



Wednesday, December 15th 1993

Once again it's time for Holiday Greetings and "Let's Catch Up" from the home of David and Michael.

We thought we'd start out with a moment of pure joy, with one of the highest high notes, from this year now past.

Friday, October 1st this year found us in the ever-amazing, to us anyway, New York City. It was our dear friend Rebecca's 40th birthday and Bette Midler's first concert appearance in ten years.

At Radio City Music Hall no less. We had planned this months in advance, dressed to the nines, and had a rented limo (thanks to Chereese) to drive us around for an hour prior to the curtain while we drank champagne. Michael is 38 years old and had never been in a limo before, nor to Radio City Music Hall.

When the lights went down and the first few notes came soaring out of our patron saint Bette, we experienced pure joy, delight beyond words. And some sadness, in that classic bittersweet way.

We noticed that the first song, which seems to be her signature song, had the words slightly altered from the original recording some twenty-one years ago. The song was "*Friends*" and the altered line was "*I had some friends but they're gone, someTHING came and took them away. But from the dusk to the dawn, here is where I'll stay.*"

Well the original is "*someone came and took them away.*"

A significant change if you're familiar with Bette Midler, her career, her friends, and recent interviews. We lost a friend this year, the cause also being AIDS, and really appreciated her thought. We think of Jerry at such unexpected times, a yard sale, a movie, or - how could you predict? - while seeing Bette Midler in concert.

Still the moment was a happy, positive one.....full of hope.

As 1994 is sure to be. (How is that for a segue?) We're looking forward to 1994 in a big way; we have plenty of plans for the year to come. But first, let's bid goodbye to 1993 - a year in which things happened we could never have predicted.

2.

Ok....just off the tops of our bald little heads, a few of those things, in a style surely familiar to you by now, due to another cool event in 1993. So here it is:

**Michael and David's
TOP TEN LIST OF THINGS THAT HAPPENED IN 1993
THAT THEY COULD NOT HAVE POSSIBLY PREDICTED**

- 10. Michael helped some clients with the purchase of a house located somewhere between Turner's Corner and Thrasher's Corner. This is not in Seattle. This isn't even in King County. To say he found the house, or sold it, would be a gross exaggeration of his abilities.**
- 9. We have hired Merritt Green on as a sporadic, part-time licensed assistant. She works out of the greatly expanded office in our new home. Given her reaction to the Psychic Friend's Hotline story in last year's letter, this is an unpredictable event. Michael is, of course, still crowing about finding Merritt her first job in real estate (she managed Greenlake Realty during it's peak years), then facilitating her tenure at the Greg Kucera Gallery, then acting as the job clinching reference when she moved on to be some other agent's slave at Lake & Co., then Re/Max (the whole slave concept didn't work for Merritt), and now back to us. Full circle, etc. When will he get off this track?**
- 8. Michael, who for 38 years thought he had perfect vision, got his first pair of prescription glasses. They are mostly for affect; you are not likely to see them unless he is in the last row of a theater or trying out some odd new look.**
- 7. Michael's car was totalled. He was hit by a big truck. He was parallel parking at the time and not at fault. The car was rebuilt and detailed, the whole thing taking just shy of two months to get it back. Insurance companies wanted to not rebuild it at first, but if you'll remember our 1992 year end letter, a new engine was put in this car at great cost. Plus it only had nine payments left and we wondered what it would be like to actually keep something and pay it off. As stated, we are looking for new experiences in 1994.**

3.

6. We have taken on a housemate. Who would have guessed? Our friend Gary Sarozek needed to move at about the same time the house we are now all in was sitting empty. It's a huge house and he's a good friend so we just told him to move in here. He actually moved in about a month before we did. It was hardly a home then, but we are working to make it one as quickly as possible. He's an easy and fun person to have around and this has turned out to be a great arrangement for all of us.

5. David bought a skirt and grew a goatee. We were in Provincetown on vacation (*Miss Saigon* was in Boston and we were taking advantage of our "See America while Rebecca and Cherese are on tour" travel plan) and it happened to be *Men In Skirts Day*. So for just one day, all these men are wearing skirts, in public places. David got caught up in this, he *really* liked it, and the next thing we know Rebecca is dragging him into used clothing stores and skirts are flying about. Then this goatee thing happened: vests, skirts, and goatees - it's so demanding to keep up with fashion these days.

4. We bought a new house. Then we sold our old house. Then we moved.

3. That we would end up owning the most expensive fence in the state of Washington. That we could possibly spend as much money as we have fencing one of the smallest backyards in the state of Washington. That we have spent more per linear foot of fence than Bill Gates will fencing his new yard. Michael loves the fence however (he tries to claim credit for designing it). Actually everyone who has seen it, likes it - people actually comment upon it when you wouldn't expect them to. David wants to know what it costs; Michael claims to have lost all the bills and receipts. It isn't quite finished as we write this. It began in June, we think.

2. We lost, due to a disk failure, over two-thirds of our mailing list. We did not have it backed up anywhere. It was not on the hard drive. We did not have a paper copy printed out anywhere. Please don't ask these questions. Yes, we now know how stupid this was. The mailing list was on two disks. The A - M disk had 507 names on it.

4.

The N - Z disk had 363 names on it. The first days of this month were spent entering names: people who bought houses, people who sold them, people who did neither but who someday might, friends, relatives, shopkeepers, - basically anyone who we've met who we also liked in 1993. Each year this list grows. This year it shrank. Considerably. After all the input was over, the A -M disk just failed, wouldn't open, crashed, whatever. This happened on Tuesday the 7th of December. Experts were called in. Ballard Computer tried. People at Microsoft tried. We finally Fed Ex'd the disk to out of state experts. Nothing worked.

So the 507 addresses on the disk were gone. On Sunday the 12th we accepted that. We put it in a bubble and let it go. In the past four days we have, along with our fabulous assistant Merritt, found and re-entered 356 of these addresses. This was no small task, we assure you. "Working on mysteries without any clues." If you or your partner's name ends with a letter between "A" and "M," including all you "Mc's" out there, it is a Christmas miracle that you are receiving this great calendar and newsy letter and fun family portrait. If you know of anyone who did not get this magnificent mailing this year who did get it last year, please be sure they call us and be sure they know it was not an intentional slight (well except one person whose last name begins with an "E" in Kingston who was very bad and purged from the list.) Believe us - we have leftovers - just call - we'll be happy to send it out first class.

And the number one event in 1993
that we could not have possibly predicted:

1. Greenlake Realty closed it's doors, leaving us real estate orphans.
But only briefly.

Actually Greenlake Realty was sorta swallowed up by, who else?, Windermere. Several agents, but by no means all (as they would have you believe - we counted 9 out of 27), allowed themselves to be swallowed up by Windermere as well in the gossipy hysteria that followed the actual announcement on May 4th. Greenlake shut its doors on May 14th. We had ten days to figure out the course of the next few years of our careers. This was during time period when we were buying one house and trying to sell another.

5.

Perfect timing - low stress.

So we began the dog and pony show of interviewing around town. At the same time brokers and headhunters we have never heard of are calling us at home and stopping by our open houses all of a sudden. We were fairly lucky - everyone seemed to want us at least. Pitches are made. Track records are dusted off. Promises are implied. Negotiations are entered into. Deals are made.

When the dust settled we ended up where we always thought we would end up if there were no Greenlake Realty and no Matt Carroll as broker. Refer back to page one - note the new letterhead? - same basic color, but a new company for us: The Landmark Group. We had our pick of companies. One company we almost went with, Wm. Bain and Associates, talked about being "one big family" and how long they've been around and how long they would be around, etc. About a month ago they were swallowed up by Coldwell Banker. Or they bought and swallowed up Coldwell Banker. We can't really tell, but we sure are glad it didn't happen to us.

Our choice of place to work is similar to other choices we make in life.

We could eat hamburgers at *McDonald's*;

we prefer to eat hamburgers at the *318 Tavern*.

We could shop for deli items at *7-11*;

we'd rather deal with *Dean and DeLuca*.

We may have paid full price for a book at *Bailey Coy*, but we are certain the service is better than being at *Crown Books*.

It is true that someday there may only be *Crown Books*, and we will have to shop there. But as long as we have a choice we are going to hold out for small specialty shops with sharper employees, a higher degree of service, and the feeling of anything other than a chain.

Except for *Starbucks*.

So our new office can be found across from the entrance to the Arboretum on Madison Street. Ours is the small brick building with ivy all over it, though that is rumored to be changing soon as the office may expand a little bit. We are an easy commute from the

6.

Eastside and Mercer Island, located in the heart of Seattle near the chic Madison Park area or close to the low rent Madison Valley. An easy jump to Capitol Hill, a short drive to Hillman City. We can get to Maltby before we can finish off a tall latte. Crown Hill is a stones throw. See, we really do have all of your needs covered. If it is in a Thomas Brother map book, we can take you there. Just to be sure you have it, our new office phone number at The Landmark Group is: 325-6000.

**And now for something completely different....
Let's see.....random thoughts and things from last year....**

Our friend Larry who runs a frame shop came across some great old, old, old frames. We got excited and decided to have a "family portrait" type photo taken and put into one of them. This sounded like more fun and easier than the reality was. Ever try to pose with two dogs and two cats, who aren't in the mood, on a couch and look natural? Enclosed you will see one of the results. Good enough to xerox and mail out, but we selected a different family shot for the frame. You'll have to stop by and see it.

Speaking of Larry - Greg and Larry finally moved back to Capitol Hill and now live but two blocks away from us. We love this. Our new home is mere blocks from everything we need and want...shops, friends, QFC, parks, espresso.

We are still in that stock club we told you about a year or two ago. It's called OZ Investments and had 20 members for awhile, now it is down to 19. Michael is the secretary for it - another thing he can barely keep up with. David has spent the past year monitoring the progress of his assigned stock, McCaw Cellular. Everybody pitches in \$25 or more a month, and we invest the total as a group by majority vote. We've only been in this club for two years now, so our relative slice of the portfolio is very small compared to members who have been in the club since it began six or seven years ago. But - get this - the total value of the club's portfolio stands at over fifty thousand dollars at this point.

7.

Remember our friends Rebecca and Cherese who foolishly left Seattle to do this theater thing - travelling with big Broadway shows like *Phantom of the Opera* or *Miss Saigon* from city to city?

Well, we are starting to think of it as travelling with the circus and just wish they would stop it. Soon. The glamour has worn off and we want them back in Seattle. But they say no. We debate the merits of this lifestyle vs. the money and coolness factors. Plus they have all their things in our basement. (The other day they called to ask how much closet space our new house has - they are about to move the show again and want to ditch their summer stuff or something like that - and we laughed - we are very territorial about our closet space even amongst ourselves - the very thought of giving up closet space was too humorous.)

But seriously - we do gain from this association. Not only are they great friends, we do get to visit places for cheap by skipping the hotel bills. This year we have been to Manhattan (twice), Boston, and Provincetown. We've taken trains up and down the East Coast, and lived, and seen many cool sights and touristy things. In New York we saw - pay attention, this is the glamour part, - *Tommy*, *Bette Midler*, the first half of *Angels in America*, and *Jeffery*, all thanks to Cherese's connections and ticket arranging abilities.

We had drinks at the Rainbow Room.

We walked and rowboated through Central Park.

We shopped.

And then the vacations weren't so cheap after all.

What else happened this year?

David turned 37.

Michael has started an inventory of all the bad things he has not done in 38 years.

We've started renting more and more movies at home and seeing movies out less and less. We'd guess that we average 3 movie rentals a week. Thanksgiving weekend - four days - we rented 15. We like the public, really we do.

8.

But staying home with our cats and dogs in this great new space has its charms. Oh - a follow-up from last year's letter: many people, some who we don't really even know, have approached us to say that they have adopted the term "cat paralysis" for home usage. We coined that phrase right here in this letter. We're so proud; no accomplishment is too small for us to take credit for.

News Flash: Mark this day in history: the house at 21st and Aloha on Capitol Hill just closed. Really. Escrow called.

This is a house that we sold in....hmmmm....early 1991 to a man from California. A horrific real estate transaction in every way you can imagine. He later listed the house with a different company in town. No hard feelings. Actually, we were glad to not have to deal with him in that way again. As a matter of fact, to show what good sports we were, both of us presented offers to him for buyers we were working with. Our offers were refused for various reasons. During all this time trying to sell it - this is early 1993 now - the house was in foreclosure. In June of this year, it happened. Michael later called the bank who took it back to see if they would sell it to his buyers. No, but they did OFFER to list the house with him. First thing he says is thanks BUT you should know that I sold it to the guy you just took it back from. The bank said the two things weren't related and the fun began.....keep in mind this is in June. The house closed today. In between there were about 14 offers, a buyer who up and decided not to show up at escrow after his loan was approved and all conditions were met, thus a failed sale, and, then, more offers. Agents and people (not always the same thing - you should have seen the seminar we were at this morning on agency and disclosure.....but we digress) have been asking for weeks if it would ever close, some in a snide way.

Now it's closed. The check's in the bank. It's a Christmas miracle.

We think that's about it for 1993.

We travelled maybe a bit too much (we are cancelling all 1994 travel plans every other day). We entertained definitely a bit too little (we hope to correct that in 1994 with more frequent dinners here at the new home.....as for "THE PARTY", it is just too soon to tell).

We are well, no heart attacks or major problems like that.

We are unbelievably happy in our new home.

It is a total fixer.

But we are used to living this way.

There isn't one thing it doesn't need (except for a fence now).

It needs a roof, gutters, a basement that doesn't flood.

It needs a kitchen (but not a stove).

It needs to have a bathroom added from scratch and two existing bathrooms to be gutted and remodelled.

It needs a garage. It will never have a two car garage (we miss many things about our old place).

It needs all new plumbing and a water line to the street and some, any amount, of water pressure upstairs.

It needs all new windows. Literally. We have broken and cracked windows everywhere and not one is double-pane or even airtight.

It needs extensive dry rot replacement to the sill plate all along the foundation on all four sides. The back part of the kitchen is in need of support from the crawl space below.

It needs to be painted.

What have we done?

Well, besides "the fence," we've redone - pretty much completely - the entry way, living room, and dining room. We've done the wood floors on both levels. We have installed fourteen telephone jacks, an alarm system, a speaker system to every room, a cable T.V. system to 5 rooms, and new electrical to most outlets and fixtures. And new track lighting. Phone jacks and cable systems? Yes, we did!

Even with the preceding list of what it needs

What are our concerns?

David wants a hood installed over the stove we bought. We bought the hood too. It's in a box in the basement, driving David nuts.

Michael wants French doors.

Kinda gives you an insight into how we live our lives, huh?

10.

Did you see yesterday's newspaper? Seattle Times, Business Section, page D -1: November home sales are strong. Well we could have told you that! We try to tell our clients this, but some are skeptical. Houses are selling quickly and, frequently, at full price again. You don't need the paper for info like this - just call us, we'll always give you the straight skinny based on actual experience. That's what we're here for.

We too can make you unbelievably happy in some home, somewhere. Or, if you've had all the happiness you can stand in some home, somewhere, we can get you out from under it. Ask Doug Freson.

Oh....speaking of clients.....We're supposed to say here what a joy it was to work with Mary Kay Holder-Olson and her husband Al Olson. It was - we'll never forget it you know. Also Michael Kuntz and Nathan Sobers specifically requested during their purchase, or were they joking???, that they be mentioned in the annual letter. Be careful what you wish for.

Who knows what we'll do in next year's letter?

Actually we have a plan already - this is true - and we'll be working on it in the next few months with our lovely assistant.

Merry Christmas - Happy Hanukkah - Have fun on New Year's Eve

Call us anytime.

Or fax us - we love that. 720-0329. On 24 hours a day. Better, and quicker, than mail. That's 720-0-FAX (cute huh?)


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