

Roseweld Holiday Letter - January 2008



We extend a big "Hello" and belated season's greetings to all our friends. How hard it is to stay in touch with all of you. Each year goes by a little faster and it seems as if each day is filled with more activities; it is hard to find time to take a step back and regain perspective. Obviously, a letter can't fill that gap, but it does seem fitting to reflect on the year during our much-needed winter vacation.



I'm writing from Mexico. We've spent the last week in sunny Jalcomulco, a small town in Veracruz, with Esprit - a

wonderful "eco travel" and kayaking company. Days have been spent whitewater rafting, mountain biking to Toltec ruins, riding a zip-line course and clambering up a narrow mossy canyon on bamboo ladders. Most nights have been in a small, comfy hotel (with some great hammocks), but we camped two nights, one in a remote village, where the kids learned to make fresh tortillas and Leah was invited to join a birthday party, earning a cheer when she split open the piñata.



It's actually been a year filled with adventurous travel, starting with a trip to Cambodia and Vietnam one year ago. In Phnom Penh we visited an incredible (cheerful and optimistic) orphanage, started by the mother of a Seattle friend. Later, a museum visit made graphic the terrible history of Pol Pot's violent repression. The people were warm and friendly, but it was depressing to see numerous amputees, maimed by landmines, begging on the



streets. After a day-long boat trip up the Tonle Sap river, we spent four days touring incredible Angkor, where hundreds of magnificent ruins lie hidden in the jungle.



Margaret was astonished by the change in Vietnam, since her '91 visit. Hanoi streets, previously busy with bicycles, are now plied exclusively by cars and motorcycles traveling at terrifying speed with no regard to stoplights. We left the city and spent four wonderful days in Halong Bay, based on a Chinese junk sailed exclusively for our family. During the day we kayaked between towering limestone spires, drifted slowly thru sea caves, and visited floating fishing villages where kids grow up rowing, attend floating school, and rarely walk on the ground. Later, we took a sleeper train north to Sapa, where we trekked thru villages populated by Flower Hmong, Xiao, and many other tribes. Each group has its own traditional garb, making an incredibly exotic scene – especially on market days. After Vietnam, Dan continued to India for a conference, while the rest of the family returned to Seattle.





Other highlights include a week canoeing the Green River in Utah, through Canyonlands National Park, with our friends the Cummings. In June, Margaret's sister's family and her parents visited for a week; we went to Orcas Island, Rainier and hiked the desolation of St. Helen's northern slopes. In August we visited Dan's family on St. Regis Lake in the Adirondacks and climbed to the windy heights of Cascade Mt. Another highlight of our summer was having our Dutch friend Harm Tiddens along with his wife and daughters stay with us for a week. We sipped wine on the dock while the kids jumped on the water trampoline, then moved inside for fine Italian fare cooked by Harm's wife Rosaria – a rough life!



The kids have had a good year. Leah made advanced blue-belt at her Karate school and loves being on the Girls' Demo Team with her friend Katy. Doll-play in imaginary worlds is still her favorite recreational activity.



Adam and Galen are in 6th grade and thriving, though they miss several friends who have switched to other schools. Both love Ultimate Frisbee, and spent time at Dancing Coyote, a sleep-away camp in the Cascades, this summer. They are fanatical about remote control boats, planes and other vehicles, as well as "modding" Nerf guns so they can shoot farther and faster. Adam has started playing the guitar and adores his "cool" teacher; he loves disassembling electromechanical



devices and is in danger of becoming an engineer. Galen climbed his 3rd and 4th of Washington's hundred highest mountains in a great trip alone with Dan. The duo also swam and rappelled the north fork canyon of the Snoqualmie River.

Margaret continues to be overcommitted at work, somehow feeling like maybe she should have earned an advanced degree in juggling. But she still feels privileged to work with the great colleagues and collaborators that she has both at Children's Hospital and around the country.



Dan's work is stimulating and too busy. His latest project is "Making Wikipedia smarter." Dan still loves mountain climbing, but is increasingly addicted to technical canyoneering. Besides trips in the Cascades, he spent a week in Utah exploring slot canyons near the Escalante river.

The two newest members of our family are Rune and Sahara, our well-loved and endlessly playful kittens.

We wish everyone a happy new year with good health for family and friends. And we hope 2008 will bring progress for peace and environmental stewardship. Please come visit us in Seattle; our guest suite is too empty!



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