



Christmas 2006

Dear Friends,



This letter is late but so are we. Usually we start this letter Advent Sunday, but that day we were in London enroute to Armenia where Rich is working with a local radio network. (The picture in the banner, above, is from the market in Yerevan, Armenia.) The fog rolled in and our trip home was delayed two days. We began to worry as folks told us that last year just before Christmas they were fogged in well, when we missed our flight on Saturday we were told for 7 days, when we finally flew out on Monday the number of fogged in days had grown to 15. Being a reporter, Rich fact checked and found that the airport had been closed for a portion of 15 days in December. Anyway, we got out and back to Alaska in time for Christmas, which we are celebrating in Sitka with Brian and Liz and Kevin and Shannon.

Who is Shannon? Shannon Lambert is Kevin's fiancée. They plan to get married in September, next year. They both sing in the Anchorage folk group "Rogues and Wenches" and went off to North Dakota together to perform as trolls in a Nordic Fest. They came back engaged. (Their engagement picture is on the right.)

Rich and Suzi cut back their work at KUDO (Anchorage's progressive talk station) after the elections to do more international development work. It is what we both love to do. We are happy with the progress that KUDO is making and the contribution it made to Alaska politics in helping open the process to more than one political party. Rich will continue to do regular commentaries and special programs on KUDO. We are thankful that this year we





may be heading toward a government more in balance. We hope that the discourse can become more civil as well. If there is one thing we learned working abroad it is that “winner take all” politics is the enemy of democracy and, ultimately, of prosperity.

Brian and Liz (left) are living in Minneapolis, but both spent the summer in Sitka where Brian worked to finish the addition on our Sitka home. Liz is finishing her Masters Degree in Recreational Therapy at the University of Minnesota in December and will intern at the Mayo Clinic starting in January. We are all proud of her landing such a plum internship.



Other milestones:

- We both turned 60.
- We adopted a new cat “Matzi.” (Albanian for, cat) though we know it’s a dumb thing to do when we decide we want to start traveling again.
- The Alaska ACLU named Rich “Alaska Civil Libertarian of the Year”.
- Rich and Suzi attended the Albanian National Day celebrations in Anchorage. Anchorage has hundreds of Albanian cab drivers and they all listen to the radio 12 hours a day. Apparently they like KUDO because Rich was asked to be a speaker.
- Suzi, Rich, Brian and Liz were in New Jersey for Rich’s mom’s 93rd birthday.
- Rich, Suzi, Brian, Kevin and Liz all got to the Winnipeg Folk Festival.
- Suzi and Rich attended KAXE’s 30th. We founded the station in Grand Rapids so long ago that it now has a new building on the Mississippi River. We are happy to see what Suzi calls “our middle child” doing so well.

And sadly, the family all got together for Suzi’s Dad’s funeral in April in Minnesota. He died just short of his 90th birthday.

But the 6 of us will be together in Sitka for Christmas and New Year this year and we are thankful for fulfilling work, loving family and good health. This coming year we see more international work for both of us with the work moving from the Balkans to the Caucasus.

We hope you all have a blessed Christmas and happy New Year and we wish for this wonderful and full world, peace and reconciliation.

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Take Care,
Suzi and Rich McClear

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