



Eighteenth Annual Granger Holiday Newsletter



CURRENTS

What I look forward to is continued immaturity, followed by death.

— Dave Barry, Humorist

Happy holidays from the Grangers! After another hectic year, it's with considerable pleasure that we look forward to renewing contact with family and friends. While for some it's only been a matter of weeks, days, or hours, for others it's been a blurring of years. As I write, it is a beautiful, clear late December day in southern California. It would be a nice day for a walk around the neighborhood, if it weren't for these manacles attached to my ankles. I've asked Karen to unlock them only after I finish this newsletter. However, I'm not concerned...

Looking back on 2007, it seems a fairly ordinary year...unless you consider changing companies (twice), dodging wildfires, and being buffeted by the winds of a volatile economy to be run of the mill.

Milestones

Throughout the year, we enjoyed getting together with our families several times to celebrate birthdays, holidays, or just for the heck of it. John's Mom celebrated her 81st birthday in October, and enjoys staying in touch with friends as much as ever. She has spent several hours recording her childhood memories, which we plan to edit and turn into an "audio autobiography" next year.

In July, John's family visited Valley Center where we grew up for a trip down memory lane. It was fun to visit the ol' homesteads and see familiar landmarks still standing. Mom was surprised to find her name listed as a property owner in the Valley Center Museum almanac, alongside famous former residents such as John Wayne. Upon learning that VC's new library included a discount bookstore, the Grangers stormed the shelves en masse and cleaned them out like bookworms. It was wonderful to discover that the Granger "reading gene" has been inherited by each generation.

Niece Melinda is happily employed as a science teacher at Menifee Middle School near Temecula. After a two-year sabbatical and a fling with a childcare business, sister Laurel has returned to her passion: teaching. In July she was alerted by daughter Melinda that her school was looking for teachers. When the principal interviewed Laurel and found out she was Melinda's mother, he hired her on the spot.



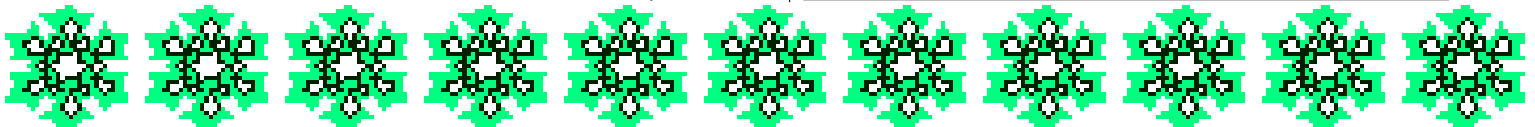
Sister Alisa, book raider, is quite happy with her haul.

Laurel is now teaching art and language arts (what we used to call "English"). While she is an experienced bilingual teacher with some art training, Laurel has never taught art before. When I asked her if she felt qualified, she said "Well...I know what I like!" In another small-world twist, attendance in his grandmother's classes is compulsory for Melinda's son Tresean, 12. Poor Tre!

Sister Alisa has started a new business to raise funds in support of her autistic daughter, Shannon 7, who has been making great progress in her development. She began making jewelry last summer and markets it at craft fairs and house parties. With Sister Carol now helping with production, and John offering to build a Web site (www.TreasuresByAlisa.com), it has become a family affair for a very worthy cause.



Karen and Windi travel back in time to the Renaissance.





Celebrating the Chargers' ascension to the playoffs last January are John, Karen, Paul, Craig, and Amy.

It has been a long year for sister Carol, who has been recovering from a successful battle with breast cancer. Although she is still dealing with lingering complications, she is mostly out of the woods. Through it all, she has maintained her trademark sense of humor while supporting son Dylan and easing back into the fast lane.

In August, we rented great-niece Windi and her friend Veronica from their grateful parents so they could spend their 3rd summer vacation in San Diego together. We enjoy playing tour guides in our own town, while dividing the logistical support duties. Karen manages the catering, transportation, and entertainment, while John coordinates special events and provides technical and moral support. While they were once goofy 13 year-olds, next year both girls will turn 16 which will add a new dimension to beach visits and necessitate new management tools, including a boy-swatter.

Great-niece Roxy was married earlier this year to Kerry Dickerson, who is currently deployed with the U.S. Army in Iraq.

Nephew Gary continues to manage restaurants in West Hollywood, while rubbing elbows with the stars and working way too much. Niece Mara lives nearby in Sherman Oaks and still makes a good living kneading flesh. Nephew Garrett works as a civil engineer with CalTrans.

Ma & Woody traveled to Montana in their fifth wheeler again this year to visit friends and family. While they still love to travel, they will probably be making shorter trips next year and stay closer to home

SPORTS

Men, I want you just thinking of one word all season, and one word only: Super Bowl.

— Bill Peterson, football coach

Although the year began badly with an excruciating playoff loss to the Patriots, our beloved Bolts have rebounded smartly this season. As they prepare for another home playoff game in January, the Chargers appear to be peaking at just the right time. While the fans approach the looming post-season with cautious optimism, the sobering words of Pablo Nogatoches, famous Las Vegas sports denizen and sometime prognosticator, keep us well-grounded. "The other teams could make trouble for us if they win," he advises, borrowing a turn of phrase from that other sports legend, Yogi Berra. The best scenario imaginable would be for the Bolts to deal the 17-0 Patriots their only loss of the season in the AFC Championship Game on the Patriots' home field in Foxboro, MA. Revenge is a dish best served cold...heh heh!

In another sports first in San Diego, the Padres and the Chargers both reached the post season the same year, only to crash and burn in the first round. Oh well, it sure beats living in Oakland or Kansas City!

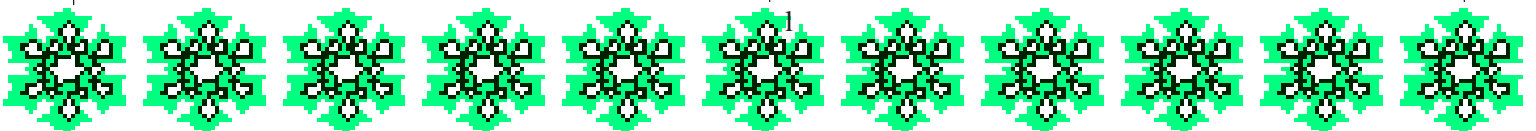
TRAVEL

I have the world's largest collection of seashells. I keep it on all the beaches of the world. Perhaps you've seen it.

— Steven Wright

In March we finally got a chance to visit the [Borrego Valley Inn](#), a peaceful sanctuary not far from the [Anza Borrego Desert State Park](#). You can enjoy homemade Bloody Marys in the morning in your room, hike the park or bicycle around town during the day, and then stargaze from the comfort of your Jacuzzi tub late in the evening. They also have an annual Circle of Art festival the last weekend in March to complement the wild flower viewing and round out your visit.

In May we returned to our home away from home, our time-share in Poipu Beach in southern Kauai. We attended a luau with our friends Tom Brotherton and Das Pweeber, did a little scuba diving, and pillaged the new island CostCo. After several visits, we now feel native enough to simply relax on the beach and do nothing and feel no guilt whatsoever. Or maybe it's just me. Oh, we still do the usual things, like snorkeling, hiking the Kalalau Trail, and indulging in our favorite pastime, Lomi Lomi massage. But our





Joining us for a lost weekend in Borrego Springs are best friends Richard and Mimi Sampson. As they say in the desert, "What happens in Borrego, stays in Borrego..."

level of familiarity is such that we feel less like tourists and more like returning residents. The strident tones of the time-share salesmen now fall upon deaf ears...

We've been saving our air miles for a return trip to Germany in April, 2008. In our first trip in the fall of 2006, we found the German people to be friendly and more gregarious than we imagined. Of course, Oktoberfest may have had something to do with this perception. Spring is a great time to visit Europe, if you overlook the lousy exchange rate. It's just starting to warm up, and the crowds haven't arrived yet. We're planning to use the spa town of [Baden-Baden](#) as our base, making day trips into the Black Forest and across the border into France when not lying comatose in the spa. The second week we'll be going mobile to get our castle fix, exploring the Mosel and Rhine river valleys by car and barge. We'll hang out in Stuttgart for a couple of days before flying to London for a whirlwind, one-day tour, and then jetting home next day.

BUSINESS

Money doesn't talk, it swears.
— Bob Dylan

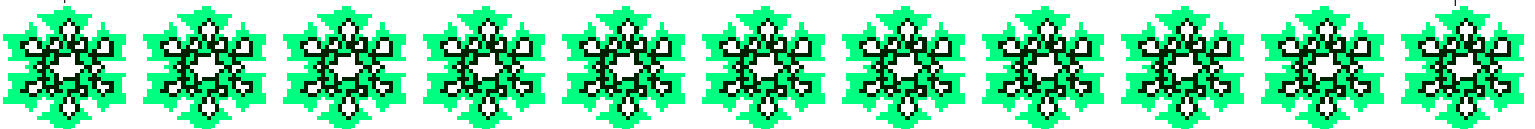
If psychologists are to be believed, changing one's job ranks right up there with divorce and personal injury as a major stress inducer. If that's the case, I should be a nervous wreck by now. In April, I left the contracting world to become a full-time employee with [BearingPoint](#), a man-

agement and technology consulting firm. Since contractors who didn't sign on were being let go, it was somewhat of a shotgun wedding. However, I was made to feel quite welcome at the orientation in Washington, D.C.. I continued to work on the Integrated Property Tax System for San Diego County until September, when I received notification of a job opening from Chuck Lane, a colleague and friend from the Stellcom days. The duties described appeared to be a near-perfect fit, and after submitting my resume, I discovered that the feeling was mutual. I was called for an interview the next day, and was on my way to becoming the new Project Manager, Training & Education for [Sempra Global](#).

To say this company is awesome would be understating the measure of support that they provide to their employees. We soon learned that actions indeed speak louder than words. When the wildfires hit eastern San Diego on Sunday, October 21st they appeared to be a distant threat. However, within hours the fires would change over half a million lives forever. Monday morning, we received an evacuation advisory message via email. In disbelief we packed both cars, readied the cat carrier, and waited as SUVs and cars loaded with belongings fled past our house. We also received notice from Sempra's crisis center that hotel rooms had been reserved for displaced employees. We thought no more about it until we got a reverse-911 call at 9:30 Monday night, requiring our immediate evacuation even though the fires were burning over 10 miles to the north and would have to pass through several neighborhoods to get to us. We called Sempra, who put us in touch with a Howard Johnson's Motel in



Weighing in before the feast at Smith's Luau are Karen, Das Pweeber, John, Tom Brotherton, and Kauai friends.



National City. With vacancies as scarce as hen's teeth, we were fortunate to be able to move right in to our reserved room. At breakfast the next morning, we met several other Sempra employees, including one who lived a block away in our neighborhood! When we went to check out Tuesday night, we found that Sempra had taken care of the bill. Impressed, Karen said, "you work for a very smart company."

Karen has taken two extensive courses in accounting this year at community college while preparing to re-enter the work force after several years off for good behavior. Frequently speaking up during class, Karen has found herself in demand as a defacto tutor among the immigrant student population. Armed with her teaching credential, Karen would be a terrific accounting instructor. Forensic accounting, which combines numbers knowledge with detective skills, would also be a good fit. With as many talents as she has, narrowing the scope of possibilities will be her biggest challenge.

We have kept up the Career Management 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 2008.

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

Dave Barry's Annual Gift Catalog

What's behind Santa's Ho-Ho-Ho

Holiday gift-giving is a tradition that dates back roughly 2,007 years, to when the Three Wise Men went to Bethlehem with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh for the Baby Jesus. Of course the next day the Virgin Mary returned these items for store credit, because she was a low-income mother with a newborn, and as the old saying goes, "You can't diaper a baby with frankincense."

But it was too late: The Three Wise Men had started a tradition. And in keeping with that tradition, this holiday season

millions of people will spend billions of dollars to buy gifts that their friends and loved ones do not need.

To this end, we offer our Annual Holiday Gift Guide. We have assembled a collection of gift concepts so unusual, so distinctive, that you will say: "You made those up, right?" No. All of the Holiday Gift Guide items are actual products that you can buy. Here's an example, with many others described on the [Holiday Gift Guide Web site](#).

TattooSleeves(www.prankplace.com/tattoo.htm)

Not long ago, people with tattoos were considered to be low-class sleazeballs. But today, millions of Americans have tattoos. What does this tell us? It tells us that millions of Americans are low-class sleazeballs. Just kidding! It tells us that tattoos are now considered "body art" and have become fashionable with people from all walks of life. FACT: All nine U.S. Supreme Court justices have the Bill of Rights tattooed on their buttocks.

Perhaps you'd like to get a tattoo, but you've been holding back for some reason, such as that you're not drunk. Or you're worried that when you get old and saggy your tattoo will stretch, so instead of having, say, an arty little butterfly on your shoulder, it will look like you're being attacked by a giant mutant bat.

That's why you need Tattoo Sleeves. These are sleeves that make you look as though you have tattoos all over your arms. Think of the pranks you can play! Like, say you're a non-tattooed college student with strict parents. Imagine how they'll react when you take off your jacket and they see your tattoo sleeves. They'll react by having coronary failure. So make sure your tuition is paid in advance. Tattoo sleeves fit everyone. They cannot, however, be removed. (Ha ha!)



And to all, a good night...

(Celeste, The Baby)

