



Twenty-second Annual Granger Holiday Newsletter



CURRENTS

My interest is in the future because I am going to spend the rest of my life there.

– Charles F. Kettering

Happy holidays from the Grangers! Maybe it's just me, but somehow this year seemed to pass much slower than last year. The events in January seem like a long time ago. Maybe this feeling is typical when the year is as busy and varied as this one has been.

2011 was highlighted by milestone birthdays, weddings, and the joyful arrival of several newborns. In May, Karen's mother Dorothy and her brother-in-law Herb Mills celebrated their 90th birthdays surrounded by many admiring family members. The family reunion featured a video retrospective of their lives, narrated by the guests of honor.

Karen's brother Art and wife Linda hosted a family gathering in July to celebrate the birth of two new family members. Jack Galley was born to Brian and Carla Galley, and little Gia

Galley was born to Devon and Robin Galley - on the same day! Gia arrived so suddenly that multi-talented Devon had no choice but to put on his midwife's hat and deliver her!

On the Granger side of the family, baby Sebastian was born on August 1st to niece Lindy and husband Martín. Grandmother Laurel lovingly calls him a "fat, chunky numpher!", demonstrating the family penchant for creating nicknames. He has a jolly disposition, loves the outdoors, and is happy that Lindy is taking a holiday break from teaching middle school. Son Tre, 17, is a junior in high school. He plays safety on the varsity football team and is an honor student, taking college level classes. Daughter Angela, 10, has taken her first step toward a career in politics by being elected ASB president.

Maybe it's a sign of the times, but Laurel bought a new cell phone that supports rapid texting so she could "talk" with her kids! While bicycling during the summer, Laurel lost consciousness and woke up in the hospital with several fractures. Luckily the doctors and king's men were able to piece her back together, but the cause is still a medical



Granger and Conde family gathering on Christmas Day. From left, baby Annalise, Alisa with daughter Savannah, Martin with baby Sebastian, Tre, Mara, Lindy, Laurel, Megan, Gary, Karen, Carol, Angela, Amanda, and Garrett.



mystery. She has taken up yoga and is healing rapidly. If you enjoy visiting places off the beaten path, Laurel and husband Luis recommend [Tecopa Hot Springs](#) in Death Valley. It's easy to spot. As you near Shoshone, just look for people wandering the desert in their bathrobes.

Nephew Garrett married his high school sweetheart Amanda. Appropriately, baby Annalise was born on September 5th (Labor Day). Garrett couldn't watch the delivery, afraid he would pass out. So he held Amanda's hand and looked away. Amanda preferred "Marie" as a middle name, but Garrett wanted "Rose" for Annalise so that her initials would spell "ARG". Did we mention the family penchant for creating nicknames? It's a measure of true love that Amanda allowed Garrett's wishes to prevail.

Nephew Danny married long-time sweetheart Jessica Shepherd in October. They are expecting a son, Grayson, in February.

Niece Mara moved to Albuquerque, New Mexico with a friend for better employment opportunities as a massage therapist. She loves the state will move to Las Cruces in 2012.

Nephew Gary is living a surfer's dream, residing in a comfortable beach house in Ocean Beach with girlfriend Megan. Since both work in the restaurant biz, they are on similar schedules, which bodes well for their long-term

prospects. Everyone loves Megan, and they are still going strong after a year. Gary may see more sunshine in 2012, as he pursues a day job in commercial real estate. During his years in the catering business in Hollywood, Gary came to know celebrities that frequented his establishment and could tell you which ones were naughty or nice. It seems he's still a celeb-magnet. Turns out a friend of Gary's is dating Lady Gaga, who showed up at a party in Mission Beach. As stars are wont to do, GaGa got very drunk and danced with our nephew. Hey Gary, we want pictures!

Niece Windi is still very much involved with the Redlands YMCA Circus. After years of perfecting her gymnastic techniques, she is now training future acrobats and participates in circus events year-round. She is also learning the retail trade at Kohls Department Store in Redlands, and how to network in a tough job market.

Back in February, we heard from our cousin Kathryn in Texas that her daughter Hannah had been chosen to be a finalist in [America's Next Top Model](#). We became instant fans of the show, and watched enthralled for several weeks as the competition progressed from 14 girls down to 5...4...3, and Hannah was still among them! We are very proud of her 3rd place finish. At last report, she had signed with Page Parkers Management in Dallas, Texas, and was also preparing for her film career debut.



Galley family gathering in July. Back row: Robin, baby Gia, Devon, son Landon, Carla, baby Jack, Brian, Jazzlin, Art, Casey, Linda, Dorothy, Mark, Adria. Front row: Sofia, Maranda, Nicholas, Brianna and Colton, Drew and Isabella.



Sister Alisa and husband John recently bought an iPad2 for daughter Shanon, who is autistic. Special apps have been developed that make the iPad2 a wonderful learning device for children with autism. In April, Alisa will take a break from caretaking and travel with daughter Savannah to the Big Apple for a guided tour with [Smithsonian Journeys](#).

SPORTS

The other teams could make trouble for us if they win.

– Yogi Berra, baseball catcher, manager

No use trying to sugar-coat it. This was a BAD year for San Diego sports franchises, so it goes without saying that we went out of our way to avoid sharp objects while watching games. The Chargers season ended in true masochist fashion, the team flirting with the playoffs only to fall flat once again near the finish line. About the only bright spots, and they're a glimmer at best, is that the Norv-haters will be dancing in the streets in January, and Pablo Nogatoches — Las Vegas sports denizen and conflicted Bolts basher — made money betting against our team. But win or lose, the tailgate parties are always a good time.

The Triple A Padres finished the 2011 season staring up from the cellar. After trading away most of their star talent, the Padres farm system is now loaded for bear. Time will tell if they'll be shooting real bullets or firing blanks when the umpire yells "play ball!" It was nice to see Trevor Hoffman receive a rousing San Diego send-off to the Hall of Fame as one of baseball's most durable and winning relievers.

TRAVEL

The ultimate trip souvenir is a broader outlook.

- Rick Steves, travel writer

In January we traded our Palm Springs timeshare for a view of the Heavenly Valley ski slopes in Lake Tahoe. A ski excursion with our extended family, the Umscheids, was a perfect start to the new year. In his red parka, John was often mistaken for the ski patrol. So why fight it? As he skied past a group of idle snowboarders, they yelled out "We're fine" to which John replied, "That's good. Try not to break anything." The snow gods were beneficent and bestowed rare spring-like conditions. The [Ridge Tahoe](#) offered terrific accommodations.

In June we flew to Berlin to meet our German friend Jessica Kalscheuer, who we met in a Cologne tavern in May 2010. We rented an apartment through VRBO.com in the heart of the city and lived like Berliners for five days. Jessica joined us for breakfast each morning to plan the day's activities. We managed to pack in quite a lot of sightseeing in a short time, including a bus tour, a marathon guided bicycle tour, a river cruise, and a pub crawl. We dined in the German Parliament building ([Der Reichstag](#)), saw an exhibition of Salvador Dali's paintings, toured a palace, and explored the city's diverse neighborhoods. We spent another four days in Bruges, Belgium and returned to our favorite Dutch town of Haarlem for a week. And now, for your amusement, the 30-second highlight version of our European trip...



Karen and Jessica take 5 outside a Berlin Post Office.

Most Fun: Touring Berlin with our adopted family member Jessica. It's a toss-up between the Fat Tire Bike Tour of Berlin with our Irish guide/comic Tony and the Spree River Cruise.

Most Beautiful: The "Wall of Beer" (1,000 bottles!) outside (what else?) The Bottle Shop in Bruges, Belgium. The town itself is pretty darn cute too, in a medieval sort of way...

Best Food: A hot grilled cheese sandwich and chips, on a cold, rainy day in Bruges, washed down with a pint of Hoegaarden Belgian wheat beer! Comfort food always takes the prize when you're wet and starving...

Best Hospitality: Reineke, owner of [Where Els B&B](#), Haarlem, Holland. With all the nice touches she provided, it felt very much like home.

Favorite Museum: The Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam.

Most Enchanting Town: Haarlem. Got our vote last year too! It is said the most contented people in Europe live there.

Best Fairytale Town: Bruges, a well-preserved medieval jewel reborn in the early 20th century as a tourist Mecca.

Most Breathtaking Work of Art: A full-size recreation of *The Night Watch* by Rembrandt by the artists at the Royal Delft Factory in Delft, Holland.

Most Bizarre Work of Art: Paintings of medieval "justice" being administered in the [Groeninge Museum](#), Bruges.

Most Unusual Edifice: The Church of the Holy Blood, Bruges.

Most Eclectic Architecture: the gravity-defying, neo-modern apartment and office buildings in former East Berlin.

Most Impressive Monument: The Holocaust Memorial, Berlin.

Most Intact Ruins: Canal houses in [Bruges](#), still standing after more than 1,000 years.

Biggest Surprise: Sexy Belgian chocolates (we will leave the rest to your imagination).

Best Serendipitous Moment: Bouncing from club to club with a group of college students on a Berlin Pub Crawl, making new, life-long friends at each stop.

Most Adventurous Moment: Lost while bicycling through the hinterlands of Holland. Lucky for us, there's always a church steeple in sight to navigate by when our GPS craps out.

Most Memorable Moment: Watching a spectacular thunderstorm from the comfort of a rooftop restaurant in Der Reichstag, Berlin.

Most Nostalgic Moment: Discovering that the [East Berlin City Hall](#), first visited before The Wall fell, is still standing.





Niece Windi returned with us to Kauai in September, her second visit since we introduced her to the island in 2003.

BUSINESS

If you want creative workers, give them enough time to play.
- John Cleese

John continues to enjoy the challenges (no, really!) of a Senior Software Developer position on the Business Intelligence team at San Diego Gas & Electric. People seem genuinely happy to work at SDG&E, where contrary to the industry stereotype, you'll find progressive and supportive management, constant innovation, and opportunities to learn and hone new skills.

Karen has been following her interest in crafts, crocheting afghans and embroidering, making Christmas ornaments, and she may take up quilting as well. Karen may also rekindle her drawing and painting talents next year and learn how to tackle a blank canvas again.

Next year, we are both looking forward to getting involved with the United Way to support young students in their school work and career explorations by tutoring and mentoring them.

If you or someone you know is considering a job or career change, you may find the links and articles on our Career Management page helpful:

http://www.jkgranger.com/work/career_management/career_mgmt.htm

PERSONALS

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 wish you the best for a happy and prosperous 2012.

Last-Minute Gift Ideas from [Dave Barry's Holiday Gift Guide](#)

For Him: [The Girlfriend Pillow](#)



This is the perfect gift for that "special guy" on your holiday list (we are using the term "special guy" in the sense of "loser.") The Girlfriend Pillow is a soft pillow with a single "arm," and what the manufacturer describes as "2 round shape cushions on the surface that gives you a breast-like sensation." In other words, sleeping with this pillow is exactly like sleeping with a real, biological woman who happens to have only one arm, and no lower body, and no head, and is covered with fabric. Think of the advantages! For one thing, the Girlfriend Pillow will never buy shoes, or demand that you share your innermost feelings when you have no innermost feelings more complex than "I want another beer." Speaking of which: If you spill your beer, you can use the Girlfriend Pillow to mop it up. Try THAT with a biological woman! The Girlfriend Pillow is the official girlfriend pillow of the National Football League. Also Donald Trump owns two of these, although they have not yet met.

For Her: [The Wine Rack](#)



For the true wine connoisseur, there is nothing more enjoyable than sucking body-temperature wine from a tube connected to a polyurethane bladder concealed in a woman's undergarment. That, in a nutshell, is the appeal of the Wine Rack, a sports brassiere equipped with a bladder that holds 25 ounces of wine or other beverages. According to the manufacturer, you can wear the Wine Rack to "movies, concerts, ball games – anywhere you can imagine" and drink through "a drinking tube long enough to route as you wish." And here's a bonus: As your wine rack empties, your bosoms appear to shrink dramatically. You will definitely want to give this product to all the classy women on your holiday list, as well as any men who for whatever reason – and far be it from the Gift Guide to judge – wear sports brassieres.

