



Seventeenth Annual Granger Holiday Newsletter



CURRENTS

I like to reminisce with people I don't know.

— Steven Wright, Comedian

Happy holidays from the Grangers! Despite the long lines at the checkout counters, the crush of traffic, and the bewilderment that occurs when one realizes that yet another holiday season has arrived with the relentless intensity of Shawne Merriman closing in for a quarterback sack...we love this time of year! It has the familiar feeling of a favorite warm-up suit that has grown more comfortable with age, with links to warm memories of seasons past.

We especially enjoy the week after Christmas, which affords the opportunity to disengage the clutch, pause and reflect, and spend quality time with friends and family.

Milestones

The year began with a Paul McCartney concert in Anaheim. It was quite a thrill to finally see the legendary former Beatle perform, having grown up with his music.

Early in the year, John's sister Carol was diagnosed with breast cancer. She has met the challenge head-on and has been undergoing treatment for several months. Anyone who has gone through chemotherapy knows how exhausting it is. Her wonderful sense of humor and support from many friends and family members, including son Dylan, 13, have helped keep her strong.

It is a family tradition every year to get together on Mother's Day to see niece Windi and best friend Veronica perform in the Redlands YMCA Family Circus. Now 14, Windi has added a new routine to her performance repertoire. This act involves spinning at high speed while hanging perpendicular from a rope 20 feet above the ground (see the video on our Web site: www.jkgranger.com). This year, there were five generations in attendance: Dorothy, 85, Ruth Ann, 65, Cheryl, 44, Kristi, 21, and her baby daughter Leora.

We were saddened to learn in September that our old friend Dave Kellar had passed after a long illness. It's difficult to look out at San Diego harbor and not think of the many hours spent on the water in Dave's boat. We still chuckle when we recall Dave's antics - now legendary - on all those houseboat trips on Lake Mead during the 1980's. Dave lived life with gusto and good humor, and he will always be remembered for his unflinching friendship.



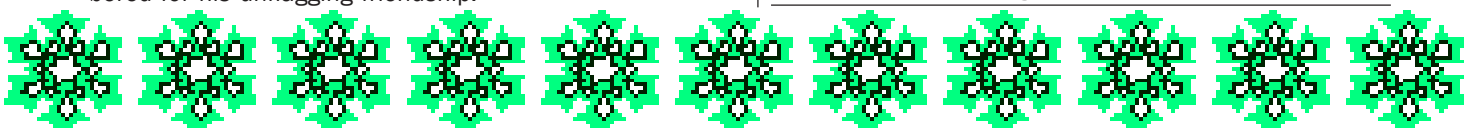
Five generations of family members attend the Circus.

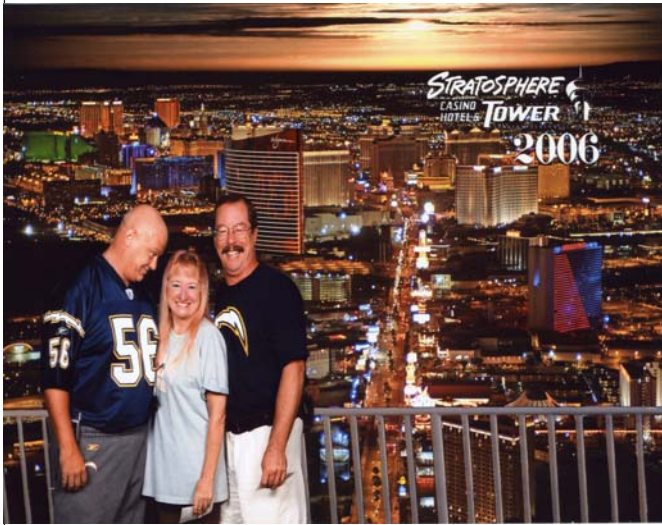
John's Mom Patti celebrated her 80th birthday on October 31st. Mom was feted with a banquet at Pechanga Casino, attended by many family and extended family members. We have been working together to produce a documentary based on early family pictures and home movies dating to the late 1940's. Our creation will be produced on several DVDs, in the documentary style of Ken Burns. This archaeological effort has involved analyzing over 500 photographs dating to 1890 to identify family members, often with the help of distant relatives. Anyone who has done genealogical research knows it can be as rewarding and exciting as it is tedious.

The newest members of the family are Rylan Kenneth Galley, born December 15th to nephew Kevin Galley and wife Kim, and Isabella Rose Galley, born December 9th to nephew Brian Galley and wife Carla. Congratulations!



Carol does her best to give Karen a scare on Halloween!





As Steve Martin once said, "comedy is not pretty". It's hard to take anything seriously in Las Vegas.

Nephew Garrett is working in the civil engineering biz as a contractor and concrete specialist for CalTrans, among others. In his spare time, he enjoys flying back east to follow his favorite band [Hate Breed](#), who he has seen in at least six states so far. If bands recognized their fans, Garrett should get some kind of medal.

Sister Alisa's day care business continues to boom to the point that she routinely must turn away new clients. Sister Laurel & husband Luis have invested in a small trailer and are having a ball camping in the local County and State parks on weekends.

Niece Mara traveled to Switzerland this month to visit a Swiss friend who she met while he was visiting Los Angeles. It's her first trip to Europe, and they are playing tourist in Switzerland and Italy. Nephew Gary is now managing four restaurants in West Los Angeles, among them [The Belmont](#) and [The Spanish Kitchen](#) on La Cienega. He manages a hectic social life when not running a catering business on the side. Niece Lindy is now substitute teaching while pursuing a masters degree in education. Daughter Angela is 6, and son Trey, 11, is an "A" student who also has a knack for finding the end zone as a running back. Nephew Andy, 9, is an avid hockey player whose coach says is "awesome". It may be that his diminutive size gives him a distinct tactical advantage as he scoots under opponents armpits en route to the goal.

For Thanksgiving this year, we decided to do something unusual. We met Ma and Woody at Agua Caliente, a desert campground about 45 minutes east of Julian in San Diego County. After the biggest meal of the year, it felt great to unwind by soaking in the natural hot springs.

S P O R T S

We all get heavier as we get older because there's more information in our heads.

— Vlade Divac, NBA basketball player

It's been a very special year to be a San Diego sports fan. Unaccustomed as we are to on-field success, it's hard to remember the last time both the Padres and Chargers won their respective divisions the same year. This highly unusual occurrence sent Las Vegas sports guru and football pundit Pablo Nogatoches scrambling for the Sports Almanac. The result? In no year has this happened – until now. While L.T. has been busy setting new NFL records each week, and nine members of this year's squad have been voted to the Pro Bowl, all we really want for Christmas is to see our beloved Bolts in the Super Bowl. As any football fan knows, the tantalizing prospect of your team's ultimate success is made all that much sweeter by its many prior years of futility.

Meanwhile, at Petco Park, we are sure that the Padres have a plan for their continued success. We're just not sure what it is at this point.

John continues to enjoy playing softball every Tuesday night at the [Sports Park](#) in Poway. Win or lose, the beer and camaraderie at each game's end are always satisfying.

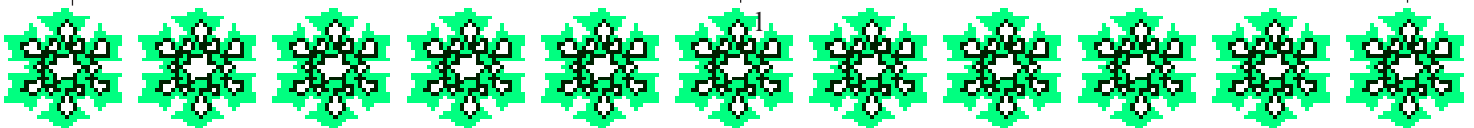
T R A V E L

Der Weg ist das Ziel (the way is the goal). Enjoy the present without always dreaming of a better future.

— German Proverb

In February, we swapped our Palm Springs timeshare for a week at the [Ridgecrest Resort](#) in South Lake Tahoe. We love the scenic drive up highway 395, especially the area north of Mammoth Lakes. In addition to the unusual spring-like skiing conditions, our good friend Tom Brotherton and his son Tommy stayed with us part of the time, making the trip even more enjoyable.

In May, we visited Kauai for another tour of paradise. We've been returning to our favorite island annually since 1998, drawn by its natural beauty and relaxed approach to life. We like to try different activities to make each trip memorable. This time, it was a tubing adventure down an aqueduct, dropping thousands of feet from the rain-soaked mountains to the sugarcane fields. As you float along with other tubers like so many peas in a pod, the water picks up speed as you enter one of several tunnels bored through hundreds of yards of lava rock. It gets very dark inside the tunnel (not recommended for claustrophobics). Just about





Neuschwanstein Castle in southern Bavaria

the time the entrance becomes a pinpoint of light in your rearview mirror, you come into the sunlight once again. This is an adventure we would enjoy doing again.

Germany and Austria

Long ago, we discovered that the best antidote to the post-vacation blahs is to immediately plan the next vacation. Following our own advice after returning from Italy last year, we exchanged our timeshare for a week at the [AlpenClub](#) in Bavaria, south of Munich – capital of Germany’s Oktoberfest.

If Germany is to beer what Italy is to wine, then Oktoberfest is regarded as the ultimate party destination for [beer lovers](#) worldwide. It has been one of Germany’s most revered traditions since King Ludwig I had a marriage party in 1810. It was such a success, they made it an annual bash. These days, Oktoberfest lasts 16 days, beginning on the third weekend in September and ending on the first full weekend in October. The festival begins with a parade of more than 6,000 participants and fills eight huge beer tents with about 6,000 people each. A million gallons of beer later, they roast the last ox.

On a whim, our two Chargers seatmates Craig & Amy joined us for the first week. In addition to the brats and beer, one of many highlights was a visit to Linderhof Palace near [Oberammergau](#), home of the Passion Play. The following week,

we drove through southern Germany to visit Neuschwanstein Castle, the Black Forest, the spas in Baden-Baden, and the well-preserved town of Rothenburg. We ended our fairytale journey in Vienna, home of Mozart, Strauss, and the world’s largest Ferris wheel. Here then, in a nutshell, is a 30-second highlight version of our trip:

Most Fun: [Oktoberfest](#), of course.

Most Beautiful: [Neuschwanstein Castle](#), model for Walt Disney’s Fantasyland Castle.

Best Food: A whole roasted chicken with sauerkraut, washed down with a liter of beer at Oktoberfest. It just doesn’t get any better than this!

Best Hospitality: It’s a tie between the hotel staffs of [Hotel am Markt](#) in [Baden-Baden](#) and [Gasthaus zum Lowen](#) in [Staufen](#). Service with a smile, and they go the extra mile.

Most Enchanting Town: [Rothenberg-ob-der-Tauber](#), still medieval after all these years.

Most Breathtaking Work of Art: Jewel-encrusted royal heirlooms at the [Residenz Palace](#), Munich.

Most Unusual: [Linderhof Palace](#), home of “Mad” King Ludwig of Bavaria in the mid-1800’s.

Most Unique: the [spas](#) at Baden-Baden re-define “relaxation”.

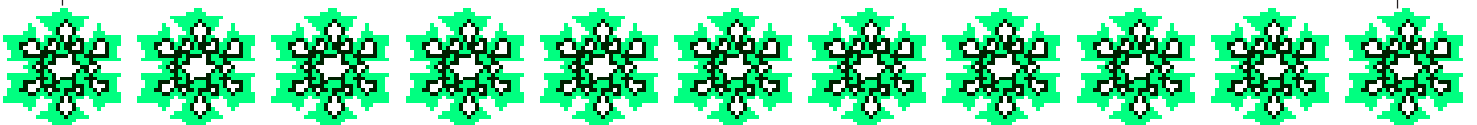
Biggest Surprise (wouldn’t want to repeat): learning to interpret the German road signs.

Best Serendipitous Moment: Having long conversations with complete strangers in restaurants.

Most Thrilling Moment: Moving into the fast lane on the autobahn.



Karen, Craig, and Amy learn to say “prost!” while in training for Oktoberfest.



Craziest Moment: Driving in a holding pattern in a traffic circle until we figure out which road to take. If you watched “National Lampoon’s European Vacation”, you know what we’re talking about.

For a more extensive virtual tour of southern Germany and Vienna, please help yourself to our trip diary and photo stories on our Web site: www.jkgranger.com.

BUSINESS

We’ve got to pause and ask ourselves: How much clean air do we need?

— Lee Iacocca, former Chairman of Chrysler Corporation

Career-wise, it’s been an eventful year. John traveled to Rockville, MD, Philadelphia, PA, and Washington, D.C. to conduct training classes for Cubic Transportation Systems. He managed to dodge bad weather before and after each trip. Cubic began downsizing in anticipation of an industry downturn. John learned in August that his position was affected by the ongoing reorganization. In September, he got a call from a former colleague at Stellcom who now heads her own staffing company with a job offer. So the day after returning from the Germany trip, John started his new job as senior instructional designer on a project involving the \$750M overhaul of San Diego County’s property tax system. Yeah, I know...for you fellow San Diegans, if I can find the Web page that controls your property tax data, you’ll be the first to know.

Karen is preparing to re-enter the work force after several years off for good behavior. She is planning to take courses starting in January to upgrade her computer skills, and is looking forward to getting back into the gym. With as many talents as she has, narrowing the scope of possibilities will be her biggest challenge. Working with numbers or children would be right up her alley.

We have kept up the [Career Management](http://www.jkgranger.com/work/career_management/career_mgmt.htm) page on our web site as a public service. If you’re considering a job or career change, or know someone who is, you may find the links and articles helpful: http://www.jkgranger.com/work/career_management/career_mgmt.htm.

PERSONALS

Love one another and you will be happy. It’s as simple and as difficult as that.

— Michael Leunig

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 2007.

Please enjoy the interactive version of our newsletter on our Website: www.jkgranger.com

Santa’s Bad Day - The Birth of a Tradition

One particular Christmas season a long time ago, Santa was getting ready for his annual trip, but there were problems everywhere. Four of his elves got sick, and the trainee elves did not produce the toys as fast as the regular ones so Santa was beginning to feel the pressure of being behind schedule. Then Mrs. Claus told Santa that her mom was coming to visit. This stressed Santa even more. When he went to harness the reindeer, he found that three of them were about to give birth and two had jumped the fence and were out, heaven knows where. More stress. Then when he began to load the sleigh one of the boards cracked, and the toy bag fell to the ground and scattered the toys.

So, frustrated, Santa went into the house for a cup of apple cider and a shot of rum. When he went to the cupboard, he discovered that the elves had hidden the liquor, and there was nothing to drink. In his frustration, he accidentally dropped the cider pot, and it broke into hundreds of little pieces all over the kitchen floor. He went to get the broom and found that mice had eaten the straw end of the broom. Just then the doorbell rang, and irritable Santa trudged to the door. He opened the door, and there was a little angel with a great big Christmas tree.

The angel said, very cheerfully, “Merry Christmas, Santa. Isn’t it a lovely day? I have a beautiful tree for you. Where would you like me to stick it?” . . . Thus began the tradition of the angel on top of the Christmas tree.



And to all, a good night..

(Windi & Veronica)

