

## Christmas, 2009

Wow, where did 2009 go? So much happened this past year. We hope everything went well for you and your family.

After our last Christmas letter went out, in late December we had record snowfall. Snow is rare here on the Willamette Valley floor, so getting an all time record of 20 inches over the course of December was quite a shock, and really shut down this area. Fortunately, Janet's 4-wheel drive Honda CRV had snow tires to get her to work and back, and John was able to work from home via the Internet.

In January, John took an improvisational comedy class, both for fun and to help stretch his boundaries a bit. The class culminated in a public performance, which Janet and several of John's coworkers attended.

February brought our annual Mardi Gras celebration, which came off as a great success once again!

In March, we decided to take a long weekend getaway to Las Vegas (or "Lost Wages", as my friends call it). This was John's first trip to Vegas since he was in the National Guard over 35 years ago. In that time, Las Vegas has changed from a little gambling town to a huge destination resort. Not being gamblers, we just took in the sights, relaxed, and rented a car so we could go see the Hoover Dam.

In April, we drove up to Seattle to meet John's sister Nancy. She was in Seattle giving a seminar. Janet attended the seminar as Nancy's guest. We then spent the next day taking Nancy sightseeing around Olympic National Park west of Seattle.

June brought a life changing event. Janet's beloved mother, friend and confidant Ruth Sandor passed away. We had set up a special phone number for her in Erie, Pa. so she could call anytime for free, and she and Janet talked frequently and at length. Janet had her last conversation with her mom just the previous weekend, and her last words to her mother were "I love you", something we should all think to do with our loved ones often. We flew into Pittsburgh, and traveled to Erie for the funeral, then back to Pittsburgh for the burial. She is buried next to her beloved husband Bill, who preceded her in death in 1994.

Late in June, John's niece Susan Spain came to Ashland, Oregon to attend a class at Southern Oregon University. We drove down one weekend and had a great time visiting with Susan, and we all traveled to nearby Crater Lake National Park and the historic old town of Jacksonville, Oregon.

In July, we started a remodeling project at home. Our master bath was demolished, and we started the process of having a walk-in tile shower stall installed, as well as tile floor, custom cabinets and a granite countertop with dual sinks. Little did we know that this project, estimated to take 2 to 3 weeks, would not be fully complete until October!

During the midst of all this, our friends Tim and Judy Huber came up from California and spent a week with us. Their daughter Rachel was getting married here, and Tim and Judy needed to temporarily use our home as "wedding central". We had a great time visiting with them, and helping with the wedding.

In August, it was time for a trip back to Jackson and back in time, as John went back to attend his 40<sup>th</sup> High School reunion. This is the only school reunion John has ever been to, and it was both enjoyable and interesting to catch up with people he hadn't seen for all those years. We spent the majority of the time visiting with family, but also spent a couple of days with our friends George and Nancy Parr in Covington, Louisiana.

Throughout the fall, we have been busy working on home improvements. Over and above the complex remodeling effort for the master bath, we are also doing closets, have replaced the gutters, and are having new garage doors and openers installed.

Pictures of our adventures are on our web site, [www.majorspain.com](http://www.majorspain.com), and please note our new email addresses below.

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

[John.spain@verizon.net](mailto:John.spain@verizon.net)

John and Janet Spain

[janet.spain@verizon.net](mailto:janet.spain@verizon.net)

Friends in the kitchen during our Mardi Gras party



Gathering around the fire on the deck for Mardi Gras



Both of us at "New York, New York" in Vegas



The strip in "Lost Wages"



Janet's Mom and Dad, finally together again



Janet working on staining our walkway last spring

