



Eighth Annual Granger Holiday Newsletter



CURRENTS

Yeah, I know. It's late. But it's not my fault. Honest! Relatives came in from out of town, my car broke down, there was a terrible flood, my keyboard broke, no wait...my printer jammed. Yeah, that's it, my printer jammed and it took ~~three~~ five weeks to get it fixed. The repair shop couldn't get the parts until the last minute. It was ready for pickup on Christmas Eve at 11am, just to make things dramatic. Why do you think we call this the Granger *Holiday* Newsletter? We hope our annual tome finds you still flush with the holiday glow and making plans for the new year while enjoying a little R & R.

1997 has been another year of personal growth and change. Probably a lot like your year. Filled with birthdays, weddings, work, classes, concerts, plays, work, errands, ... and through it all, getting just a little bit older. Karen and I have considered this aging thing for some time now, and we've decided we definitely don't like it. Maybe that's why I'm considering taking up the drums again. It's sad to discover that the secret to eternal youth is two Advil before any strenuous physical activity. We're planning to avoid our next high school reunion. We know we will be confronted by a bunch of old geezers who will claim to be our classmates, but bear little resemblance to the fresh-faced youths we remember. Better to stay home and drink our prune juice.

Milestones

Karen's dear stepfather Roy Schuck passed away on December 19th and was buried on his 88th birthday, December 23rd. At the cemetery under a beautiful clear sky beneath snow-capped mountains, the family sang happy birthday to Roy one last time. Roy is survived by more than 50 direct descendants, and will be remembered for his devotion to family and church, and his passion for life and all that it has to offer. Roy was a man of many talents, an expert electronics repairman who loved fixing things, playing music, fishing, and talking football. Perhaps most of all, he enjoyed his frequent travels with Dorothy over the past 15 years to visit family and friends across the country and around the world. He was a wonderful man, and a true Viking, and we will miss him greatly.

Brother Ken married fiancé Barbara in August, providing a great opportunity for family to rendezvous for the wedding north of Seattle. Everyone can also take great delight in saying that "Ken and Barbie" are now hitched. The wedding day coincided with the 20th anniversary of Elvis Presley's death, prompting a renewed flurry of sightings of the The King throughout the

region. Karen spotted the largest version just outside our hotel near the interstate (see pic on page 4). Try as we might, we couldn't persuade members of Ken's barbershop quartet to do their rendition of "Hound Dog."

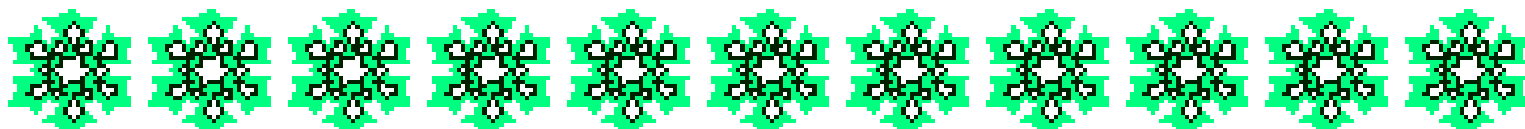
Sister Alisa retired from her court reporting business to give her wrists a long-overdue rest from the keyboard. She is enjoying the freedom to explore new career alternatives. In the short term, she decided to take a low-pressure, low-stress job as a driver education instructor. She says it's great, the adrenaline rush from close calls replaces her craving for caffeine as a wake-me-up in the morning.

Sister Ruth Ann spent her 4th summer in Oxford, England as the head cook for a team restoring author C.S. Lewis' home. Niece Amber, who came to San Diego last year to study fashion design, is excelling in her chosen field. You can expect to see her label and clothing line soon in trendy stores everywhere. Nephew Danny is a snow sports instructor at Snow Summit near Jim and Lori's new home in Big Bear.

Sister Laurel plans to complete requirements for her elementary school teaching credential in the spring. Her bilingual education will help keep her in demand. When she's not studying, my mild-mannered teacher-sister assists the FBI in foiling robbery attempts. Yup! With eyes keen enough to be a poster child for radial kerotomy, she spotted a getaway car near a bank, noted the license number, and phoned the police from across the street. Laurel said the robber trying to hide in the back seat was easy to spot; the



Roy and Dorothy show their fighting form.



hooded sweatshirt and stocking mask were a dead giveaway (no one said criminals have to be smart.) The driver of the car, taken hostage by the would-be robbers, escaped unharmed.

Niece Lindy is taking college courses in preparation for entering the Sheriff's Department as a deputy in April or June. Sister Carol started Moorpark College and is taking criminal justice classes to prepare for a position in the private investigation industry. Her astigmatism prevented her from passing the eye exam required for police training, so she's becoming a private eye instead of a public one.

Is there a trend here?

Nephew Garrett will graduate high school a year early in June and will attend Moorpark in Fall 1998. Niece Mara is majoring in music writing at Cal State LA. She is working with a temp agency that specializes in movie industry production work. Nephew Gary is working at Robinsons-May in Carlsbad, while Mom is still cookin'. In fact, she's getting her recipes off the internet these days. You can email her at pdgranger@msn.com.

TRAVEL

For our first semi-annual diving fix this year, we decided to visit someplace way off the beaten track, offering access to some of the world's most pristine reefs, and an exotic jungle adventure, with just a little touch of home. Lighthouse Reef Resort is located on a small sand spit of an island (or "caye") 50 miles off the coast of Belize, formerly British Honduras. If you want remote, this is it. Mangrove swamps, saltwater crocodiles, and voracious mosquitoes mixed with crystal clear warm water, spacious bungalows, friendly iguanas, and great company. The sole token to civilization, the social hub of the island, is a restaurant/bar at the foot of a short pier, which served as the launching pad for each day's diving adventures with the 12 other guests.

The highlight of the trip was diving the Blue Hole, a ¼ mile wide, 400 ft sinkhole (made famous by Jacques Cousteau) whose distinctive blue color can be observed via satellite. Our dive boat anchored near the rim of the crater. As she swam to the edge of the crater, Karen's \$110 dive light slipped off her wrist. Too late, she realized it was gone as it sank toward the rim and dropped out of sight. We descended slowly with our dive group to the sport diving limit of 130', marveling at the giant stalactites in the pale green light filtered from far above. As we snapped photos with fellow divers, we felt a sense of euphoria induced not only by our surroundings, but by the nitrogen that was starting to accumulate in our bodies. After a brief 6-minute stay, we began our slow ascent up the muddy wall of the crater. At



Shark food-fights

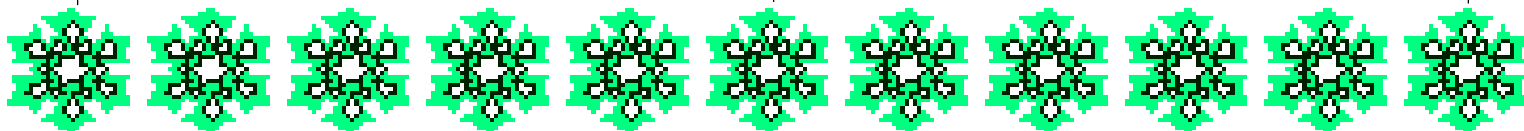
about 60', we happened to look over at the wall and there, perched face-down on a foot-wide ledge, was Karen's blue dive light! It was thrilling to experience a minor miracle!

After 5 days of diving, we took a 3-day inland tour of the Mayan ruins of Zunantunich and Tikal. Both have been well preserved and restored. Tikal, located in Guatemala, appeared as the Rebel Planet's stronghold in the original Star Wars movie.

We spent Thanksgiving on Little Cayman, another remote island within spitting distance of Havana. With a bustling population of 100, it is relatively unchanged since the Southern Cross Club resort was built in 1957. In just a few short days, you can begin to feel like an insider since the main sport after fishing and diving is gossiping about everyone else's extracurricular activities (including their most embarrassing moments.) The islanders, many expatriates from the U.S., Canada, and the U.K., are warm and friendly and hope to keep their island unspoiled for as long as possible.

Little Cayman is best known among divers for Bloody Bay Wall, so-named for the strawberry colored sponges that populate its sheer face. The wall begins 100 yards from shore at a depth of 50', plummeting more than 2,000' to the ocean floor. Toward the end of one dive, as we were resting at about 20' admiring the coral heads and schools of french grunts, I gazed out over the sand flats toward the Wall. I suddenly felt a strange premonition and thought that this would be a great location to spot a large pelagic like a manta ray, or a dolphin, or a...Karen yanked hard on my fin, and as I spun around I saw God's version of an ocean-going Indy car. Less than fifty feet away was a sleek, 6-foot shark sporting a long, thresher-like tail fin. He appeared to be a black-tip, reef, or silky, not particularly dangerous unless provoked. As we watched for endless seconds, the shark swam slowly toward the Wall, paying us scant attention. We later recorded that on dive #199, we finally saw a large shark up close and a little too personal.

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S P O R T S

Char-gers! Pad-res! Char-gers! Pad-res

What do you get when you cross a Spaghetti western with the San Diego sports scene? In 1997, you get the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly. After the city nearly lost the SuperBowl to Pasadena due to the Stadium renovation fiasco early in the year, football fans can finally look forward to SB XXXII in late January. Unfortunately, the closest the Chargers will get to it is via a wide-screen TV. The Chargers' Christmas present to fans is a draft pick in the top 3 slots.



Padres Pennant Investment Club members Tom & Sue Fota, Neola Mace with sister Janice and Karen enjoy a tailgate.

Pablo Nogatoches, he of Charger Masochist fame, advises that if the Chargers were a stock, he'd have to rate them a strong BUY right now due to little downside risk (they can't sink much lower) and good long-term growth potential (he's not holding his breath). Pablo also suggests that all the Chiefs fans in San Diego buy one-way tickets back to Kansas City and trade in their tomahawks for crying towels in preparation for their inevitable playoff loss.

The Padres showed promise this year, entertaining over 40 members of the Padre Pennant Investor Club for another season highlighted by the first appearance of interleague play.

B U S I N E S S

Stellcom Technologies continues to grow by leaps and bounds, presenting challenges faced by any entrepreneurial firm seeking to ride the technology wave (tsunami?) into the 21st century. The culture of employee ownership encourages an awareness of business operations that is both exhilarating and demanding. John completed his Professional Certificate program at UCSD in Business Computing Applications,



as well as the Dale Carnegie course which emphasizes personal growth through public speaking. John got the class' attention with a 2-minute version of the Viking Story (and they're still talking about it.)

24-Hour Fitness has become the fastest-growing fitness business in the country, opening new clubs monthly at a break-neck clip. At the annual sales blastoff meeting in May, comedian Dana Carvey was the surprise guest.. While our employee relations roles share some similarities, Karen's is much more legal focused, whereas John is more involved with training and professional development.

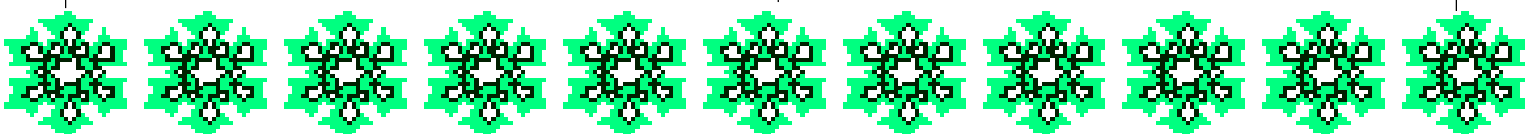
John's old company Staefa Control System shut its doors in February after a hideously long merger and dissolution process. Most everyone we know landed on their feet. Long-time friend and Staefa expatriate Neola Mace has suggested a Staefa Survivor's Party, to be held sometime in late spring.

P E R S O N A L S

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 1998. And remember...it's not too early to make new year's eve reservations for 12/31/99. I don't know about you, but we're thinking about 'Vegas. If you get a moment, why don't you drop us a line or send off a quick Email to let us know how you're doing? Here's how to contact us:

Email (home)
Granger Web Page

jjgranger@san.rr.com
<http://home.san.rr.com/grangers/>



A CHRISTMAS POEM
(Author Unknown)

Twas The Night Before Christmas And Santa's A Wreck...
How To Live In A World That's Politically Correct?
His Workers No Longer Would Answer To "Elves".
"Vertically Challenged" They Were Calling Themselves.
And Labor Conditions At The North Pole
Were Alleged By The Union To Stifle The Soul.

Four Reindeer Had Vanished, Without Much Propriety,
Released To The Wilds By The Humane Society.
And Equal Employment Had Made It Quite Clear
That Santa Had Better Not Use Just Reindeer.
So Dancer And Donner, Comet And Cupid,
Were Replaced With 4 Pigs, And You Know That Looked
Stupid!

The Runners Had Been Removed From His Sleigh;
The Ruts Were Termed Dangerous By The E.P.A.
And People Had Started To Call For The Cops
When They Heard Sled Noises On Their Roof-Tops.
Second-Hand Smoke From His Pipe Had His Workers Quite
Frightened.
His Fur Trimmed Red Suit Was Called "Unenlightened."

And To Show You The Strangeness Of Life's Ebbs And
Flows,
Rudolf Was Suing Over Unauthorized Use Of His Nose
And Had Gone On Geraldo, In Front Of The Nation,
Demanding Millions In Over-Due Compensation.

So, Half Of The Reindeer Were Gone; And His Wife,
Who Suddenly Said She'd Enough Of This Life,
Joined A Self-Help Group, Packed, And Left In A Whiz,
Demanding From Now On Her Title Was Ms.

And As For The Gifts, Why, He'd Ne'er Had A Notion
That Making A Choice Could Cause So Much Commotion.
Nothing Of Leather, Nothing Of Fur,
Which Meant Nothing For Him. And Nothing For Her.
Nothing That Might Be Construed To Pollute.
Nothing To Aim. Nothing To Shoot.
Nothing That Clamored Or Made Lots Of Noise.
Nothing For Just Girls. Or Just For The Boys.
Nothing That Claimed To Be Gender Specific.
Nothing That's Warlike Or Non-Pacific.

No Candy Or Sweets...They Were Bad For The Tooth.

Nothing That Seemed To Embellish A Truth.
And Fairy Tales, While Not Yet Forbidden,
Were Like Ken And Barbie(!), Better Off Hidden.
For They Raised The Hackles Of Those Psychological
Who Claimed The Only Good Gift Was One Ecological.
No Baseball, No Football...Someone Could Get Hurt;
Besides, Playing Sports Exposed The Kids To Dirt.
Dolls Were Said To Be Sexist, And Should Be Passe;
And Nintendo Would Rot Your Entire Brain Away.

So Santa Just Stood There, Disheveled, Perplexed;
He Just Could Not Figure Out What To Do Next.
He Tried To Be Merry, Tried To Be GAY,
But You've Got To Be Careful With That Word Today.
His Sack Was Quite Empty, Limp To The Ground;
Nothing Fully Acceptable Was To Be Found.

Something Special Was Needed, A Gift That He Might
Give To All Without Angering The Left Or The Right.
A Gift That Would Satisfy, With No Indecision,
Each Group Of People, Every Religion;
Every Ethnicity, Every Hue,
Everyone, Everywhere...Even You.
So Here Is That Gift, It's Price Beyond Worth...

**"MAY YOU AND YOUR LOVED ONES ENJOY PEACE
ON EARTH."**



Karen is dwarfed by giant Elvis, still The King and still huge after all these years...

