

Christmas, 1998

Greetings to all from Hillsboro, Oregon.

Hope everyone is well. Yet another year has passed, and we've been up to a variety of things.

In February, we threw our second annual Mardi Gras party. Our Oregon friends have come to enjoy our party, and we would like to thank our New Orleans friends for sending us the food and other goodies that make the party both authentic and successful.

This past spring, John traveled to Mississippi to visit with family for a week. He also stopped in New Orleans for a visit with old friends. During the year, he also made a couple of trips to Texas to train Compaq employees on some newly released computer equipment.

In June, we met our old friends George and Nancy Parr in Vancouver BC after their Alaska cruise ship docked, and we spent a couple of days touring that part of the world with them.

Our summer was taken up in large part by a construction project. We tore out our old deck, which had sagged and decayed badly, and constructed an entirely new one out of a weatherproof synthetic material called Trex. To avoid future sagging, we put down concrete footings underneath, graded the soil to redirect water around it, and made a foundation of treated 2x6 lumber on 12 inch centers. This deck may be here when the house is gone.

We have spent another year exploring this part of the country. We spent many weekends camping along the coast and up in the mountains.

For our vacation this year, we spent a week in early September camping at Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming and Montana. It was gorgeous there, and we were very lucky with the weather. The enclosed photograph shows us together with Old Faithful spouting in the background. On the way to Yellowstone, we stopped to see the Craters of the Moon National Park in Idaho, and during our stay at Yellowstone we took a day to see the Grand Tetons and tour Jackson Hole, Wyoming.

Actually there is a lot more to Yellowstone than geysers and bears. There is a huge canyon called the Grand Canyon of Yellowstone, and massive formations of minerals built by upwelling hot springs.

After a remarkably nice summer here, winter has set in with a vengeance. We've seen ceaseless rain, and even some snow (although no accumulations at our elevation yet). This time it is "La Nina" that is supposed to be the source of our weather woes.

We have recovered nicely from our injuries of last year. Both of us now exercise regularly, and are watching our diets as well. John goes in to work early at Intel to use the fitness center; Janet uses Boise Cascades exercise facility over her lunch period.

Janet has earned several new medical related certificates this year, including certifications as a Medic First Aid instructor, breath alcohol technician and Spirometry certification.

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

John and Janet Spain