

Christmas Letter, 2000

2000

It's hard to admit that it is time to write the Christmas letter again. Yet, when I think back to the things that we have done during the last year—Giants games at Pac Bell Park, climbing Mt. Shasta, having the 3 youngest home for the summer, and Shannon joining the Coast Guard, and it does seem to have been a full year.

Did I say Shannon joined the Coast Guard? Yep, he just finished basic training at Point May, New Jersey. He is home for the holidays, and then he goes off to Yorktown, Va. for Quartermaster school. When he is through with that school, he will be ready to drive the boats. He got a great deal, and it should set him up nicely.

It was nice having Shannon and Sarah home with Jesse, Mary Lou and me this summer. Shannon worked at the airport loading fire retardant into CDF planes. Actually, it was a pretty fire-free summer, so he fine-tuned his horseshoe game and read some good books. Sarah worked at a deli and had good times with her local friends. Her good friend, Katie, stayed with us as well.

Jesse started the summer by traveling to Eastern Europe with his high school choir group. He went to Prague, Czech Republic; Krakow, Poland; Vienna and Salzburg, Austria; Heidelberg, Germany; and Zurich, Switzerland among other places. When he got back, he played summer league basketball, umpired baseball games, and then finished the summer off with high school football practice. He had a good football season playing linebacker and defensive end. He is now playing basketball. He and his team are doing very well. He is planning on playing tennis this spring. He is a senior in school this year. He has been looking at potential colleges and is leaning toward Shasta College. Mary Lou and I like that idea.

This last summer was marked by highs and lows; places visited and places missed. Jesse, Shannon, and I climbed Mt. Shasta with my brother-in-law, John, his son, Aaron, and a couple of their friends. Seven of us walked to the top, and six of us walked off of the mountain. Actually, it isn't quite as bad as it sounds. John's friend, Chuck, broke his ankle at the top of Red Banks. I helped him down to Helen Lake where he was helicoptered off. That was the high. The low was Mary Lou's father passing on. He will be dearly missed. The places visited were going to Pac Bell Park twice to watch Giant's games. The places missed were the fact that we didn't go backpacking this summer...again. I can't believe we didn't go. We get so busy during the summer and it

just gets away from us. I guess we'll have to go to Grizzly Lake in the Trinity Mountains this next summer to make up for it.

Sarah is in her 2nd year at CSU, Chico. She loves it there. She is living in an apartment complex that is full of students and young adults. She just finished her first semester of her second year of college. We are proud of her.

Todd and Ana both have new jobs. Todd is now working for a young company that builds hubs for downhill mountain bikes. He is their Production Manager. Ana is working for AmeriCorps with the Sacramento River Partners. She is working on projects that help restore Sacramento River riparian areas. La'akea is attending pre-school that is paid by AmeriCorps. He is growing up so quickly. We love being so close and involved in his life.

Cori and Chris are doing great. Cori just finished her work for her Master's Degree and credential program. She now has a school counseling credential. She is substitute teaching, teaching aerobics, playing tennis, doing activities involving her children, and about a few dozen other things. Chris had another successful watermelon season. He stays busy with his rentals, karate, activities with the kids, and video production. Zacharie is now in Kindergarten. He is becoming very grown up. He is now a yellow belt in karate. Jasmine is sooo cute. She is also in a pre-school program. I think she is also involved in gymnastics. What I do know is that she is a very good listener when it comes to having a story read to her. I know I said this before, but we love being close enough to see them fairly often.

Mary Lou took a water painting class this fall. That re-kindled her artistic side. There, for awhile, every spare moment you could find her painting. She runs regularly on our back land with our dog, Willie. I was running with her for awhile, but somehow got out of the habit. I ran with her twice in the last few days, and I plan to continue. It is so great to be able to just go out our back door and run on trails. We feel very lucky to be so blessed.

I am enjoying my job as the Director of Technology Services for a large high school district. It keeps me on my toes and learning new stuff all of the time.

Well, that is about it for this year from the Swagerty's. I hope all is well with you. Happy Holidays!