



# Fifteenth Annual Granger Holiday Newsletter



## CURRENTS

**Half our life is spent trying to find something to do with the time we have rushed through life trying to save. -**

Will Rogers (1879 - 1935)

**H**appy holidays from the Grangers! Like most years in recent memory, this one seemed to go by in a heart beat. But when we stop and think about it, it's been a pretty full year for us and everyone we know.

A major highlight was our high school reunions, which took place in late summer about a month apart. We've been out of high school long enough to want to forget how long it's been, but suffice to say that our reunions are now 5 years apart instead of 10. John helped out on the organizing committee this year, as in 1999. It was a challenge tracking down old classmates, but a labor of love nonetheless. The reward was seeing over 100 faces from the past, some of whom we hadn't seen in over 25 years! Our class is planning to go all-out in 2009, with a 3-day ocean cruise.

### Milestones

Sister Carol discovered a lost love, Michael Shields, and moved back to Richmond, VA in September with nephew Dylan. They are adapting well but we miss them. Carol and Michael plan to wed in March 2005 in Williamsburg, VA.

John's Mom moved in with sister Alisa and John. She is in hog heaven, helping Alisa with her home-based child care business named "Little Ones" (they preferred "Little Monsters", but thought it lacked marketing potential). Nephew Garrett has taken a respite from the academic life and is enjoying his new career as project inspector working for Caltrans.

Sister Laurel and Luis hosted several family get-togethers and vacationed in Vancouver. Nephew Gary is a service manager at The Belmont and The Spanish Kitchen restaurants in West Hollywood. He enjoys his job immensely whenever he's not exhausted, which is most of the time. If you're near 747 N. La Cienega, look him up at The Belmont.

We donated a computer to 12-year old niece Windi last spring to begin her geek-ification. She learned PowerPoint on her own and delivered her first class presentation at school last month. Nephew Andy is a budding artist who, with his love of drawing, is poised to learn computer graphics and become a first-class nerd by age 10. Niece Roxy turned 17 in



*Novie, our cat of 18 years.*

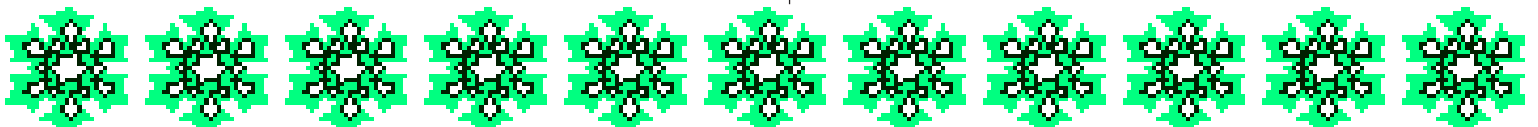
in July and is in her senior year of high school. She is living in Apple Valley and taken a part-time job with a veterinarian, and also manages the inventory at a super-market. We visited Hollywood the weekend before Oscar night last February and ran into a couple of old friends...

Niece Amber is living in the San Diego area and recently started a new career as a bank loan processor. Fashion design is her first love, and it's a nice balance to have a steady job and a dream job. Niece Mara is living in Sherman Oaks, working full time as a licensed masseuse in the shadow of Hollywood. She is continuing to position herself for a career in show business - maybe 2005 will be her year!

Ma and Woody entered the computer age this year and have enjoyed using e-mail, although they're still a bit wary of the Internet. They particularly enjoy receiving digital



*Karen & Roxy meet the dynamic duo. You never know who you'll run into on the eve of the Academy Awards!*





*The Spectre of Raider Defeat, with friend Amy, has a 2-0 record on Halloween when the Chargers play the Raiders.*

photos from family members and the occasional good, clean joke. Drop 'em a line at [DotWoody04@aol.com](mailto:DotWoody04@aol.com).

Karen and Ma visited brother Ken and Barb in Seattle for a week in November. Ken has been seriously ill but has never lost his wonderful sense of humor. On his road to recovery he has continuously been in our thoughts and prayers.

Nephew Brian and wife Carla have given the family a spanking new nephew, named Nicholas. Congratulations!

We lost a close family member in March. Nouvie, our cat of 18 years, lived a long and full life. We miss him, and he will always be in our hearts.



*Karen with Linda, brother Art, great nieces Brianna and Maranda, and their mother, niece Adria.*

## S P O R T S

**All things fail and are built again, and those that build them again, are fulfilled.** - Yates

The year 2004 has seen the resurgence of not one but two of San Diego's major sports teams. The Padres move to Petco Park has created an electric atmosphere downtown. The Gaslamp Quarter is abuzz, and management has given the fans a team to be proud of. Although they didn't make the playoffs, our Pads were nipping the heels of L.A. and S.F. at the end of the season and gave us a promising glimpse of things to come.

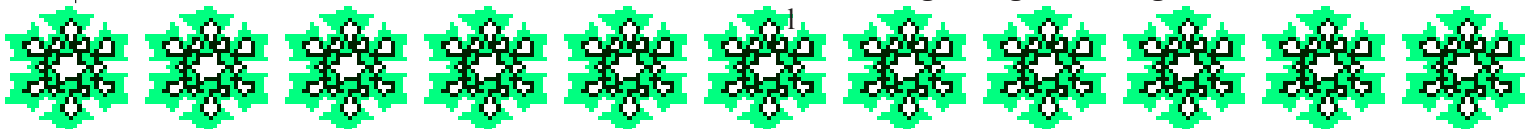
And while Padres fans are still swooning over the team's success, we Chargers faithful are absolutely delirious with the unexpected turnaround of our beloved Bolts. After wandering the NFL football desert for nearly 10 years, it appears that the Promised Land is finally within sight! At 10 - 3, the brilliant Boltz are poised to claim their first AFC West title since 1994. While noted Las Vegas sports bar denizen and closet Bolthead Pablo Nogatoches still believes it may only be a cruel mirage, all we want for Christmas are our Chargers PLAYOFF TICKETS!!!

## T R A V E L

**I once wanted to become an atheist, but I gave up - they have no holidays.** - Henny Youngman (1906 - 1998)

In March we decided to drive rather than fly to Lake Tahoe and spent a week skiing at Heavenly Valley and nearby resorts. The scenery was spectacular, the pace leisurely, and perhaps best of all, we were miles away from the nearest airport security checkpoint. Our condo at The Ridge Tahoe featured a private sauna and steam bath, with a living room large enough to host a soccer game. On the return trip, we stopped to visit Karen's brother Art's family in Sacramento, then headed down the coast to Carmel where we stayed at the seaside Hyatt for \$35 a night. Say what?! We subjected ourselves to yet another timeshare presentation and got a real bargain. After sitting through a few of these things, we've learned a lot about how they work while finding creative ways to say "No" and come away with the goodies.

The next day we took a leisurely drive down the coast past Big Sur, averaging 10 mph since we kept stopping to take pictures of the magnificent coastline. Further south, we witnessed hundreds of elephant seals lounging on the beach. It was obviously mating season, as many were enjoying an apres cigarette. That evening we paid homage to our Viking heritage in Solvang...







*Karen and friends at a museum of contemporary art in Carmel, CA*

We celebrated the 4th of July in Kauai. For something different, we decided on all all-day group expedition through the hinterlands of the island (which make up roughly 80% of it). After kayaking downriver for an hour through primeval looking jungle, the group was thoroughly soaked from splashing each other silly. We dried off by taking a short overland hike to a waiting tractor trailer, which ferried us through ranchland - with a stop to feed wild pigs - and past memorable locations used in Jurassic Park and Raiders of the Lost Ark.

After having lunch by a waterfall, we strapped ourselves in to a harness and flew 50 feet above the jungle on a zip line, kind of like skydiving while attached to a high wire. Amazingly, nobody in the group lost their lunch. Finally, we were taken to a large pool surrounded by waterfalls and huge banyan trees. Peter Pan would have felt right at home here. Rocketing 25 feet over the pool on a long rope swing allowed us to indulge our Lord-of-the-Jungle fantasies...

A trip to Italy in late spring 2005 is in the planning stages. Karen has always wanted to visit the art and architecture of old Europe. John would like to see if the graffiti he wrote on Nero's subterranean bathroom wall back in '75 is still there.

**BUSINESS**

**Time is an illusion. Lunchtime doubly so.**  
 - Douglas Adams (Author - The Restaurant at the End of the Universe)

Economically speaking, 2004 was a kinder, gentler year than 2003. Based on conversations with classmates at our reunions, everyone's stocks are doing well, but not quite well enough to retire, so we still work.

John's system engineering and training development experience at Staefa and Stellcom have paid off in the new job at Cubic Transportation Systems. If you've ever ridden a subway train or taken a bus in a large U.S. city, you've probably used Cubic equipment - unless of course you prefer to hop the turnstiles.

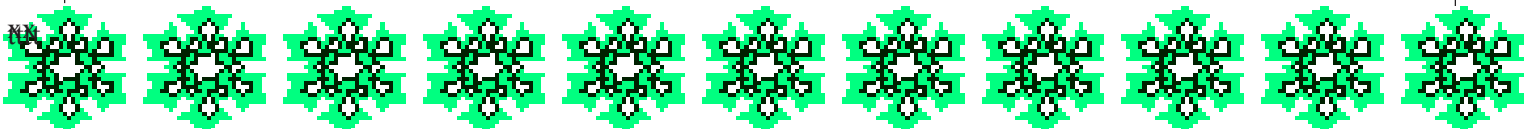
After writing the system manuals and course material for Cubic's new Nextfare computer system, John travelled to the garden spots of North America to deliver training courses to Cubic customers in Edmonton, Minneapolis, and Baltimore.

Karen has been enjoying semi-retirement but is thinking about re-entering the work force. Although she's still exploring alternatives, she'll make some lucky employer very happy. When you have as many talents as she has, the most difficult decision is deciding where to invest them.

Finally, a small world story: we learned recently that we now have two degrees of separation from a billionaire with a bad hair-do. Kelly Perdew, one of the contestants on The Apprentice, recently won the contest for the right to run a business with The Donald's guidance. John worked with Kelly, a Layoff Lounge co-founder, while managing networking events in San Diego back in '01.



*Elephant seals let it all hang out at beach near San Luis Obispo.*



## PERSONALS

**The years forever fashion new dreams when old ones go. God pity a one-dream man.** - Bob Goddard

As always, we welcome this time of year for the opportunity it brings to reflect on our blessings and renew contact with those who mean so much to us. We hope this letter finds you well and smiling, and we wish you the best for a happy and prosperous 2005. If you get a moment, why don't you drop us a line to let us know how you're doing?

### Internet Addresses

Family Web Site <http://www.jkgranger.com>

John's email: [jgranger@san.rr.com](mailto:jgranger@san.rr.com)

Karen's email: [kgranger@san.rr.com](mailto:kgranger@san.rr.com)

### SANTA CLAUS: An Engineer's Perspective

There are approximately two billion children (persons under 18) in the Buddhist religions, this reduces the workload for Christmas night to 15% of the total, or 378 million (according to the Population Reference Bureau). At an average (census) rate of 3.5 children per household, that comes to 108 million homes, presuming that there is at least one good child in each.

Santa has about 31 hours of Christmas to work with, thanks to the different time zones and the rotation of the earth, assuming he travels east to west (which seems logical). This works out to 967.7 visits per second. This is to say that for each Christian household with a good child, Santa has around 1/1000th of a second to park the sleigh, hop out, jump down the chimney, fill the stockings, distribute the remaining presents under the tree, eat whatever snacks have been left for him, get back up the chimney, jump into the sleigh and get on to the next house.

Assuming that each of these 108 million stops is evenly distributed around the earth (which, of course, we know to be false, but will accept for the purposes of our calculations), we are now talking about 0.78 miles per household; a total trip of 75.5 million miles, not counting bathroom stops or breaks. This means Santa's sleigh is moving at 650 miles per second — 3,000 times the speed of sound. For purposes of comparison, the fastest man-made vehicle, the Ulysses space probe, moves at a poky 27.4 miles per second, and a conventional reindeer can run (at best) 15 miles per hour.

The payload of the sleigh adds another interesting element.

Assuming that each child gets nothing more than a medium sized Lego set (two pounds), the sleigh is carrying over 500 thousand tons, not counting Santa himself. On land, a conventional reindeer can pull no more than 300 pounds. Even granting that the "flying" reindeer could pull ten times the normal amount, the job can't be done with eight or even nine of them — Santa would need 360,000 of them. This increases the payload, not counting the weight of the sleigh, another 54,000 tons, or roughly seven times the weight of the Queen Elizabeth (the ship, not the monarch).

600,000 tons traveling at 650 miles per second creates enormous air resistance — this would heat up the reindeer in the same fashion as a spacecraft re-entering the earth's atmosphere. The lead pair of reindeer would absorb 14.3 quintillion joules of energy per second each. In short, they would burst into flames almost instantaneously, exposing the reindeer behind them and creating deafening sonic booms in their wake. The entire reindeer team would be vaporized within 4.26 thousandths of a second, or right about the time Santa reached the fifth house on his trip. Not that it matters, however, since Santa, as a result of accelerating from a dead stop to 650 m.p.s. in .001 seconds, would be subjected to centrifugal forces of 17,500 g's. A 250 pound Santa (which seems ludicrously slim) would be pinned to the back of the sleigh by 4,315,015 pounds of force, instantly crushing his bones and organs and reducing him to a quivering blob of pink goo.

But as we all know, legends such as Santa are immune from the laws of physics...  
- Anonymous

