

Happy Holidays 2004

As the holidays roll around again, we'd like to write and let you know what we've been up to all year and hope that you may do the same. Our welcome mat is out if you are in the area or would like to be. Our Email address is louis@vc.net.

Katy and Anarion are keeping busy with their jobs, with the little house on the mountain, and with Seanna, who is now a cute talkative 2-year old. Katy is still a buyer for the Phoenix Shop in Big Sur. Andy has been in Japan since April, teaching English for the ECC Foreign Language Institute. He is based in the Shinjuku area of Tokyo and is really enjoying his year. He has a website, www.andysensei.com, with lots of pictures and commentary about his experiences and Japanese life. Look it up and check all the archives. Emily is in her 3rd year at UC Berkeley. She spent last semester at James Cook University in Townsville, Australia, which she said she really liked. She was able to see and study a lot of wildlife, including wallabies around her dorm and the carpet python, which the students named "Shag", on her balcony. Jeremy is in his senior year of High School. He is almost always on the computer and hates homework, but he is planning on attending one of the Cal State schools next fall. He got his drivers license and is driving the Neon until Andy gets back.

I took a lot of vacation time this year. (The 20-year anniversary bonus week from Northrop Grumman really helped.) I went to Florida to visit Marilyn, Ron and Mom in February and came back with a slightly improved golf game. In June, Lou, Emily, Katy, Anarion, Seanna, Mom, and I descended upon Ron and Marilyn at the Island in Lake of the Woods, Canada. (Katy and family missed their flight in San Jose and had to spend 9 hours at the airport.) We all enjoyed the opportunity to spend time together...and caught a few fish too. I am still at Northrop Grumman as an Engineering Manager for the LN200 fiber optic IMU product line...a lot more stress than research, but rewarding nevertheless. I still like to go up in the mountains for a hike on weekend mornings. Lou is still at SAIC, working as a contractor to Northrop Grumman-Azusa for most of the year. He spent this fall working on a couple of programs in Torrance, but he'll be going back to Azusa in a few weeks. He has become addicted to Yahoo Fantasy basketball. He still takes care of the garden, the flowers in front, and the ~30 fruit trees, which combine to produce one sort of fruit or another year-round.

Lou and I took two cruises this year, the first being a 3-day cruise in January, with Emily, to Ensenada on Royal Caribbean. Lou wrote a page about that experience on his website, www.vcnet.com/~louis. About the same time, Carnival Cruises announced the last non-smoking cruise of the Paradise, the only totally non-smoking ship left in the world. The cruise was scheduled through the Panama Canal from Miami to Long Beach, and we, along with our friends Tricia and Dennis, couldn't pass it up. *Skip ahead to September 2.* Lou and Dennis had booked our Miami hotel 3 days in advance of sailing, knowing it would be hurricane season. We wanted to mitigate the risk of cancelled flights and wanted to snorkel the Keys. We flew into Ft. Lauderdale, however, just in time to be greeted by preparations for Hurricane Frances. Our beachfront hotel was shutting down, so on the recommendation of some locals, we moved inland and got a couple of rooms at a Comfort Inn, just in time to gather some food supplies and wait for the hurricane to hit. Early the next morning, however, Lou had chest pains. I got directions and drove him to the hospital...I knew it was serious when Lou told me to run the stop signs and red lights. It was blowing and starting to rain, so no one was out anyway. The hospital staff assessed his condition quickly, and whisked him up to surgery within minutes. Luckily, the cardiac team was sleeping at the hospital in preparation for Hurricane Frances. They diagnosed him with a blocked left anterior descending artery, inserted a catheter, cleared it, and inserted a stent. Lou spent the next 2 days in the hospital. He decided that he wasn't going to let that incident keep him from the cruise, so he signed himself out of the hospital, and we made the ship. The next 15 days were enjoyable, although the ship sailed a day late. We missed Aruba due to Hurricane Ivan, and we missed Cabo San Lucas due to Hurricane Javier. (We didn't get to snorkel at all!) The food was wonderful, and it was relaxing lounging in the pool and playing board games with Tricia and Dennis. The Panama Canal crossing was every bit as thrilling as expected, and Tricia, Dennis, and I took a river raft trip in Costa Rica.

We had a nice Thanksgiving with Arthur, Marleen, and our friend David Woolcott, and we did have a lot to be thankful for this year. We wish you all the best for the New Year. *Chris*