

December 24, 2009



Dear friends and family,

We are honoring the pre-Christmas rush by getting this letter out on Christmas Eve. Nora has been visiting with us for a few days and is flying out to Chicago to volunteer in a camp for kids with cancer. We'll be staying in San Francisco for a few more days before joining her for a family vacation with some of Bob's family in Key West, Florida. Our low-key empty nesters' Christmas Day will include morning yoga, dim sum for brunch and an evening potluck with friends.

Mary continues to represent federal employees in whistle-blowing, discrimination and harassment cases. Fortunately, the new administration settled several important cases this year and made some excellent new appointments, including some of her friends. She organized a neighborhood phone tree supporting health care reform.

Bob remains at Wells Fargo, riding out the turbulence of the recent merger. Of course that means his job is secure through the holiday season at least. He continues to study Mandarin, though at a slower pace than earlier.

Nora tells us that she is "swallowed up by academia". She is halfway through her fourth year at University of Arizona and is living in her second apartment. She continues her Deaf Studies major with minors in Public Health and Sociology.

We went to Michigan in October to join a surprise party in honor of Mary's brother Pete's 50th birthday at the Detroit Yacht Club.

In 2010, Mary and Bob both intend to publish journal articles and develop their respective book outlines. Bob will return to Wuhan, China, this time to teach a short course on business process modeling and regulatory compliance.

In this recession year, we are more grateful than ever for our family, our friends and our health. The road ahead may be narrowing, but still have some solid two-lane blacktop ahead of us.

With love,

Mary, Bob, and Nora

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