



Happy Holidays to you all!

Once again it's holiday time and I hope all of you had a wonderful 2011. It amazes me how quickly time goes by. Acutally, as I write this, it's May 21, 2011 and although the year didnt start off the way I'd like it to, there's still plenty of year left to make up for what has happened so far. In March, Mom suffered a moderate stroke. In July 2008 she suffered a TIA but this time, it was a regular stroke. She is able to walk and talk but not much of anything else. She can no longer write, dial a phone, or use a television remote. Her short-term memory is gone, and she repeats everything minutes apart. It's been very difficult to deal with this and be her 24/7 caregiver. Art is still suffering with his bad back so it's all left to me to wash, cook, clean, change beds, etc. I really hope as the year continues, so will her health improve.

May 16 found me in a very bad accident in which my 2007 Buick was totaled. As I was turning left after waiting through a green and yellow light, then turning when safe on the red, an 82 year old woman ran the red light and broadsided me. I was injured with rib and back and head/neck injuries and as I type right now, very painful. The doctor seems to think that some cartilage has been torn away from the ribs and there is no remedy for that other than time and rest.

I never like to share bad news in a Christmas letter, so I can only say that the good part of all this is, as of this writing, Mom is doing ok, and turned 90 in June; My car was replaced on May 20 with a 2011 Buick LaCrosse, and my injuries will heal.



Scott is now living and working in Fairfield California. He is engaged to a radiologist and plans to marry soon. He is doing well, and will be 34 in March. I'm sure many of you can remember when I used to write that "...Scott will be 10..." or "...Scott started Jr. High School..." and here he is, ready to marry. Kate will be 32 next week, and still works for the County of Los Angeles. Her oldest daughter, Kristina, is 13, and Julianna just turned 1 in October. I am deliriously proud of my children and granddaughters. They bring joy to my life that cannot be understood until you go through it yourself.

On August 6, Scott proposed to Sonja, (the radiologist) and she said yes. I don't know the date yet but hopefully it will be soon. We are very excited for them both. She is a lovely lady and they make each other very happy.

Krisitina is in the 8th grade...something I simply cannot comprehend, and doing very well in school. She is the very proud big sister, as you can imagine. She is a big help to Kate in taking care of Julie. As you can see here, Kristy is quite the beauty. Our whole family could not have any

Despite the fact that Mom and Art are now sharing a room in a skilled nursing facility (Dad since July, Mom since December 1), I know they are safe and comfortable, and the burden on me will be lifted. All I want is for their happiness and safety for what's left of their lives for them.



Carlos and I have 14 years under our belts and the time we share together is making each other laugh every day is one of the keys to our happiness.

In May, I joined the Gay Men's Chorus of Los Angeles as part of their "5th Section" mainly being there for administrative and support, so while I no longer sing, being a part of this incredible family has helped ease the burdens of daily life, and the guys in the chorus are just the most wonderful people ever. If you ever get the chance to see one of our shows, you will experience the love these men share as they sing their ways into your hearts.

I will turn 65 in another month, and after waiting 23 years, I will begin to receive my pension from A T & T. I never thought I'd see the day...and while it's not a trip to Europe, it will add a little to my monthly income I get from social security. I have a rough time believing that I'm old enough to be a senior citizen. How could that be??

That about wraps it up for another beautiful year. I am a firm believer that we make our own joys in our lives, as well as our own sorrows. We make do with what we have, and somehow, it always seems to work out.

I wish you the warmest of holiday seasons, and a new year filled with joy and love and peace.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michael".

michael@dardenelle.net <---the EasyLink. Go ahead. Click it. I know you want to.