



HOLIDAY GREETINGS

Sunday December 11th, 1994

9:18 PM

It's that time again...

...time for us to prepare for the next year by exorcising the current one with our annual year-end holiday letter.

Are we doing this too early or what? Usually by this time we have received at least one, usually five or six, holiday newsletters from some of you. Those are our templates!! We are lost without them. Those wonderful xeroxed letters, a page or two long, with a paragraph for each child, another for the vacation, one or two paragraphs for the jobs, peace, love, joy, happy holidays and catch you next year. Those are our inspiration. Were we cut from your list? We hope not; you realize Michael actually reads and saves every letter we get.

Do you? Has anyone out there ever saved one of our year-end letters? (What if you were mentioned in it? - Did you save it then?) How many of these are even read? Is anyone trying to follow along? Once in awhile we wonder about these things.

SO, DID YOU NOTICE? THIS YEAR'S LETTER ACTUALLY COMES WITH A SMALL GIFT !!!!

Do not be fooled! It is not a slick self-promotion device. It is much more than just our real estate resume. It really is something we made just for you. It took a great deal of time and energy and a whole lotta money. It

re-defines the old phrase "a labor of love." Everyone we have ever closed a transaction with is included. (Actually one closing - the very first couple Michael ever sold a house to back in 1987 - was somehow missed, so it is not perfect. This was discovered by Michael after everything was sent to print and he feels appropriately bad about it.) All the dates are in order. All the dates were double checked. Everyone was assigned a "district" or neighborhood for their particular real estate transaction. There was a great deal of detail "fussing" as we like to call it. The entire team that brings you this fabulous

"1995 Calendar of Happy Homeowners"

strived for accuracy and consistency in all that we did. We hope we have not let you down. Check it out please and let us know. We would like to thank Lee Sylvester for the hip yet retro feel of the layout, Geoff Manasse for his wonderful ability with the camera and for making our clients look so darn good, and Merritt Green for making this happen. Research like this required is not easy and arranging this kind of data once it is collected is a time consuming nightmare. Merritt did all of that. We could not possibly have done all of that and kept our careers on track and our house and lives together in 1994. So a special thanks goes to Merritt for this and all of the "fussing."

We have no idea if we will do this again next year. It depends on so many factors. We lie.....it depends on only two factors: what kind of response we receive from all of you and how well our business does next year. And I guess we'd need a new concept for a new calendar - or would we? - there are, after all, so many of you we'd like to photograph. So maybe that's three factors. Hmmm.....we haven't had the **BIG** party in quite awhile. Maybe we'll go back to a **BIG** party and stock shots of tulip fields and mountains. Not that there's anything wrong with that. Who knows? One night of fun or twelve months of great photography, happy homeowners, and fun dates????

What's a hard working team of real estate agents to do?

Enough about this calendar already! Besides there is always Merritt's hilarious centerpiece should you desire more details about the birth of the calendar and the state of real estate in general. Oh...ONE FINAL NOTE: the calendar had to go to press on July 5th of this year. If you closed after that date this year (again with one exception) you are not listed this time around. We had to go with exact closing dates; for deals in progress and deals not yet started, we had no closing dates. (Heck - sometimes you aren't even sure you have a deal till it closes.)

Also it just was not possible to list the birth dates of EVERYONE we know. Or, maybe we don't have your exact birthday in our vast records. Yeah, that's the ticket, we didn't know it to begin with. Fax it over. Or write. Or call. We love postcards.

It's late. Going to bed. **Tomorrow we say "buh-bye" to 1994.**

12/17/96 2:50 PM

This letter will probably be written in fits and starts and stops. So now it's Monday. We're listening to Christmas music on the stereo, but the sun is out in force and it's actually warm outside. But we have a tree in our entry hall, Christmas knick-knacks all around, stockings on the mantle, and red and green M & M's in a pine tree shaped dish, so it must be the holidays.

What's up with us?

What have we done?

Where have we been?

And what's the plan now? Where are we going?

Without a doubt the biggest thing that we did in 1994 was add a third story to our house. The house definitely hibernated for the first part of the year; nothing was planned, nothing was done. We basically worked (the first few months of the year are always the busiest for real estate) and watched laser discs. Then in March rain began to finally come through the ceiling to the second floor. We suspected the roof leaked, but it was one of those out-of-sight-out-of-mind things. In late March David began

putting bowls in the attic to catch the rain. This accomplished only two things: one, our kitchen was less functional with fewer mixing bowls, and two, David began to realize just how much headroom and space there was in the attic once you crawled through this tiny hatch in the hall closet. Soon the rain was running down the walls on the second floor in two spots and just coming through the ceiling and light fixtures in several more. And David was dreaming of a "simple room" on the third floor with maybe a pull down door / ladder type thing and wondering about the "potential."

So we called two great contractors: Wally Novak about dormers (and a real staircase) and Greg Mork about the roof, gutters, soffets, rot, and other burning roof issues.

On Monday March 21st, the same day as the Academy Awards, the various crews descended upon our house and the real fun began. It only took about two weeks to get the main part of this project completed, i.e. the old many layered roof off and the new dormers up, staircase in, and roof on. Michael has, as you might expect, obsessive photos of this entire process from start to finish, in perfect order, and woe be to he who looks at these photos and gets 'em out of order. But we both love giving tours and Tony, who now occupies this "suite" as we call it, is generally amenable to us trooping through with our various clients, friends and neighbors. We must be kids at heart, because the construction was a thrill for us. The tools, lumber, noise, activity: for weeks we felt like Tim Allen (on T.V.'s **Tool Time**) building a 600 square foot tree house. With a real, up to code, staircase! (Michael is most pleased with that feature since he has strong opinions **what a surprise!** about indoor spiral staircases and ladders.)

Once the shell was in place for the thrid floor suite, all work up there stopped for a full 5 months. During that time we gutted the entire kitchen. We seem to have an odd need to keep things in a constant state of chaos and upheaval. Then summer came and Michael went out into "his yard" and lost all interest in anything to do with the house, kitchen , or anything not a part of his master landscape plan. He fancies himself a master landscaper. Hah! You should see how the yard was left at the end of summer: huge pits here and there (seriously a man could fall in and die) that he claims are part of a progression in his plan, piles of dirt (from the pits of course) that he couldn't get hauled away, piles of rocks, trenches

that circle the house, and so on. It is a serious hazard and a muddy mess now. The pets go out into this minefield and then come in the house covered with **let's not go there.** One section, in all fairness, did get fully planted, from woolly thyme to bamboo and trees, and promises to be lovely in the spring.

As for the house in general.....things happen, but no one can see them when they visit. It seems these first years of a slow remodel and update take place behind the walls. Our kitchen, for instance, looks 90% gutted, but behind the walls that are standing there is all new copper plumbing and plastic waste lines. We've managed to get all new plumbing throughout all four floors of this place now, we just haven't changed out the fixtures that are visible when you visit. Same thing for the wiring, it's been 95% or better replaced, but you wouldn't know it unless you were told. Soon things will happen that others can appreciate. It is all about cash flow.

What else in 1994? My, the places we've been....

Like **Spokane.** We went there in **January** to attend the annual Robbie Burns Party at David's sister's house. We visited for a few days, saw Bruce and Susan's new house (David sold their previous home in Federal Way - we branched out in 1994), and saw pretty much all of Spokane.

In **June** we were treated to - thanks to Holly Allen, a great client - a wonderful weekend on **Whidbey Island.** We stayed at the charming, yet not rustic, **Inn at Langley** and enjoyed dining at the amazing restaurant there. We explored the town on foot, the island in our truck, walked the beaches, and took food and many rented movies back to the inn and relaxed in the solitude and quiet of our well-appointed room facing the water.

Another great short travel treat, provided largely by another great friend, was our trip to **Vancouver, B.C.** in late **November** with Sherry Horn. She was being thanked by Microsoft for an amazing feat or some huge amount of hours worked, something, and we tagged along. We walked, we shopped, we counted Starbuck's locations. We stayed at **The Sylvia.** Our favorite restaurant in the whole wide world, **Le Crocodile** is in Vancouver, and we went there for a fantastic dining experience on our last night in town.

The next day we woke up feeling great, but Sherry woke up in great pain. What followed was.....oh, **let's not go there** either. That story belongs in Sherry's annual year-end letter which we are certain she is writing right now. It was a great trip, we're all back in Seattle now, and Sherry is fine.

Small, simple car trips. On our travel budget, those are all we would be able to afford. **Were it not for one thing: MISS SAIGON !!!!** Actually that would be Rebecca and Cherese and Miss Saigon. As you may recall these are our two closest, dearest friends who hooked-up, put all of their belonging in storage, and went on the road with major Broadway musicals. Traveling Broadway shows. On the road. Buses and trucks and planes. Bringing Broadway to **your** hometown. In years past we've visited them in Boston, New York, Chicago, and Provincetown. This year it was **Washington, D.C** in **August** and **Detroit** in **November**. In Washington they had a place mere blocks from the White House in Dupont Circle. We were there for ten days and did all of the touristy things any American should do when visiting our Capital. We also shopped and ate in great restaurants. We are pleased to report that Starbucks has locations there. We hate going places without good espresso shops. This made our four days in **Cincinnati** and our ten days in Detroit most difficult. No Starbucks and no clue about coffee. Miss Saigon moved from Washington to Detroit. We had frequent flyer things on Delta, which is based in Cincinnati, where David's brother-in-law Dave is based as a pilot. So we paid nothing to fly, stayed with David's sister, and then drove to Detroit where we stayed in another of Cherese and Rebecca's fabulous apartments.

So we did the major family visit trip. First we saw Mary and Dave's house and kids in Cincinnati and then Michael's entire family - parents, sister, cousins, and old friends - in Detroit. Michael drove David around Detroit and all of its suburbs so that he would understand why Michael is so very happy in Seattle. Michael actually took David to his grade school, junior high school, high school, the college he attended, and the school at which he taught English - his first real job! David got **the tour** of Michael's formative years! He saw the childhood home! He finally met Lisa! He dined with the parents, spent time with his sister Lynn and her family, and met all of the Mumm family - Michael's Aunt Geraldine and cousins, childhood chums, Susan, Mark, and Marsha. David bonded with all of them, and now wants Michael to write and call more often. And all them to visit.

Well, we think that is just about it. Or it ought to be.

Basically we worked at real estate very hard in 1994, we walked our dogs a great deal, tried to smoothly run a large household (there are now four of us in this spacious Seattle Box), got out of town when we could, and visited friends in town when we couldn't. We cooked a great deal, we entertained (but there was no party, so don't feel left out), we worked on this house as much as possible, and played with our brilliant cats. We learned the ins and outs of international printing and made our first calendar.

We finally bought a real computer in 1994. Couldn't forget that. It is a Power Macintosh, 6100/60 AV, if that means a thing to you. It has a CD-Rom, two great Sony speakers, and a BIG, really very BIG 17" color monitor. We think we have died and gone to heaven. We have a new separate modem. We still have the old Macintosh Plus, but just can't bring ourselves to find a use for it. It is so slow. Michael bought a totally cool contact manager system (fancy words for an address book) and has spent the better part of October, November, and December working on our mailing list. He sorts by zip code, he sorts by neighborhood, he arranges odd bits of data, he amuses himself for hours. This letter is the first word processing document written on this new computer as a matter of fact. Until now it was **100%** monopolized by Michael and his mailing list.

For 1995 we plan on obsessing about turning 65. Neither of us have turned 40 yet, but one of us will in 1995. Our wise friends Cherese and Rebecca want us to start planning for retirement with them now. We all hope, the four of us, to retire together somehow, somewhere. In this light we have bought QUICKEN, and subscribed to Smart Money, and bought books on mutual funds and things like that. Michael recently read a book called, Your Money Or Your Life. Our office just developed a retirement plan and there are materials to read. We are self-employed and have **only** part of an asset (the 30% of this house that is ours). So we guess this is a good path to take. Other than this bent, our plans for 1995 are to improve our business (this will involve our computer somehow - that's the plan), to work even harder in the real estate careers we have chosen, and to enjoy our friends even more, if that is possible.

David Updike

Michael Nelson