

Goodness, where has the year gone? We're still thawing out from the ice storm last week!

Ann continues to hold the fort at Durant Elementary, a year round school with breaks in April, July, October and January. This affords us some great travel opportunities. In April we took a Caribbean cruise along with our friends Nancy and Frank from Long Island and a group of nearly 60 people who we met up with on Cruisecritic.com. We arrived in Ft Lauderdale 3 days prior to sailing and enjoyed meeting lots of new folks, taking airboat rides in the everglades and riding the water taxi up the inter-coastal waterway. One couple in the group from Maui, hosted a sail-away party in their penthouse suite aboard the Celebrity Summit. It was great fun! We cruised to the Grand Caymans, Cozumel, Key West and Nassau, Bahamas. Photos can be seen at <http://meyen.org/MarkMeyen/Summit2002/Summit2002.htm>

Summer just sort of came and went this year. The drought nearly fried our lawn but a re-seeding has brought it back to near normal this fall. Remember last year's news letter where we introduced Michael's significant other, Rachel Vogelpohl? Well, they're officially engaged! They plan to tie the knot on Labor Day weekend next year(2003). We couldn't be more pleased!!! Rachel doesn't know it but we adopted her the first week we met her so it won't be any adjustment at all to call her daughter.

At Thanksgiving we had all the kids here along with Grandma Phyllis and Rachel's sister Rebekah and her roommate Amy. Nothing gives us more pleasure than to have a house full of family and extended family. It gives Ann a chance to drag out all the good china and put on a really good feed.

Just last weekend Ann and Michelle took off to the Big Apple. It seems Les Miserables is closing it's record setting 13 year run on Broadway in March and Michelle really wanted to see it because she'd done a lot of the music when she was in show choir in high school. In a whirlwind two days the two of them took in Les Mis, Ground Zero, the 86th floor observation deck at the Empire State Building, the 74' Christmas tree and ice skaters at Rockefeller Center, Park Avenue Shopping(!!!), and Ellis Island where they found the Meyen family name in the registry of immigrants. They walked and shopped and walked and shopped 'til their feet gave out. They even found time to sample the NY cuisine with our friends Nancy and Frank.

While Ann and Michelle headed north, Mark headed south to Ft Lauderdale for a winter Cruise-A-Thon. While there he inspected a dozen or more new cruise ships, including a return visit to the Summit. He sampled the dining room fare and attended several leisure travel seminars along with 600 other cruise agents.

Looks like Christmas will take Michael to Rachel's home in Tulahoma, TN. We plan to spend Christmas day with Michelle and Ross and Ross' family. Michelle is turning into a fine hostess in her own right and they have a lovely home.

Don't have any real plans for next year but expect some of our energies to go into Michael and Rachel's wedding. As usual, we hope this finds you enjoying health, happiness and *His* saving grace this **Christmas** season.

Mark & Ann

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