

Seasons Greetings

from the entire Arnold Family

Dear Friends,

Before we start our letter, we ask your prayers for the members of our Armed Forces protecting our freedom, at great cost to themselves and their families. God bless the soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, coastguardsmen and contractors of our country and their families.

This has been quite a year. Everything considered, this has been an excellent year for the Arnold Family of Descanso. There have been a few low points, but we seem to be finishing the year in better shape than we started. We spent some time recovering from the aftermath of last years fires in the area, clearing even more brush and the like. One thing has not changed, we are still so very blessed and we all know it.

Aunt Muriel passed away on 19 February 2004 after 89 years here on earth. We had a small party for her birthday a few weeks earlier and Uncle Jack and Aunt Muriel's 62nd anniversary. Even though she had been down for more than a year after her hip broke and all the resultant complications, she is no less missed by Uncle Jack and the family. After almost two years of visiting Uncle Jack five times a week, we are back to Hap on Wednesdays and Hap, Dru and Jack on Sundays. Uncle Jack is doing pretty well, though he would be even better if he would walk more.

The Silver Tipped Grizzlies (mostly retired Air Guard people) have been getting together now for a couple of years the third Saturday of each month at a local airport for breakfast. They call it breakfast, but Jack and Hap mostly eat hamburgers. It has been quite fun, Jack put together a website: <http://www.grzly.org>. Take a look and see what we have been up to. Better yet, join us. If you want to get on the mailing list, send a note to cmac@grzly.org.

This summer brought a shock. Long time friend, superb pilot, commander and father, Grizzly Pilot Jay Van Pelt passed away. Jay's family knows more than anyone how much he will be missed. No one can forget Jay's insightful analysis, "Life is tough. Its even tougher if you are stupid." Jay was a wonderful fellow.

Jon Proehl invited us to the Reno Air Races this year. We weren't going to go, but Jon said there were two German F-4s coming and they would fly. After Jon promised he would get Jack a chance to sit in the front seat, we accepted the offer. Just as we were getting ready to take off, Jon told us if we could make it by 1400, we could meet Dick Cheney. Oh yes, and if we got there after 1430, the field was closed. We landed at 1429, the field closed behind us like a zipper. We did not get to meet Dick Cheney, but we did see him and got to look at Air Force Two. Long story short, Jon was a wonderful host, we had a great time, had a wonderful time with him and his lovely family. We were joined by Milty for dinner and home we went. And the F-4s? Jon forgot to talk to them, but gave us his cell phone if we had a problem. In fairness to Jon, he is now the Wing Commander and did take time to give us a tour of the Air Races and bring us to Race Control. It seems Hap had helped convert German WSO's base from F-104s to Phantoms, so we didn't have to call Jon's cell phone. The static display jet was out of canopy air, so Jack got to sit in the jet that just did the flyby. The German crew turned out to be the German Air Force Fighter Weapons Commander and Ops Officer, Bernd and Mad Uek. Wonderful fellows, they gave Jack a thorough front cockpit checkout, even let him turn on the master switch and check the fuel. They are welcome at our home any day. What about the American crew that was with them? Hard to say, they didn't have time to talk to an old retired guy and his kid. If Reno wasn't enough fun, as we were walking (Hap hobbling) along the Flight Line, who pulls up in a golf cart with a cheerful, "Would you like a ride, sir?" Marvelous Marv Rogge. Marv gave us a super tour, there is no one in Nevada Marv doesn't know.

Sad trip back from Reno, though. Grizzly WSO Doug Corbett passed away and we moved the Grizzly Fly-In to Apple Valley. Cmac drove up and we went to Doug's funeral. Doug was a quiet guy who loved his family and did a fantastic job at the Guard. He was also a darn good WSO. Hap loved to fly with him. Doug never got worked up, he always had the numbers. He was a fine fellow.

No family vacation this year, but lot of trips this year as Hap, Dru and Jack took the Aztec to the Organization of Flying Adjusters (OFA) annual meeting at the end of September, first of October 2004. We were supposed to go to Carlsbad Caverns on the way for a vacation. There was a big overhang from Hurricane Ivan dumping rain on the cavern area, so we went to Lake Powell instead to look at a bent boat for Hap's work. We got to meet Gary Anderson and his lovely wife Cathy for dinner. Powell is beautiful, the lodge is wonderful and Gary and Cathy are even nicer. We left Powell for beautiful Enid, Oklahoma. On the way we flew over Rainbow Bridge and Monument Valley, past Shiprock and Durango, over the Continental Divide near Taos, New Mexico and in to Enid. There we met up with Ryan Cardin, eldest son of Ron and Kathy Cardin, who introduced Hap and Dru and were as Hap says, second best couple at their wedding. Ryan is going to USAF Flight School at Vance, AFB. He just finished Tweets and is flying the T-1A. Ryan was a super host, we got a tour of the flightline and his squadron, then dinner. Hard to say who had the best time there, Jack or Hap. Either way, it was fun. The airport at Enid was very friendly, no tiedown charges, cheap gas and a fun model museum. After Enid, on to Overland Park, Kansas to meet some business friends of Hap's. While they had been talking for years they had never met. We all got to meet Paul Martin and his family, Adam Martz and his wife and Brandie Daugherty. It was a wonderful time, we found people we thought would be nice, were way way nicer in person and we just did not want to leave them. While were were there, the Maine Men, Al Ryan and Jim Cobb came in accompanied by the new OFA Newsletter publisher Hope Alexander. We all had a wonderful lunch together.

We all met again for dinner at Pierponts, a posh steakhouse in the old ATSF Terminal, "Just like Hogwarts!" in Jack's words. And it was.

After Overland Park, we took off for St. Louis and the OFA Annual Meeting. There we met up with Paul, Adam, the Maine Men, Hope and all the rest of our OFA family. The Coogan family put on this year's meeting. The meeting was officially done by Conference and Program Chairmen Bernie and Chad Coogan. Let it be known by all that without Rebecca, Bernie's daughter, his wife Joann and Chad's wife Michelle, Bernie and Chad would think deep kimchee was a pleasant fate. With Rebecca, all went close to perfect. This was the best run annual meeting on record. As always, it was wonderful to meet with all our friends. We only see most of them once a year, but they are great people. The Coogans are among the nicest people on the face of this earth. They don't get any better than Bernie, Joann and their family. Thanks.

After our evacuation due to the fires last year, the Arnolds bought a fire truck. Hap and Jack picked up our 1968 Ford F-850 Western States Fire Truck on Memorial Day weekend in Adair, Oregon and drove it home. Mr. F-850 is in great shape, everything works and he pumps like crazy. But, once he got here, there was no room inside for Hap's car or Dru's truck. So, up went Hangar Two. Finished just before Thanksgiving, everyone can park inside now.

This year at the Jacks' birthday, Little Jack was 12 and Big Jack was 92. Next year, we may have to change names as we think Little Jack will be bigger than Big Jack.

Jack is now between sixth and seventh grade. He is working at the office with Hap on Thursdays and Fridays, he has a Art/History class on Tuesdays and Social Skills Group on Friday night. His schoolwork is coming along well. He no longer fights the math and now it just flows into him. Dru is learning a lot of math she never quite got also. Nelson, the former Thursday night Chief Acolyte, is back from Desert Two, having spent a year in Kuwait and Iraqi. Though Nelson is back, he has turned over the Chief Acolyte job to Jack. With the Episcopal Church of the USA in freefall towards the fellow with red horns, the Church of Christ the King is a refreshing island in a sea of effluent. God willing, it will stay that way. We assume with the new election of a heretic to the San Diego Bishop office, the final battle may be soon rather than later.

We have not heard much of William. Last heard he was building dune buggies. Please pray for him.

Brother Bruce and wife Lorena finally finished the rework of their already lovely home's interior and back yard. Their daughter, Megan, is doing quite well at La Jolla Country Day School. Once again we had Thanksgiving at their home, it is a beautiful place and the food was wonderful. This year we had Uncle Jack join us as usual, but most of Lorena's family were out of town. It was a great time to be together, but we missed her family.

Brother Tuck, wife Robie and daughter Alison keep working on their house. It is really looking super. This year Brother Tuck finished his POST requirements (for now) for the El Cajon Mounted Police. His horse is one of the top police horses in the state. Robie's job teaching Art at Valhalla High School seems to be even more enjoyable as the years go by. Ali is doing very well in school and sports.

Mrs. Kay Denton, our excellent friend from York, in the UK, is not doing too well. She has been in and out of the hospital. She has neck deterioration problems, in addition to the heart and kidney problems which require her to undergo dialysis. Her son Paul and his family, Emma, Jack and Eve now live in Australia, your prayers are appreciated.

Once again, on the Friday after Thanksgiving, Hap and Jack went shooting with Butch Hadzima and son in law Bryce Shields. They had a great time. Jack is an ace with his CAR-15 and is looking forward to delivery of his M1917, just like Grandpa AC's.

Unless it rains, we are going on a Jeep ride this New Year's Day. 1030 Show for an 1100 Go. About 1500 we should be back to BBQ some dead mammal. If you are what passes for local and have a 4WD, come join us. If you do not have a 4WD but want to go, we have spare seats!

Please keep our family members in your prayers –Mrs. Kay, Jack Arnold and William Arnold

As we prepare to celebrate the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ, we look back over the past year. It is so clear how blessed 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, and a few no longer on the list. We think of years gone by, time spent together. We wish we could have spent more time together. May God be with you as He has made so clear He is with us.

Best wishes and Love, Dru, Hap/Bill & Jackson, Mr. O, and all the Buddies

PS: If you would like to communicate with us: Telephone (619) 659-3608 or

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