Schindler Elevator, and is now a security agent for TSA, which, oddly enough, she loves. She is doing well, and she and I remain the best of friends.

August saw more surgery, another amputation of the #2 toe on the right foot...and hopefully, that will be the last for a while. I guess I am thankful that I was born with 10 toes...

Carlos and I have been together nearly 4 years now, and every day is like the first day we met. He is a pleasure to know, and an honor to be in his life. We continue to see the world (well, the United States anyway...) when we can, and we just returned from a trip to Rome over Thanksgiving. To say we have stepped foot inside the Sistine Chapel and St. Peter's Basilica...wonderful treasures. The coliseum was, to say the least, awesome. What memories these trips are producing.

I am trying to keep active with my photography so I don't vegetate in front of the television. I am working on a book called Second Chances that hopefully will help others to realize life is not lost, just because we have our downfalls.

As the year comes to a quiet peaceful close, my hope and wish for you is continued love for one another, peace we all deserve, and harmony between all human kind.

Love,

Michael