

Greetings to you all!

One of the great things about the internet and web designing is the ability to post what you want, when you want, and make it as long as you want. In previous holiday letters, I would try to limit myself to one page, 11pt type and include as much as I could in a limited amount of space. Those of you who know me well enough, know that I'm generally not a one page - 11pt type kind of guy. So, for ease of typing, and not wanting any of you squinting to read such small type, I present to you the Happy Holidays letter for 2008, in glorious 24 pt type. No need for glasses on this one.

New Years saw us with our dear friends, John and Jim, as the four of us celebrated with a wonderful dinner and movie on New Years eve. Sweeny Todd...quite the movie. Couldn't think of a better way to bring in the new year, than with those you love, and who love you back.

My step-dad, Art, was hospitalized early in January and this time they decided to insert a pace maker. He has been wonderful ever since.

January also saw some heavy rains, which apparently our home decided not to deal with, so shortly after the storm, the ceiling in my folks' room collapsed at 2:00 pm....and as bad as it was, it could have been at 2:00 am, causing more than just \$35,000 in structural damage. About 1/3 of the ceiling collapsed, and after about 4 months of them sleeping on a blow up doll.....er....blow up BED...they moved back into their room in April.

January 31 was the reunion for 3M Company where I worked from 1970 - 1977 and I saw people I haven't seen in 30 years. Barbara and Jim Birch, Marlene Bush, to name a few, and I won 2 door prizes...a basket ball hoop, and a pad of 3M post-it notes.

Well worth the effort LOL

March found Carlos and me in Portland, to visit with one of my dearest friends, Mark, who was putting on a performance at a country club. It was a nice get away, and Mark and Carlos had never met, so it was especially nice to have that happen.

I had surgery again on the left knee, only to find out the pain in my leg is not related to the knee at all, but as I found out later, spinal stenosis in my back. After all this time, I have JUST received approval from the insurance company to have back surgery, so that will take place in January. All I want...all I've ever wanted...is to be pain free and not walk like I'm 61 years old!

Wait....wrong choice of words. I AM 61 years old. How fast those years creep up on you. A good friend had extensive back surgery in June, so he's been my inspiration to have mine done next month. He has a 22" scar down his back and was laid up for months. I don't expect mine will be that involved.

Scott turned 30 in March (do some of you remember when I used to say, "Scott will be 6" or "Scott just turned 10" or "I can't believe Scott got his driver's license today..." So now I have

this adult son, 6' 3" of the nicest boy around. He and his fiancé still live in Bakersfield, and doing really well.

Katie was married in October, and she and her new husband are living with Katie's mom. She and Matt are both working for the County of Los Angeles, and enjoying this new life they are creating. Her daughter, Kristy, just turned 10 this month. She is growing at a rate that well, scares me. She is tall, thin, and very pretty as you can see here. She adores Matt, which is very important in a new "step" relationship.

I still keep in close contact with Georgia. She is doing well at the airport, still working for TSA though she suffered an injury in July as she tripped over a rug in the terminal. She broke her elbow and damaged the cartilage in her knee and is now in the process of litigation with the city and I suspect she will prevail.

My mom had a series of small strokes in July, and was hospitalized for about a week. Although she is doing remarkably well, there are times I need to remind her of things she used to know...why the printer has to be turned on before it will print, how to change a channel on the television remote. I thought this might be the good time to remind her she promised me a car. THAT, she remembers, she never did.

I did buy a new car this year, though, a 2007 Buick LaCrosse. I finally retired the 96 Ford Taurus after 13 years of faithful service. The car was considered used, but it only had 4700 miles on it. It was an opportunity I couldn't pass up. This picture was taken the morning of Katie's wedding. In fact, it was taken by Kristy!

Carlos and I will have 10 years together in May. It's amazing that at our ages, we still were able to find someone who is so compatible and caring. He's an amazing man, and we complement each other very well. He started singing again with the Gay Men's Chorus of Los Angeles, and will be performing with them this holiday season. I would really like to join them as well, but with my hearing loss I suffer, it's just not possible right now. All in good time, my pretty, all in good time....

So now as the year comes to a quiet close, so does this year's holiday letter. I hope that each and every one of you finds the love, peace and happiness that I have found with those I love. May this bring you the love and warmth of the season, with wishes for a wonderful 2009.

Love,
Michael

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