

# Merry Christmas



Avery, Zacharie, Mary Lou, Brian, Cori (holding Lexi), Ana, Shannon holding Gwen, Claire, Amanda, Julia, Chris (on ground), La'akea, Badegech, Todd, Jasmine, Sarah, Eve, Jesse, Kainoa, Hanne Mae, and Mabel (Kent was working)

"I'll call my doctor, if you call your doctor." Once the dare was initiated, it started a snowball of events that led to weeks and months being devoted to office visits and lab tests and hospital stays. Don't worry, we are both doing well, but we have had to rely on modern medicine to pull us through. It happened when I started to loose control of my arms and legs. It was minor at first, and I pretty much just ignored it and hoped it would go away. Mary Lou's shoulders were really bothering her to the point that it was hard for her to do grocery shopping due to items being much higher than she could reach, much less lift them into her cart. We made quite a pair. Mary Lou thought I should do something about my motor control, and that is when I made the challenge. Mary Lou called her doctor and made an appointment for a physical in two months. So, now, I had to call my doctor. By the time I explained my symptoms to the nurse I was told to go immediately to the emergency room and get x-rays of my neck. I think I got the raw end of that deal! I saw my doctor in a couple of days and he said I was fine to drive to Seaside, Oregon, where Mary Lou's mother, sister, and nephew live, but I couldn't go backpacking. Off we went to celebrate the Forth of July, stopping in Paradise to celebrate our grandson's high school graduation. The next day, my symptoms got much worse, and it was becoming difficult for me to walk. We figured out that the car driving was aggravating my neck, and I flew back to San Diego. In a couple of days, I was having neck surgery. As it turned out, my spinal cord was being squeezed, causing loss of control of my extremities. The surgery was successful, and I'm doing much better.





# Happy New Year



Only 87 people in the world have this. What are the odds of being one of 87 people in the world to ever have one? What amazing luck! No, Mary Lou didn't win the lottery. She did get oohs and ahhs from the medical staff, and comments like, "Oh, I've only seen this in a textbook." Don't worry, Mary Lou is fine, and the rare tumor has been successfully removed from her big toe. That is how her medical journey started. When Mary Lou saw her doctor for a physical, she immediately referred her to an orthopedic surgeon. After foot surgery in August, she had a reverse shoulder replacement done at the end of September. She is doing so well that she is now talking about having the other shoulder replaced.

OK, not all weeks were spent visiting doctors and labs. Our year actually began with another addition to our family when Avery Faustina Garcia became Sarah and Kent's first child and our eleventh grandchild. We (including the expectant parents, Jesse and Eve) are also expecting our 24<sup>th</sup> family member (and their second daughter) this coming January.

We had great visits from Jesse, Eve and Mabel; Shannon, Amanda, and their three young daughters; my sister Donna and her son Aaron; our two oldest grandsons, Zachary and La'akea; and Cori, Sarah, and Avery (returning Dojah and our truck while I was in the hospital). Visits to the beach and other San Diego landmarks and eating at local eateries were hallmarks of their visits.

We went to a Rolling Stones concert and to lots of local music events, drove several times to Northern California to visit family, and generally enjoyed living in San Diego. Mary Lou is looking forward to resuming her art classes, while I am one semester away from getting a luthier (stringed instrument maker) certificate.

We look forward to next year. Hopefully, we will finish up our body tune-ups and possibly even move back up to Northern California.

We hope you have had a great year, have a Merry Christmas, and a great new year.

