

*Dear Friends and Family: The holidays are here once again! In February we moved from the Bay Area down to Los Angeles, and are happily celebrating our new home, new friends, and new opportunities. We hope that each of you has much to celebrate this season and through 2006!*

### **LARRY:**

Southern California: overall, pretty sweet! We managed to find a great place in the foothills of the Santa Monica mountains, away from the concrete and traffic of LA proper and with lots of private gardening space. Topanga State Park is a ten minute bike ride away, but the true prize of SoCal living is sunsets and frisbees on the beach.

Work has been a tad frenetic: I'm the technology lead for a new startup, developing advanced software for the booming video game industry. I love the startup life: business development, new technology and building teams, all rolled into one. We've been growing by leaps and bounds: eight people in the spring to three studios and fifty people before Xmas! I've been on the road quite a bit as well, with multiple trips to China, Korea, all across the US and a trip to Japan next month. Check us out at [www.emergentgametech.com](http://www.emergentgametech.com).

This has been a good publishing year for both Michelle and I. In addition to her astounding acceptance rate of stories, I've had my first book hit the shelves: two chapters in a collection of development practices for massively multi-player video games. I've also spoken on software engineering techniques for online gaming and fun meters for games at the leading game developer conferences. The new year should be quite exciting ☺

### **MICHELLE:**

The adjustment to L.A. living has come a bit more quickly for me, I suspect, since I haven't been traveling like Larry. ☺ We're both helped by the fact that our home is in a good location for beaches (dolphins!), tourist attractions, and everyday living & working. Despite some "challenges" in making this home our own, we've survived all of the renovations and contractor battles to-date with our sanity (mostly) intact.

My adjustment was also helped by my publishing success this year—two stories in horror anthologies, one ghost story in a literary magazine, one magazine article, three more stories accepted for anthologies for next year (one horror, two science fiction), and two more encyclopedia entries underway! I'm writing my own book of short stories to start shopping around to publishers by early spring, so wish me luck! (updates at [www.mpmellon.com/new.html](http://www.mpmellon.com/new.html))

Since April I have been working  $\frac{3}{4}$  time at Phillips Graduate Institute, a graduate school of psychology just down the road in Encino. I started out in the counseling center affiliated with the school, but found some of the staff in desperate need of therapy themselves! I recently began my new position as Admissions Coordinator. The lack of stress and drama has helped me dive back into my writing, and I even took a screenwriting class this fall.

Ultimate frisbee has once again been the key to meeting lots of people in a short amount of time. I played with a women's team this year (after healing from a broken rib from summer league), and Larry and I enjoyed playing fall league on the beach in Santa Monica through the beginning of this month.

*Say what you want about superficiality, weirdos, and traffic, but it's hard to beat the weather in L.A.!*



*Find out for yourself! As always, we're happy for houseguests! See pictures of the new place at [www.mpmellon.com/home.html](http://www.mpmellon.com/home.html) and don't forget to keep in touch:*

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