

Guard well your spare moments. They are like uncut diamonds.
Discard them and their value will never be known.
Improve them and they will become the brightest gems in a useful life.
-- Ralph Waldo Emerson

Christmas 2000

Spare moments--what a concept! I don't know about you, but for us, since the Y2K crisis (now just a faded memory) ended, the year flew by with few spare moments.

Last year's Christmas letter announced a great event - Mike's football team qualifying for the national playoffs...our journey led us to the Stagg Bowl, the title game! Our family enjoyed five football games on the road - over 12,000 miles traveled in five weeks! The Pacific Lutheran University football team became the 1999 Division III National Champions...attaway Lutes! Our family enjoyed every moment of the journey...though my guess is that Dad was relieved when he didn't have to buy any more last minute airline tickets during the holidays. The weekend of Christmas was the first our family had spent at home in over 16 weeks. God bless peace and quiet!

Over the summer, Mike was in charge of several different team and individual football camps, and spent time at Lister Elementary, helping motivate the students to excel in all that they do. Michael is enjoying his junior year in college...He's had the opportunity to work with Boy Scout Troop 266 in Olympia, to help them earn their leadership training merit badges. Sometimes, I think he's loving college so much that he may end up being a professional student. This year's football season continued through the second round of the 2000 national playoffs...the boys played in the snow at Bethel College, and completed their season with an exciting overtime loss to St. John's of Minnesota. We tied the game with 3 seconds left, only to end the season with an interception in the end zone. We cannot believe Mike has just one more season with the team!

Dad officially removed me as a dependent (though I'm not being compensated for writing this letter...hint, hint) from the family. This year, as we shared time together in the office, and adapted to the market volatility, our bond was strengthened. For one thing, as a charity fund-raiser, we played together on the worst putt-putt golf team Merrill Lynch has ever seen...but we had a great time nonetheless. It was definitely an amazing year to be part of the market and the financial industry.

Mom has continued her work in counseling, both in private practice and while leading a Bible study at the Purdy Women's prison. Mom's family came out from Iowa this summer, and one of the highlights was going out to Ft. Lewis to watch the fireworks show on the Fourth of July. A coach of Mike's runs Western Fireworks, and he and Mike and several other young men put together a half hour fireworks display by hand...one of the last fireworks events in the state not coordinated by computer! The boys all wore their football helmets and layers upon layers of clothes...to protect from fallout. Mom was less than thrilled when she realized how potentially dangerous it could be...what a holiday!

As I'm writing this, my basketball season is just beginning. The girls, whom I coach, are now in seventh grade and are coming off last year's season high during which we beat the boys' basketball team! These girls have given me great joy...especially since most of our plays are named after food and people! Where else can you do that?

Though the year disappeared so quickly, we felt God's blessings throughout ... especially in our treasured spare moments! May God bless you and give you plenty of spare moments in 2001 (the real Y2K)! Make them great!

With love and prayers -

Tom, Karol, Shelley and Michael Mauss