

Seasons Greetings, 2009

Right now, as I write, it is February 16, 2009, on a cold and rainy winter's day. I decided to start writing the Christmas letter at the beginning of the year so I didn't have to wrack my brain in December to try and remember what happened all year long. Will it last? We shall see.

January saw me in the hospital for some long awaited surgery on my back. If you recall in years past, I had mentioned that my back and leg pain were becoming unbearable, so the doctors and I made the decision to have the surgery.

January 6 was my date, and although the operation lasted about 6 hours, and not without my share of pain and problems, it has now been 6 weeks and I truly am feeling better. I still have some pain in my back but I suspect in due time that will subside. At least I can walk without my limp (gee, I had become so fond of the pain and the limp...) and now only time will tell. The doctors say the recovery can take anywhere from 6-12 months. And yes, I can walk upright...



Scott celebrated #31 on the March 5. He told me he doesn't look at birthdays the same way now that he's grown. I suspect we all do that. He is now in the process of continuing his education and going for a teaching credential to teach high school history. He is really excited about it. I know he would make a great teacher because of his personality and attitude. Here is Scott from Katie's wedding in October, 2008, but he hasn't changed...

He and Liz are still in Bakersfield...and oddly enough, he doesn't speak with an accent.

May found Carlos and me in Ft. Lauderdale for a few days. We hadn't been there for a few years and it is a favorite get-away place. Here is a recent picture of the two of us as we enjoyed an evening with some friends. He has decided to take some classes in the travel industry and is doing some apprentice work at a local agency. It keeps him busy and active. With both of us in our 60s now, we are finding ourselves slowing down a bit.



June found me going through some very routine cataract surgery and as my doctor said, it's a shame to call it surgery it's so mundane. It took about 10 minutes to perform and I was home within the hour. It amazed me how well I could see after a few days of healing.

After a couple months, in August, it was time for the right eye. It too went without complications but after a few days, I still could not see clearly. We waited another couple weeks for the eye to heal, and when I told the doctor I still could not see, he said that we "have a problem" (a doctor should never tell a patient that, don't you think??) It seems I was 3 "diopters" off in the power of the lens and he said it needed to be replaced. Surgery was scheduled for 3 days later, and on September 11, I was back in for another surgery. You'd think that 3 cataract surgeries on 2 eyes would be a bit much. When that lens surgery took place, all went well until 11:00 that night when I awoke to excruciating pain. Long story short, the pain was caused by eye pressure, which was caused by the doctor leaving something in my eye during surgery. The pressure caused violent vomiting, dehydration, and eventually diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA for those of you wishing to google it...) and 4 days being in the hospital. I am in the throes of a lawsuit against the doctor because none of this would have happened had he not implanted the wrong lens in August. The subsequent hospitalization was critical and should never have happened...but it did, and for several months I was absolutely miserable. Actually, in the first week or so of December was when I really started feeling decent again, and luckily my eye is almost back to normal. There is still an image I see in my eye that cannot be identified, but I feel lucky that I was not blinded by this. During my hospital stay, I had to ask Carlos several times if my eye was open because I could not see.

As I write, my dog Lady, who will be 17 in March, is still with us, but her days are numbered I fear. She is such a precious pet to us, and those of you who have long time pets know that they are like part of the family.

Kate and Matt are doing quite well. She finally got transferred from her office in Lancaster to one that is 75% closer, in Chatsworth. They are both still working for the county as "eligibility workers" for the DPSS. They celebrated their one year anniversary in October.

Kristina turned 11 on December 2. She is now in the 6th grade, in middle school, and doing very well and loves her math class. She likes them all but she told me math is her favorite.

Mom and Art, now in the upper 80s, are still very involved with the City of Hope and the Pearl Harbor Survivor's Association, where Art serves as National President. They are showing clear signs of slowing down but still active to a point. There are times I have to step in and say, "enough is enough" but they're not quite ready for the rocking chairs yet.

I hope this finds you well and happy and that your holiday season is as special to you as you are to so many people. As potentially bleak as 2009 could have been, I am happy that I can say I made it through a difficult year and that 2010 will be as wonderful as most of 2009 was.

Love,
Michael