

Happy Holidays! We hope that 2004 was an adventurous and successful year for each of you. We have had our ups and downs this year, but are looking to 2005 with anticipation for the challenges and life lessons to come!

LARRY:

Another year of California, another year of exciting growth & changes! We've shaped a very interesting life out here, I'm oh so glad Michelle suggested the move.

Our home & garden projects are still proceeding, most notably a kitchen makeover, a deck extension and the final hardscaping of our own private state park ☺ Michelle outdid herself with a "Casa Mellon" web site, check out www.maggotranch.com for a tour!

Our big Ultimate tourney this spring was the internationally flavoured Kaimana, hosted in an incredible Hawaiian setting of beaches and collapsed volcanic formations. Michelle's team won the spirit award with an amazing combination of cheers & late-night dancing, while the freedom of playing on the bottom-seeded Spirit Team let me have a blast with the long-ball game. We camped on the beach and I took my first surfing lesson, exciting, but also somewhat prophetic: a move to surf-rich Southern California may be in the offing.

I wrapped up my stint at Electronic Arts by helping ship the hit game The Sims 2.0, and then took the summer off to co-author a book, to throw a lot of Frisbees, and to play a lot of Go. I've spent the fall consulting & working to set up my own studio based on collaborative storytelling in gaming, but some very tasty lead roles in game & tool development have come my way. A startup in the Santa Monica Mountains may be too tempting to pass up: tune in next year as the saga continues. Oh, and I finally got that recumbent I've been muttering about all those years!

MICHELLE:

This past year has been a year of "breaks," both literary and literal. My New Year's resolution was to write and send out one story a month. As I write this in early December, I'm only two stories short of my goal (November was a tough month for us). Unfortunately, none of these stories have yielded the literary breaks I mentioned yet; all of my publishing credits for this year (and scheduled for next year) have been nonfiction—articles and encyclopedia entries. The feedback on my fiction has been positive, however, so I persevere, knowing that, at the very least, I'll soon have a book-length collection of short stories to shop around next year!

The literal breaks came earlier this year when I broke my first bones ever (a toe in February, an ankle in May). The frustration with my limited mobility for most of the year probably spurred my creative voice, but I'll be looking for less drastic ways to find my muse for next year!

In October Larry and I celebrated our five-year anniversary with a long weekend to drive up the coast of California, a stay in a cute bed and breakfast in a tiny coastal town, and more driving through impressive redwood country.

I am still at my part-time job in a dermatologist's office, and am volunteering my time as a grant writer to a nonprofit tackling body image issues for women and girls. After being certified as a Community Emergency Response Team member earlier this year, I was selected to participate in an advisory body to the City Council on emergency preparedness and disaster recovery. And, once I was off the crutches, I was helping as usual with garden and home improvement projects.

As of this writing our house in Arlington, VA will be sold and settled by mid-January. As Larry mentioned, it could be that in the spring we're looking for property in southern CA. We'd keep our house here in Walnut Creek, but why wait for an uncertain future? Plan your Bay Area trip to visit us now!! ☺



On November 11, we lost our super-sweet Siamese, Tarkas,



to a sudden, debilitating illness. Thankfully we had our other boys, Nirgal and Prometheus, to lean on.

We're all still adjusting to his absence, and it makes us realize how important it is to cherish everyday those that you may otherwise take for granted.



Don't Forget to Stay in Touch!

larry@maggotranch.com

michelle@mpmellon.com

(925) 937-1947