

Mark & Sue

Another year has gone by and it's time for Christmas letters. How the time flies by as we get older! We're in our 22nd year of living in our modest little house here in Gig Harbor. We are all still as healthy as can be expected, considering that 2 of us are over 50 now. Age is slowing us down a little here and there, but nothing too serious.

Sue and I did quite a lot of bicycle riding this summer, both because we were a car short for a while, and because Sue bought a mountain bicycle.

In August we sold our aging minivan. During the three weeks it took to replace it, I found commuting to work by bus and bicycle surprisingly enjoyable. One memorable day the bus was stuck in gridlock. I simply got off the bus and pedaled home in the sunshine past all the frustrated motorists.

Because the summer break from my teaching job didn't coordinate with the family school schedule,



Sue, Mark and Mark's mom & dad. We pedaled from our house to their church camp for a surprise visit



Mark, exercising behind our development

I spent a week baching it out of the back of our new pickup truck down on the northern California coast. In 7 days I was able to paint 5 paintings which now hang in a gallery in Olympia.

Despite the vacation complications, teaching

Clint

in a technical college is the best job I've ever had, beating printing hands down on all counts. Like any teaching job, I spend a lot of unpaid hours at home creating lesson plans, but the pleasure they bring to the students makes it all worthwhile.

Clint graduated from high school this summer with a 3.8 average for the entire 4 years. He just finished his first quarter at TCC and

was pleased to find he can easily maintain his high standards in college as well. He is aiming at being a radiologist or a PA, although that may change. For now, he is taking preparatory classes like math and English to get those out of the way.

He finished his kayak in May and has put it to good use, going out every couple of weeks as time and weather allow. He has an amazing ability to cover long distances in a short period of time... something about big arms and a long waterline.

After graduating from high school Clint and two buddies took a one month road trip touring all the skate parks in the country, sleeping in the back of his pickup truck. We worried a bit, knowing he'd



Clint and his home built Pygmy kayak



Clint and his buddy Craig at high school graduation

never done that much driving, not to mention the dangerous nature of BMX riding. Still, he had a grand adventure: fulfilling a childhood dream.

We were surprised to

Lisa

hear they enjoyed seeing all the beautiful scenery as much as the great riding. We're hoping next time he calls home more than once a month.

Lisa has been working at a dry cleaners 4 days a week for almost 6 months now, trying to save up for a used car.

She doesn't particularly love the job, but considers herself lucky to be working at all since many of her friends were unable to find after school jobs.

Because we've lived here her entire life, she has a lot of friends...the poor ringer on the phone is wearing out.

She is doing great in school, no doubt inspired by her big brother who got a free two year college tuition based on his academic record. We are pleased to see the kids taking education so seriously, unlike their vagabond dad...or perhaps because of. They've seen the price I paid from not taking my studies seriously in high school.

Lisa (and Sue) went climbing half a dozen times this year. She seems to be a natural climber and does well even on the high cliffs. Lisa experienced her first epic while climbing a 400 foot cliff in Leavenworth.



Lisa climbing on Castle Rock near Leavenworth



Lisa & a friend at the high school prom

The rope got stuck in a crack and neither Sue nor I could easily reach her to help pull the rope free. Some friendly nearby climbers came to the rescue.

My dream of living off my muse is still with me, although life forces it to take a back seat much of the time. I was lucky to be asked to teach drawing twice this last year at the college. Sharing my love for drawing, and creativity in general with the students helps to keep my muse alive.

The class forces me to draw even when I don't want to, and I've come up with some keepers while simply preparing for the next days lecture. Love that class!



Lesson plan for my drawing class

One great benefit of teaching is all the time off. We get seven weeks off a year, with 4 of them during the late summer/fall break.

I take advantage of these breaks to work on my freelance web design projects, and when those are done, I go painting.

For Christmas presents this year I created a twelve month calendar from scratch, featuring one of my paintings on each of the 12 months.

I was able to make them quite professional due to the software I've learned in the course of teaching at the college.

In the last week before Christmas I found I could get the calendars printed at one of my old print shops for only \$7 each. This opens up the possibility of selling them



Painted in Trinidad, California on my vacation.

in local gift shops.

One of my dreams as a pressman was to finally get good enough at computers to bring in a high quality job to print, instead of simply being the blue collar pressman printing other designers jobs. I could tell my old boss was very impressed with my design skills as he wrote up the job order for my calendars.

In the words of Tony Curtis: *"I'd like to live my life so completely that when the grim reaper creeps into my house like a thief in the night, there will be nothing left for him to steal."*



Father and son beginning an epic 9 mile crossing of Puget Sound...Note: windsurfers don't paddle well



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Merry Christmas
from
the Webster's

