

Christmas, 2001

Well, here comes our first Christmas of the new millennium. Hope everyone is well and had a good year.

Our fifth annual Mardi Gras party was in March this year. We had to hold it after Mardi Gras due to a conflict with a company function.

Also in March, John made a week long trip to his old stomping grounds of Austin, Texas to attend a training seminar.

For his 50th birthday, John's present was a camping trip to the Detroit Lake area of Oregon and a hike up into the beautiful mountains around the Santiam Pass in the Cascades.

Mom Spain came up to visit us in June, and spent a couple of weeks. We took her around for quite a bit of sightseeing. Among other things, we went on the Mt Hood Railroad from Hood River, Oregon in the Columbia River Gorge up to the small town of Parkdale at the foot of Mount Hood. We all enjoyed the trip, and Mom had a chance to examine the Oregon wild flowers up close.

We went up to Seattle one weekend. Mom got to see the Pike street market and the original Starbucks coffee house. And of course, no trip to Seattle would be complete without going to the top of the Space Needle. On the way home, we went through Mount Rainier National Park and drove up to Sunset, a visitors area about 6000 feet up with an excellent view of the mountain.

Among other places, we also went to Multnomah Falls in the Columbia River Gorge, Timberline Ski lodge on Mount Hood, the Oregon Gardens, Silver Falls State Park and the Evergreen Air Museum. This is where Howard Hughes' "Spruce Goose" seaplane is on display.

We took our annual vacation camping trip this year in early September. This year's trip was centered around the giant coast redwoods in Northern California. But first, we headed to the Grants Pass, Oregon area to see the Oregon Caves and the Rogue River. The caves were fascinating and filled with spectacular formations. After a few days in that area, we headed down to the Jedediah Smith State Park in California and spent 5 days among the redwoods. The Christmas card picture this year is of us standing in front of an ancient redwood with a diameter of around 20 feet. I don't know the height of that one, but certainly over 300 feet. One redwood in that area measured a height of 367 feet.

After that, we went back to the Grants Pass area for a few days. We took a jet boat trip down the Rogue River. This is the river on which they filmed the movie "The River Wild". Many other movies also used it for their white water scenes. The high-powered jet boats skim over the rapids at around 45 – 60 miles per hour. All in all, a very exhilarating trip.

Now here it is, Christmas time again. We're having a very rainy winter so far, but we had a drought over the last year so the rain is needed. Hope the weather is good where you are.

Here's wishing you a merry Christmas and a happy New Year. Please keep in touch.

John and Janet Spain