

December 2013

Dear Friends and Family,

“Tunnel” seemed to be the watchword for us in 2013. Susie has been writing about network tunnels (software), and John has been commissioning the physical variety (highways). And then there was the lava tube, which is like a tunnel . . .

The lava tube (formed by volcanic lava flows) is the perfect segue to the highlight of our year: an 8-day workshop on lucid dreaming at the Kalani Retreat on the big island of Hawaii. Lucid dreaming is being aware in a dream that you are dreaming. Susie had never been to Hawaii before, so that made it even more special, and we had a chance for bit of island exploration.

After considering himself semi-retired, John has taken a part-time position with Axiom Engineers. An example of career networking at its best, this opportunity grew from a connection John made with a classmate in a year-long commissioning class in San Francisco. He just completed his first gig with Axiom, commissioning the 4th bore of a freeway tunnel on Rt. 24 in Oakland, CA. His next assignment is in SF, on another tunnel.

Susie has discovered that it’s an exciting time to be a technical writer--lots of changes happening in the way content is written and delivered. She learned about these trends in October, when she went to a writers conference in Portland. Susie flew to Argentina in June to spend time with her AFS host family and meet the next generation. A bonus was reuniting with high school classmates in Rafaela, where she spent the year in 1964.

After flying through three startup jobs in three years, Eric has settled down as the Head of Engineering at a small software company called AppMonsta. Since he works from home, a few square feet of his already tiny condo are now officially a "home office." Anna, his girlfriend of six years, is moving to San Francisco in the new year, and they look forward to enjoying everything SF has to offer (not to mention being in the same time zone).

Tiffany, who is strategizing her next career move, is in a new relationship with a man who hails from North Carolina. She started the year juggling three calendars--hers, his, and Ava's. We are delighted that she is happy, and that she and Jason make parenting a top priority.

Avalon, now 9, is thriving in the 4th grade. In addition to her academic and sports prowess, she is developing quite a sophisticated artistic talent. She also plays the ukelele. Ava and Jason recently adopted a kitten, which Ava named Ace.

Life is good here on the old homestead, and for that we are grateful. The chickens have finished molting and might begin laying again any day now. We’ll head over the hills to Merced to spend a few days with Susie’s family at Christmas. Earlier this year, we five flew to Austin, TX, to visit John’s sister Lou and her husband (in their new home), niece Kimberly and her family, brother Dave, and Susie’s cousin Carol and her husband.

We hope you will be with those you love for the holidays, and we wish you a warm and wondrous new year.