

December 1999

Cheers to you on the eve of the millennium!

We have many milestones to share with you this year. Yep, still in Iowa City, Iowa; and yep it's really great here. It is still one of the country's best kept secrets.

Many of our loved ones found their way here to breathe the fresh air and wander around Amish country. Filippo's cousin, Emanuele, visited for the month of July in 100+ F weather. What a trooper! My folks and Filippo's father, Erico, met for the first time here. Erico stayed with us for a month and went home exhausted from projects, yet revitalized. Overlapping his visit was Filippo's aunt and uncle (Marlise and Tullio). We took advantage of the moment to gather in Duluth with Filippo's American parents, Helen and Keith Yetter. Good friend Alvaro came a couple of times this year. He's always game for whatever fossil scouting or volleyball party we have cooked up for him. While Colleen's dear friend, Genell, visited us during her spring break.

As travelers, we were able to take advantage of my unemployed status. I enjoyed about 5 weeks out of the country in winter, first with Filippo and his family in Italy. Then I set out on a cruise with 18 members of the Alaska, California family delegation. We toured Turkey, Israel, and Greece; what a fantastic opportunity for a family vacation.

In May Filippo lined up a research project in Tahiti. We went over to do work with a biologist friend in French Polynesia for a month. Let's just say, we grabbed that proverbial brass ring. On the weekends, we visited many of the smaller islands: Moorea, Bora Bora, the atoll of Rangiroa, and Vahine Island off the coast of Tahaa.

For Thanksgiving we visited good friends Markus, Graziano, Paola, and Richard in New York. With some luck, we'll continue this tradition for many, many years.

We shared many joyful milestones in the lives of our loved ones. We had the pleasure of celebrating the darn tootin' good time in Oregon at the long awaited wedding of my brother Tommy to Jeannie Deagen. They had it all: a tiny village on the coast blooming with nasturtiums, hydrangeas, and impatiens; bonfires on the beach; 250 of their closest friends; a little white chapel with a steeple; lights surrounding the outdoor pavilion; and the freshest of hand caught Alaskan salmon. Everything amounting to great memories.

Next we welcomed two perfect babies. Chloe Grace was born to Scott & Roselie Yetter, and Sean Patrick was born to Mac & Tricia Carey. Way to go!

We bid a sad farewell to three of the most compassionate, and heroic people we knew. Colleen's Uncle Gene Byrne, ended a rich life as the family patriarch in October, gathering family from everywhere. And her dearest friend Belinda lost her husband and confidant, Mick, early in their lives together. Their three year old son, Vincent has yet to understand the magnitude of loss in the kind of father Mick was meant to be. Filippo's friend Scott Anderson died in a tragic accident. These three great men touched lives in their work, their commitments, and their strong values.

Both of us marked professional milestones this year as Filippo survived his first year as faculty at U Iowa. (His first love is his work, but surely Colleen's a close second.) As much as she enjoyed her stint as family gardener, sometime in November Colleen landed a great job at the med. school as the director of the Pathology Learning Center. It's a great opportunity.

One final note, we are delighted to share we have entered our fifth month of waiting for the future Baby Menczer due to arrive the end of May! Colleen feels fine, although she didn't see the light of day from September through October. She's a champion sleeper, you know. Since her first checkup, we heard the rapid, little heartbeat. She's feeling little flutters now and then, possibly fetal movement. There is no way to properly underscore our joy right now. It's certainly the beginning of something beautiful.

Party Like It's 1999! Doot - doo, Doo - doo, doot, doo!

Colleen and Filippo