

Dear Family and friends,

2009 is coming to a close, and again we enjoy this opportunity to extend our greetings and to share some of the ups and downs of our past year. The first six months of 2009 were spent primarily supporting the local medical establishment. In January, after an exhausting three years of unsuccessful treatments, Jeremy came to terms with his ulcerative colitis and settled on the last resort – surgery. He spent the next six months in and out of the hospital completing a hierarchy of surgical procedures and recoveries. Joyce stayed with him in the hospital most of the time, even as she continued her courses at Pierce College. Meanwhile, Chris finally decided to have the right knee replacement surgery she had been needing for a year. Her surgery was scheduled for early April, and she spent the next three months recovering and strengthening the knee. Lou had his hands full taking care of two invalids at the same time. Once Chris' knee felt well enough to travel, she visited Marilyn and Ron in Canada, where wandering around the island paths provided the best therapy one could imagine.

Jeremy now feels much better. He and Joyce were admitted and started college at Cal State – Northridge this fall as Psychology majors. The Plymouth Neon they were driving died of old age, so they found a used Honda Accord in good condition with all the desirable features one could want. They traveled to Lincoln, CA with us to visit our friends the Sugars in October, where we attended a Pumpkin Festival, Octoberfest, and Renaissance Faire.

Emily graduated from the Monterey Institute for international Studies in June with a Master's Degree in International Trade Policy. She spent most of the summer at home starting a job search and recovering from the toils of academia. This culminated in a month of networking, job hunting, and visiting friends in August, flying all over the country on a Southwest Airlines fly-anywhere special promotion. The last week was spent in Jamaica, where Lou and Chris flew to join her. We stayed in an older resort hotel in Negril, where the beach was white sand and the water was bathtub warm. A thunderstorm passed through every afternoon. We enjoyed many Jamaican food specialties, including local fruit from the town street vendors and the small, vegan "Rasta" restaurants (Rastafarian), which Emily particularly appreciated. The country is beautiful but poor. Whenever we were away from the hotel, we were hustled by swarms of locals offering us goods for sale, "guide services", or simply begging for a few coins. After returning home, Emily continued her job search and just recently accepted the position of Recycling Coordinator for the City of Monterey, where she can put her UC Berkeley Environmental Science degree to good use.

Andy found a job in Japan the day before his visa was to expire. He is working for an IT company in Tokyo. He is currently on a trial basis but is hoping to secure a permanent position. He posts wonderful photos and commentary on his blog, andysensei.com, describing his travels around various areas of Japan. He particularly enjoys climbing the many mountains around Tokyo.

Katy and Anarion are constantly busy with work and shuttling Seanna and Kaiden to school and various activities. Seanna played T-ball, danced ballet, and made a lot of friends in 1st grade. Kaiden is in preschool and is full of energy. Summer was filled with frequent visits to swim in the river at big Sur. They all came to visit twice this year and are driving down for the Christmas holidays.

Lou still works at SAIC, even after they moved the office AGAIN – this time 20 miles further down the freeway to Seal Beach. Happily, he is usually able to work from home a couple of days a week. Chris is still at Northrop Grumman as an Engineering Manager. Work has not slowed at all during the recession. Now that her knee is better, she enjoys hiking the local Santa Monica Mountain trails.

We hope 2010 brings you joy, luck, and prosperity. Please keep in touch. Happy New Year!