

December 17, 2003

Dear Friends and Family,

As we review the year which has just passed we are grateful to have been blessed by events, friends, and family.

In January we began the year on a trip to Brian Head in Utah, with some sightseeing in Bryce and Zion National Parks. We were relieved to find that after six years we still knew how to enjoy skiing. New Years' Eve plans of torchlight skiing and fireworks were changed by an incoming storm which encouraged us to get down the mountain early.

Sandy and her mom, Fay, joined friends from England in February on a cruise from California through the Panama Canal to Florida. They visited interesting places in Mexico, Costa Rica, Aruba, and Jamaica as well as enjoying two weeks together on the ship.

In May we always look forward to the Grossmont—Mt Helix garden tour and delight in poking around in some neighbors yards. I attended the Ballet with my mom. We visited Bell Garden Farms rode the model railway twice – with Louise for Mothers' Day and then with friends who have two little train-mad boys.

Sandy's beautiful but aging Intrepid was replaced with a silver Honda CR-V EX in June. With the new wheels we took my father, Darb, on a driving trip to Palomar in the local mountains for Father's Day. We also went to the Del Mar Fair this year.

We were very excited to have grandchildren Katie and Braden visit us in July. Pam flew out with them and then went off to join Andrew and travel around Northern California. So with the kids on their own for a week, we had a blast with them at the beach, Sea World, LegoLand. Braden (5 ½) learned to boogie board and went to the Aerospace Museum with Papa Lee. Katie (8) learned to surf a long board and took Grandma shopping. Andrew works as a physical therapist in a hospital in Denver and Pam has been taking on some short-term accounting assignments.

After a hiatus last year, we continued the tradition we started of a neighborhood block party at the end of August.

Lee's GMC pickup truck was replaced in September by a silver Subaru Baja, a kind of cross between a sports car and a four-door sedan with a small truck bed in the back.

Sandy went on a short familiarization to Loreto in Baja California in October. She flew back only to find a large part of San Diego County on fire. We're happy not to be among the 3000 families who lost homes, but it was scary none the less to prepare to evacuate with smoke pouring over our house and firefighters struggling to stop the flames from coming into the neighborhood just east of us.

For Thanksgiving we went to Atlanta to celebrate with Rob, Barrie, and Emma. Rob is a Lieutenant with the Cobb County Fire Department and Barrie is a substitute teacher at Camp Creek Elementary where Emma is in Kindergarten. We did a little early Christmas activities including a trips to the Mall of Georgia and Stone Mountain Park.

A number of guests came to stay with us, from as far away as the UK and as near as Oceanside. We also kept busy attending performances at Lambs' Players, the outdoor theater on Mt Helix, the Mainly Mozart, silent movie night at the Spreckles Organ, and even went out to see some good movies.

We're going to Hawaii for a week to celebrate Lee's birthday in December. We've said we're going to just relax while visiting Oahu and the Big Island, but we don't even believe that ourselves.

Sandy's mom, Fay, enjoys her home in Oceanside. She swims regularly and does two volunteer jobs at Tri-City Hospital. For Christmas we will be at her house with Sandy's sister Paula, her brother-in-law Lee, and my parents.

Lee's parents, Darb and Louise, enjoy living in Casa de Las Campanas in Rancho Bernardo. They take pleasure in the social activities there, working in the library and on resident committees, attending a college art class, and playing bridge.

Sandy's work at Ambler Travel keeps her busy arranging all kinds of tours, cruises, vacations, and other travel. She's also been going walking and swimming regularly, and she attended some drawing classes.

Lee is teaching for the Community College at Naval School of Health Sciences. During breaks in his schedule there he has done substitute teaching in elementary schools, and has redone the ceiling and painted our bedroom.

Our best wishes go out to you at this holiday season. We always look forward to hearing your news by way of letters, cards, and notes! Also by email: LeeDarby@juno.com or sandydarby@mail.usa.com.

May this season and these holidays be a time of love, joy, peace, and fellowship for you and all of your family.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year for 2004!