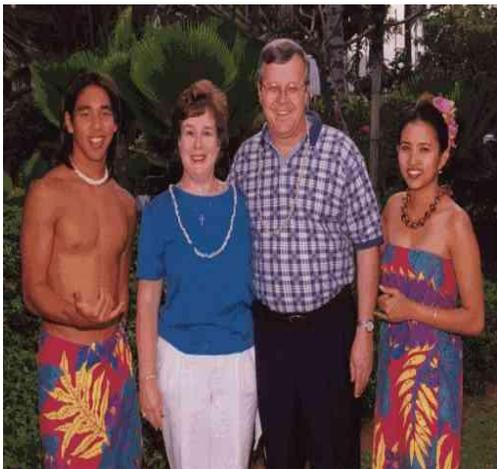


## Christmas 1999

Well, well, well..... here we are again, wondering where another year has gone. We hope your year has been a good one. Ours has certainly been busy.

We began 1999 with a wedding. Michelle with the ink barely dry on her bachelor's degree tied the knot with that nice fella, Ross that we told you about in last year's Xmas letter. They walked the aisle on January 9<sup>th</sup>. Michael served as one of the ushers along with Ross's brothers. Michelle and Ross honeymooned in Las Vegas and now reside in Banner Elk, NC where she is working for a furniture manufacturer and Ross manages the computer lab at ASU while finishing his degree. He'll graduate next May. After that they'll move to where ever they can both land a job.



In April we treated ourselves to an 11 day trip to the Hawaiian Islands. Stops on our trip included, Waikiki, Oahu, Kaanapali, Maui and Kauai. We toured Pearl Harbor on Easter. We can say we've seen lots of touristy stuff: Don Ho, The Bonsai Pipeline, Wiamaia Falls, Diamond Head, the Yio Valley, The Road to Hana, LaHaina, The Fern Grotto, The Grand Canyon of the Pacific ( by helicopter no less ), a genuine Luau with pig & poi. We returned home tired but satisfied we'd seen it all.

July brought another week's vacation and a trip to Florida to see Ann's brother Tom and his family. This was the trip where we started to scope out potential future retirement communities. Our investigations took us to Tampa, Orlando, Palm Coast, St Augustine, Jacksonville, Charleston, and So. Myrtle Beach. The only one that showed any promise was Jacksonville. Future expeditions will be mounted as we intend to leave no stone unturned in our search for the perfect retirement location. Let us know of any communities you'd like to recommend.

In September Michael started his senior year at UNC. He'll graduate next May at about the same time as Ross. He and his roommates found a new apartment this year, which is closer to the campus. He seems quite content but is starting to grow a little uneasy as the time has arrived for him to start the job interview process for real.. He has excellent grades and a pretty decent resume already so we don't expect him to have much trouble landing a "position". Also in September, I scampered off to Reston, Va. for 1 week of computer learning. Which I promptly put to use to enhance my travel web site. The darn thing seems to have a life of it's own and is continually evolving. The machine is in Atlanta and I program it from my home office in Raleigh ( gotta love that hi-tech stuff don'tcha ) . It's drawing business from all over the world now.

In October we managed a long weekend away in Nashville with our friends Kay & Larry. We took in the Ryman Theater, The Grand Ol Opry, The Country Music Hall of Fame, Nashville Nights Dinner Theater, The General Jackson Showboat and the Belle Mead Plantation. We crammed all that and a lot more into 3 days, somehow!?. Again in October, we hit the road to go visit Michelle & Ross up in the mountains. The fall colors weren't quite as nice this year as we'd

seen in the past but we were consoled by the opportunity to witness the goings on at the Banner Elk annual "Wooly Worm Festival". Yep they hang strings from a wall and have a wooly worm race to see which worm can climb to the top of it's string the fastest. If I hadn't seen it I wouldn't have believed it.

For Thanksgiving we traveled up to my folks in Va and on to West Va. to spend Thanksgiving day with my sister Pat and her hubby, Ted. While there we got in a quick visit to the racetrack in Charles Town where Ted happily show us all how to graciously hand over our \$\$\$ at the betting window. Ann managed to find her favorite, the one armed bandits in their casino. Again, the machine gave back less than we put in.

I'm writing this on Dec. 1. In another week I'll be traveling to Ft Lauderdale for 5 days to attend another Cruise-a-thon. I'll be forced to inspect the 15 ships that steam into port while I'm there, sample the entertainment and food - and, generally work hard at looking like a serious business man instead of a cruise junky in hawg heaven.

Well, gotta close.... I smell dinner. As ever, Hope this finds you and yours enjoying good health, prosperity and God's gift of salvation this Christmas season.



*Merry Christmas & Happy New Year,*

***Mark & Ann***

p.s. You can find our personal home pages at:

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