

rolling hills and trees. They often spot Coyotes, horses, hawks and other wildlife and always have many yellow finches feeding at their bird feeders – it is truly an idyllic place.

December 2004

The year was not without sadness as Sandy's dear nephew Gene Miller lost his battle with cancer after a long and courageous fight. Gene was a gifted artist and a very special person. He leaves behind with those who knew him a legacy of caring and sharing that will go on with us all.

On the happiness side we have been blessed by the visits and stays of many of our special friends – it is always a pleasure to welcome them to our home and we truly enjoy it.

This year's Christmas card photo was taken at a lovely Christmas dinner at my parents' restaurant last year. We often go for dinner with Darb and Louise at the "Casa" and Fay at Fairwinds and feel good that they can entertain us without having to spend the day cooking! We try to spend as much time as we can with them but it never seems to be enough as there is always something going on in our lives!

We always look forward to hearing your news by way of letters, cards, and notes! Also by email:

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We send our love to all of you to love each other, care about each other and share the joys of this wonderful season. We hope this finds you well and happy and we hope to see you all very soon!

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year for 2005!

Dear Friends and Family,

The holidays are fast approaching and we want to be sure to send to you our warmest love and affection at this very special time of the year.

We finished last year with a trip to Hawaii that included Pearl Harbor Day, a thatched cottage on an ocean-front lava flow, and Bed and Breakfast stays around Hawaii Volcanoes National Park.

For Valentine's Day went to Denver to visit family. Sandy's son Andrew is a physical therapist at Presbyterian-St Luke's Hospital there. His wife Pam is a CPA who has been taking on various contract accounting jobs (which allows her to have time off when she needs it to be with the children). Katie (fourth grade) and Braden (first grade) are excelling in school, swim team and soccer. They also like to go camping with mom and dad.

We also visited Lee's Afghan 'brother' Samim, his wife Aneesa, and their children Zouhal, Mansour, and EJ near Boulder. We enjoyed a real feast with their extended family, and Katie and Braden rampaged around the house with the younger children.

Sandy's mother, Fay, went to New Zealand for a cruise and went swimming with dolphins there. At 83 she decided to sell her home and has moved to Fairwinds Ivey Ranch, a retirement community in Oceanside.

She still misses Dad but really enjoys her life more now that she has many people to talk to on a daily basis. She has her own lovely one bedroom unit, gets to have fun eating two meals a day in the elegant dining room, goes on outings they provide, plays bingo, and has many activities with the other residents so she has company when she needs it. She still does volunteer work at the

Tri-City Hospital several times a week also. Right now she's on a tour in Australia.

This spring, after 16½ years, Sandy changed jobs. She is now working at Rancho San Diego Travel, just one mile down the hill from our house. While she really needed a change after all that time, the new job, after much angst and stress, is slowly working out. It was difficult to change computer systems (really like starting all over again!) but she is mastering it and each week gets a bit easier.

Lee went on a driving trip to New Mexico to visit his sister, Barbara (Sister Marietta), at her monastery in Jemez Springs. She's involved both in the management of the facility and in the instruction of new members of the order. Lee enjoyed doing some odd jobs and having time to hang out with her. He continues to teach at Naval School of Health Sciences for the San Diego Community College District. He also worked with me in putting together a group tour to Malta and Sicily.

This summer Lee's parents, Darb and Louise, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. We had a party in Balboa Park for them before one of the Spreckle's Organ concerts. They play bridge, read, serve on committees, take classes, attend meetings, work in the library, and eat dinner with different friends every night.

We had grandchildren come on their own and stay again this summer. Katie and Braden came for two weeks this year. We visited Legoland, Disneyland, California Adventure, the USS Midway, tide pools, and beaches. We also had some great visits with friends who have children and grandchildren around the same ages, so the friendships are now continuing into the third generation.

After talking about it for a few years, Lee decided to learn to sail. He joined a sailing club, took lessons, got certified, and now can be found out on San Diego Bay in a 21-foot Victory boat. We both benefit from this as we love to be out on the bay enjoying beautiful San Diego from the water. We are very blessed to live in such a

lovely city and of course the weather year round allows us to go sailing without having to brave cold and storms. He is doing well and has soloed many times. I already knew how to sail a bit because Andrew and Rob both taught sailing and I used to go on sailboat races with them in Los Angeles when I lived there.

In September we made a trip to the Copper Canyon of Mexico. We flew from Tijuana to Los Mochis, and began in the colonial town of El Fuerte, staying in the historic 18th century Hacienda del Hidalgo and taking a river raft trip.

We caught the Chihuahua al Pacifico train there, climbed 3,200 feet into the mountains, and stayed in the village of Cerrocahui. After the summer rains, there were fields full of wildflowers as we went hiking and visited canyon overlooks. Then we went to Posada Barrancas and stayed at the cliff-side Hotel Mirador where we spent a day (and moonlit night) watching the changing scene 6,000 feet below us.

The train then took us to Creel where we visited waterfalls, 300-year-old missions, and strange rock formations. Finally, we ended up in the city of Chihuahua which was important in both the Independence and Revolutionary periods of Mexican history.

We have not seen Rob and Barrie and Emma in Atlanta yet this year but are really looking forward to spending time with them over the Christmas Holiday. We plan to enjoy them and spoil Emma since we have not seen her for a whole year!

Sandy's son Rob is a Lieutenant with the Cobb County Fire Department and his wife Barrie works at their daughter Emma's school. Emma (a first grader) has been doing gymnastics and we are most anxious to see her perform. They added a new porch room to their house so they have been busy with the remodel and are glad it is finished.

My sister Paula and brother-in-law Lee are still retired and living in their lovely home in Oceanside with a beautiful view over