



Merry Christmas and Happy New Year 2003-2004

Dear Friends and Family:

Another year of wonderful experiences for our family passed by too quickly in 2003! It is, of course, of great note that our house construction is still in transition, with grand hopes that it will be complete in 2004. It really really is in the final stages. We had some amazing travels in 2003; kicked off by a family trip to Washington in March so that Joe could receive a national award, the Ernest Lynton Award for Faculty Public Service at the American Association for Higher Education meeting. We had dinner with Mrs. Lynton and members of the sponsoring organization, the New England Resource Center for Higher Education at the University of Massachusetts. We had a chance to tour DC with the kids too, and the whole family was able to join with Dad when he got the award. They even sat through Joe's short speech!



All winter and spring, Joseph prepared for his first communion, which we celebrated in June; Joseph's godfather, Nick Lomako, along with Kathy Lomako, brought Grandma Anne from Detroit, and joined Aunt Sandy and cousin Tim with the family at the Anchor Bar for wings and then a Bisons's game in the evening. The non traditional celebration topped off the ceremony at St. Joe's church. Dad enjoyed being Joseph's communion class teacher as he was for Claire.


Over the past year, Joseph and Carol have continued their efforts at Tae Kwon Do, Joseph has achieved the level of red belt, that is just a few steps from black belt, which he may reach in 2004. Carol is up to a blue belt; either way, both can kick their dad's butt!

Joseph is now in the Olmsted School 64 nearby on Amherst Street, and enjoying Mrs. Flynn's fourth grade class; he was just elected to a 2 month rotation to Student Council. He also made the Buffalo News for a close encounter with the Mayor of Buffalo in December; Joseph reminded the mayor that he promised to move people out of Hickory Woods and he had not lived up to that promise. The mayor took it in stride. We don't know where Joseph gets the direct approach, but we do know that Grandpa Joe would have been proud, like his parents, his sister, his grandma and friends in Hickory Woods!

Claire continues at School 84 with Mrs. Cordero's class and her friend Jackie, but her friend Brianna has moved up to another class. She has made anew friend, Ashley, in this year's class. Claire had a wonderful summer with a week at Cradle Beach again and did great. Joseph and Mom joined her there; and next year, Dad might come to work on science demonstrations. We had two other family trips last year; an October long weekend trip to Cooperstown and the Baseball Hall of Fame; that was wonderful and included a trip to an Belgian style brewery. Our big trip was amazing, Claire was granted a wish from the Make a Wish Foundation and we all traveled to LA to see filming of the Star Trek Enterprise TV show, so Claire could meet the actors she loves; in particular Dominic Keating, who plays Armory Officer Malcolm Reed and Conner Trineer (Engineer Trip Tucker), and Linda Park, (who is Korean and plays communications officer Hoshi Sato). Our trip to LA took place in early November, we flew to LA on Sunday and stayed in Santa Monica; went to Disneyland and Hollywood, and then on Wednesday we spent six wonderful hours at the Paramount Studios. When we first arrived, we met our host Doug, a production assistant; and then ran into Anthony Montgomery, who plays Ensign Travis Mayweather. Anthony was a great joy to meet for all of us; and shared with us stories of his family. We then toured the entire stage and sets and settled in to watch filming; we then got to meet Scott Bakula, Captain Jonathan Archer and Jolene Blalock, Subcommander T'Pol, science officer. Boy, we cannot say enough about how friendly and welcoming they were, touring us around the bridge set, allowing Joseph to sit in the Captain's chair, the science officer's station and the pilot's seat. Scott Bakula and Jolene Blalock really were so friendly and took time to learn about us; lots of pictures and a memory for Claire that she can keep forever! We then met Linda Park and Dominic Keating; they shared time and autographs with us; really interrupted so much of their day to make Claire feel welcome and enjoy how the show is made. Anthony Montgomery also spent so much time with us; he made sure Claire could see during filming; we met a good deal of production staff, including someone from Buffalo (Angola on the Lake, actually), and in the true spirit of Buffalo, where there is only one degree of separation, this veteran of 16 years of star trek production was a close friend of our friend, Dr. Wesley Hicks, and his brother, Dr. Paul Hicks. We also spent time with a Producer, Merrie Howard, who gave us so much of her day. We were really treated like royalty on the set and look forward to seeing "our" episode on January 21st. We know why we are Star Trek fans in our house, and the trip was beyond our wildest dreams. We made a quick trip to Pittsburgh for Thanksgiving with Grandma Bebe and Grandpap Pete, who is recovering well; with dinner with Aunt Sandy, Uncle Bob and Cousin Tim. This past December, Grandma Anne came for Christmas and New Years, to see Joseph sing in the Christmas Choir at Christmas Eve mass.

Carol continues part time at the MCEER Information Service and also as prime manager of the house project. With some final touches coming together, her eye for decorating and design is now obvious. We still wonder what we have in the boxes that we have not lived with for three years.

Professionally, Joe also was awarded an honor from the Citizen's Environmental Coalition during their 20 year anniversary banquet; an Environmental Hero award for his work with communities; it continues apace this past year with work in Hickory woods, Seneca Babcock, Bellevue in Cheektowaga, Kenmore-Tonawanda, Lewiston Porter and on the East Side of Buffalo with the Toxic Waste Lupus Coalition. Joseph even joined Joe and his students doing soil sampling at 858 E. Ferry to study lead contamination this past summer. We hope this coming year sees relief for neighborhood friends.



Professionally, Joe traveled to San Juan, Puerto Rico in January and had a wonderful time, hosted by his student Rosamil Rey and her husband Hector Colón along with Glorimar Vicente, visiting two Universities and also the President of the Puerto Rican Senate. The President insisted on a police escort for Joe to the Airport; his first time in a police escort for doing something good! Joe also went to San Diego in September and spent some quality time with Dave and Shirley Hercules, his former students Christine Mahoney and Mike Clark and many other friends, including Jean Jacques Pireaux at the SIMS meeting. We made a short trip to Cleveland for a day to visit with Professors Jorge (Cleveland State) and (former student) Norma (Cuyohoga Community College) Gatica and had a wonderful and too short day! We hope to work with Jorge on research in the future. Four separate trips to Washington for various events over the year allowed some time with cousins Gary and Joann Cameron. We hope Aunt Inez and Uncle Willie are doing better healthwise. Finally, in late June, Joe got to join Adam Hawkridge's wedding to Ann, and visit with Fred and Laura Hawkridge and many friends in Richmond Virginia. We miss you all!



Joe's surface science research continues apace; John Strong defended his long awaited Ph.D. in December, and teaches at D'Youville College in Buffalo, as does Denise (Carney) Brylinski. We also heard news and about transitions from Jianxin Li (contemplating a move to China), Kent Zhuang (who moved to a new house), Jin Zhao (who, with Xinran welcomed a new son), Jiaying Chen, Bob Schmitt, George Grobe (who moved to Indiana), Mike Clark, Christine Mahoney, Yuanxue Hou (who moved to California), Joo Woon Lee (working at the University of Texas), Limin Sun, (who moved to the University of Toronto), Norma Gatica (happy in Cleveland), Evan Bekos (at an award ceremony for Frank Bright in NJ, Evan's now moved to a small biomedical polymer company), Wen Yan Yan, Dan Hook and Dan Ammon at Bausch and Lomb (still waiting for Dr. Ammon's rise to the Fortune 100), Rich Nowak, (who we thankfully see every day!), the newly married Adam Hawkridge (moved to the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota), and Terry Vargo, (CEO extraordinaire, fisherman, hunter and entrepreneur). We hope to hear from everyone soon.

As always, we hope that your new year brings you joy and good health, and possibly a visit to Buffalo to share with us. One way or another, we hope to see you soon!

All our Love!