**Warm 2016 Greetings**

Picture on the Holiday Card: For Christmas 2015 we had all the kids and grandkids together - Andy, Suzuna, and Melina from Japan, Katy, Seanna, and Kaiden from Carmel, and Emily already here. What an opportunity to get a picture of us all! You can see photos and more detailed descriptions of all our adventures below on the web pages and Word documents at: *geosling.com/louis*

We began 2016 by getting up early and going to the Rose Parade with Andy, Suzuna, and Melina. We got bleacher seats with a pretty good view. The floats were so spectacular that we went the next day to the float viewing venue in Pasadena, where we could wander around and see the flower artistry at close range. In late winter and spring, we took several weekend trips to the desert. In January we went to Palm Springs with friends Tony, Robert, and Linda; we spent the days seeing the sights and the evenings playing board games. In early February we went camping with Paul Younger and family to Death Valley. A week later we took advantage of a Wynn Hotel special offer in Las Vegas with Tricia and Dennis, where we saw a couple of shows and generally relaxed. We spent the last weekend of February camping in Anza Borrego with Larry Gordon and family. The desert flowers were just starting to bloom, and we came back with lots of sweet Borrego Springs grapefruit. There was so little snow in the mountains early in the year that we didn’t go skiing in Mammoth until April 30.

On May 19-21, we attended Lou’s 50th Caltech graduation reunion. He reconnected with many old acquaintances. Caltech had a number of dinners and interesting activities to keep the celebration lively. On Memorial Day weekend Chris’ sister JoAnna came to visit, so we hopped on a boat to Anacapa Island for some hiking and then took off to go rafting on the Kern River with Katy, Seanna, and Kaiden.

On June 4, things got quite warm around our house as a wild fire broke out in the canyon one street away. We remained in the middle of the evacuation area as tanker helicopters roared back and forth overhead. This was dubbed the “Calabasas Old Fire”, which was under control by the next evening.

For a week around the July 4th holiday we flew to Lake of the Woods, Canada for a visit with Chris’ sister and brother-in-law, Marilyn and Ron. Cousin Nancy and Carter joined us, and we had a relaxing time visiting and fishing. We then went to Winnipeg and visited Lou’s cousins Gert and Jim, who threw a party where we got to see many of the Winnipeg relatives.

Shortly after we got back home, we heard on the news about a large, out-of-control fire in the Carmel area, which eventually came to be called the “Soberanes Fire”. The [drought-fueled wildfire](http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-soberanes-fire-20160926-snap-htmlstory.html) burned for 83 days over 132,127 acres. It drove Katy and family from our ridge-top property for over two months and destroyed the water system which pumps from the stream. Luckily, the house was not significantly damaged. We are still in discussions with the insurance company over the coverage.

We flew to Sacramento over the Labor Day weekend to enjoy our friend Bob Sugar’s hospitality. We then took a scenic Amtrak ride over the Sierras to Reno where we met with Emily and her friend Victor. They had taken the Dodge van to Burning Man, and we volunteered to drive them home. In October we went to the Society of Women Engineers convention in Philadelphia. It was fun comparing the “Philly cheesesteak sandwiches” from various famous places.

In November we finally took the trip to South Africa that has long been on our bucket list. Emily joined us, and we flew to Johannesburg, rented a car, and toured through Kruger National Park, Swaziland, the eastern Indian Ocean coast, the Drakensberg region, Lesotho, Mountain Zebra National Park, to Port Elizabeth, the Tsitsikamma forest area, Knysna, Mossel Bay, Franschhoek, Cape Town, and the Cape of Good Hope. Highlights were the animals in the parks, including the “Big Five”, beautiful scenery, Zulu culture, an oyster boat tour, views from Table Mountain, and swimming with penguins.

Chris is still working at Northrop Grumman Systems in Woodland Hills. She enjoys fishing trips with friends from work. Our freezer is always full of various types of fish. Louis works to keep the yard in good shape and has improved an online program to play the board game, Terra Mystica. You can play against (or watch) his Javascript artificial intelligence robots on the web at: *lodev.org/tmai*