

Seasons Greetings

from the entire Arnold Family

Dear Friends,

We apologize for missing last year with our annual letter. Too much has happened, most near the end of 1999.

This has been quite a time for the Arnold family. Once again our world has changed more than we expected and faster; some for what we perceive to be good and others not so good.

With all of our parents now gone, Dru and Hap are still getting used to the idea of being orphans. While time passes, there are still all those emotions and problems to deal with.

We are still so very lucky and we all know it.

The Arnolds have been in our new house now for 5 1/2 years. The travel trailer has moved to Bill and Joanne Bernard's. Never has a trailer had such an easy life. I think in the six years or so we had it, it got slept in maybe 10 people nights, never an entire night by our family. Our steel building, known in our family as Hangar One, is filling nicely. The Old Man (42 Chevy pickup) is down being re-done. We still haven't gotten a roof on the BBQ area, maybe next year.

Young Jackson is now just over eight and wears a size fourteen. He is a big Third Grader, homeschooling, having dropped out of school in First Grade. He hasn't grasped that math is fun, but he has grasped if he pays attention to it, he can go on to history or reading or writing or anything else for that matter. He is still growing by leaps and bounds, not only physically, but spiritually and mentally. He is so amazing, there are no end to Jack stories. He is concentrating on being God's Buddy, something we all need to do more of.

William managed to get through his Senior year of High School and is at San Diego State University as a Criminal Justice Major. He finally finished his Private Pilot License, but hasn't flown much since. Part of that is due to the Cessna being without an engine since he got his license. He thinks he wants to be a Highway Patrolman, but isn't completely sure. He is working at the office with his dad. Though he is huge, he is still the Rodo and is really a wonderful fellow.

Dru has continued in her full employment as a nurse for Hap and taking care of Jack and William. She is now Jack's Third Grade teacher, another full time job. With Jack going to school at home, we quit supporting Smart and Final with their wholesale rates on cupcake mix and those cute little cups.

Hap has medically retired from the Guard. The Air Force system was very disheartening; the treatment in no way honorable. While support from his unit, his former Wing Commander, Medical Commander, the Commander of USAFE and several congressmen made it all come out close to right in the end, the entire operation left a bad taste in the mouth. Perhaps there will be a change in the future. At least the Guard stands by their people.

Physically Hap is doing very well. He still has nerve damage, walks like a penguin and all the rest, but he is here with us. We are all happy that we are together more. He is flying and happy about that.

For years Jack asked if we had deer for pets, before we had squirrels. Now we have a cat, Angelina Catalina, Angie Cat, or AC. And, we finally have our garage back from the various rodents. The various and assorted fabric based life-forms who in outward appearance vaguely resemble different species, but are all rodents at heart, as in pigrat, sharkrat, tigerrat and even the occasional rat-rat, still form our main family unit augmentation.

We got a chance to go on a family vacation twice last year, for the first time in six years, none this year. We decided we really liked it and think we won't wait so long for the next one. In August, we all went to Hawaii. We spent the entire time on Oahu. I know many world travelers look down on it as too touristy, but we had a great time. Pretty funny to see the great hulking Rodo in the back of a Mustang convertible; the boys loved the little red car. We had a great time snorkeling in Haunama Bay, driving around Diamond Head's crater, exploring all the airfields and looking back to their activities.

We don't think you can go to the USS Arizona Memorial, see the film and then go out to her without being affected. Between that and the drive around Ford Island, we were continuously talking about Great Uncle Jack

and Aunt Muriel and what it had been like on 7 December 1941. We all owe our predecessors for our freedom and in our family we don't have far to look.

The first week in December, we, William excepted, went to Orlando. The Disney World complex is really amazing. Hap and Dru liked Epcot and the train, Jack loved MGM Studios. We had a great visit to Cape Canaveral, saw a Shuttle on the pad. Gatorland was like we imagine TW Cook's place. The high point of the trip really was Green Meadows farm, where we were the only ones there for about two hours and Jack got to hold every farm animal known to man.

Probably the high point of fun for the past two years was 11 September 2000. We spent the day aboard CONSTELLATION CVA-64. Our San Diego office's Shamim Gray's husband Obra, an S-3 pilot, is her Strike Ops Officer. They brought us aboard for the Family Day Cruise off the coast. Unbelievable! Hap spent a week aboard ORISKANY CVA-34 in 1966, most of the time on the LSO Platform. He says this was better. Air Force people, get this: They closed off the starboard half of the flight deck and conducted Flight Ops on port half! We were positioned just about even with the rollout point from the Number Three wire. They did four evolutions (take offs and landings) with two Hornets, a Tomcat and an S-3. The S-3 wingtip was about twenty feet from our heads when she stopped. Obra was an excellent host. We had an unbelievable time and have pictures to prove it.

The big news for Brother Bruce and wife Lorena is Lorena is out of the pewter importing business, Ante Gifts was sold. They have completely remodeled their backyard, quite impressive. Their daughter, Megan, is doing quite well at kindergarten and is taking up more and more of their time. They seem to be surprised at the time, but pleased. Once again we had Thanksgiving at their home, it is a beautiful place and the food was wonderful.

Brother Tuck, wife Robie and daughter Alison moved across the street into the old family home. They now have the same address as their horses. Brother Tuck is now an active member of the El Cajon Mounted Police and really enjoys it. Tuck was the Chairman for last year's Los Senderos annual ride, no small honor, and no small amount of work, and is now the Vice President of the Club. Robie's job teaching Art at Valhalla High School seems to be even more enjoyable as the years go by. Ali is growing to be quite a young lady and enjoying school.

After years of doom and gloom predictions, sister Jacquie lost her radio station job in Oakland. In no time at all she landed a far better sales and marketing position and seems to be very pleased. Her calls are certainly less stressful than when she was at the radio station. Her very good friend and roommate Becky passed away this year, which was a great stress for her. We think Jacquie will probably make it down for Christmas this year. It will be great to see her.

Last year just when our excellent friends from the RAF, Bob and Kay Denton, were to come on their tenth annual visit, Kay became very ill. She got better, but as she was coming out of the hospital, Bob was hospitalized for a heart condition and died days later. This was a terrible shock to all of us, Bob has been one of our family's best friends since the day we met. His passing has been felt by all who knew him, both in the UK and here in California. Kay has moved back to their old home area in York. We are hoping to get to see her after the first of the year.

The Aviation and Marine insurance adjusting and accident investigation business is doing well, we have seven offices now, San Diego, Long Beach, Phoenix, Flagstaff, San Francisco, Honolulu and Portland. Office travel has been very light for Hap, just one trip Portland in August, one to San Francisco in December and the annual OFA meeting, this time in Albuquerque, New Mexico for the Balloon Festival.

Alan Ridenour, from our San Diego office, made a trip to the Alameda office in the fall. He had some spare time and got a chance to tour HORNET CVA-12 tied up at the now closed NAS Alameda. Alan brought home a hat and patch for Jack, he was thrilled as Uncle Jack commanded her VT-2 and then was her Air Group Commander from Iwo Jima on.

The Aztec is doing very well. She is just about up to speed after two and a half years of living with us. With almost eight hours range, she goes further than we do. We flew her to Albuquerque, with a block time about 30 minutes less than Southwest. The Cessna 150 is getting a new engine and real radios, but hasn't flown in about a year. Hopefully, the new 150 hp engine will be worth the wait and William will renew his interest in flying.

Those of you who have sent us your holiday letter, thanks! We really enjoy them, it is great to know what our friends are doing. For those of you who don't send them, start!

This past two years, more than any year in the past, it has been made clear how lucky we are. We have been blessed with health in soul, mind and body. Those of our family here on earth are all healthy and extremely happy. Once again, we have concrete evidence of just how kind God has been to us this year. As we look over our Christmas list, we think of our friends, some we have seen, most whom we have not. We think of years gone by, time spent together. We wish we could have spent more time together. We wish you all a very happy and joyous holiday season. May God be with you as He has made so clear He is with us.

Best wishes and Love, Dru, Hap/Bill, William & Jackson, Mr. O, Fred and the rest of the Buddies

PS: We now have our own e-mail server at the office. If you would like to communicate via e-mail with us:

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