

Mike & Bonnie's 2007 Newsletter



Prince William Sound in Alaska

Special events we celebrated in 2007

- * 10 years in one place
- * Silver Anniversary
- * Graduation

Holiday Greetings from us to you!

Greetings from Virginia!

When Michael and I talked about what to write this year in our annual letter, we found that we didn't accomplish a lot this year - but what we *did* was very eventful. We're still here in Virginia at our same jobs, but we observed the *tenth* year of living in Virginia. Who knew we'd be anywhere so long? For that matter, we could hardly believe we were celebrating our 25th wedding

anniversary. It doesn't seem that long ago when we married in the Special Forces Chapel at Fort Bragg. Now we are looking to soon see the completion of our academic endeavors: Michael's Master and my Bachelor degrees.



College Days

One reason we didn't do much this year is because we've been so busy at finishing our degrees. Michael has been pursuing his Masters degree online at the University of Phoenix with a double major of Adult Education, and Curriculum & Instruction. He will complete the first degree, Curriculum & Instruction, on Christmas Eve and he will complete the other one in early May of 2008. He's been doing *very* well, maintaining a 3.97 average. Bonnie is so proud of him! She'll be finishing her

Bachelor of Science in Business Management on January 14th with a GPA around 3.5 (those statistics courses did her in).

The big question people around here have been asking us is, "*what are you going to do next?*" Michael is hoping to be accepted for an instructor position back at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, this summer, and what we do next is based on that. We'll let you know as we find out.



Glacier Hiking in Alaska



25 Years Together

The big event was our Silver Anniversary. To celebrate, we decided to do an Alaskan cruise. When Bonnie started planning two years ago, it started out as a trip on a traditional cruise liner such as *Princess* like you see on television. The more we looked into it, the more we preferred a more personalized experience that didn't load us up on buses with hundreds of other people for shore trips. Bonnie searched on the Internet and found a fantastic wilderness-eco cruise called *Discovery Voyages*.

Alaska. After arriving and staying overnight in Anchorage, we explored the Prince William Sound aboard a small boat with only ten other passengers, the Captain and his fabulous crew of four – oh, and *Happy*, a black Labrador who lived onboard. It was an amazing trip!

Captain Dean, having extensive involvement with scientific research conducted after the Exxon Valdez oil spill, was intimately familiar with the coves, islands, and streams in the Prince William Sound. This, of course, worked to our favor. The weather was between 40-60 degrees each day (being colder by the glaciers). Each day we saw wildlife, kayaked, and hiked along beaches, meadows, rain forests, and glaciers. We saw humpback whales, porpoises, seals, sea otters and sea lions, gulls, arctic terns, a funny bird called an *oyster catcher* with a beak that looks like a plastic orange clothespin, bears (from a *far* distance), and mountain goats. We watched icebergs *calving* from glaciers (they make huge cracking noises that sound like thunder as they plunge into the water), and had not only the experience of walking on a glacier, but kayaking through iceberg floes on our final day – an incredible experience!



As we returned to the boat after our trips kayaking and hiking, we were met with snacks of cheese and crackers or freshly baked cookies by the chef, who kept us very well fed during our trip.

The other passengers on the boat consisted of one extended family. Fortunately, they were delightful company and they seemed to enjoy us as well. One of them caught a Halibut fishing off the side of the boat that was about four or five feet long. It made a delicious dinner for us. A trip to an oyster farm resulted in another gourmet dinner. We never went hungry on this trip. It was an incredible trip that we will treasure the memory of forever.

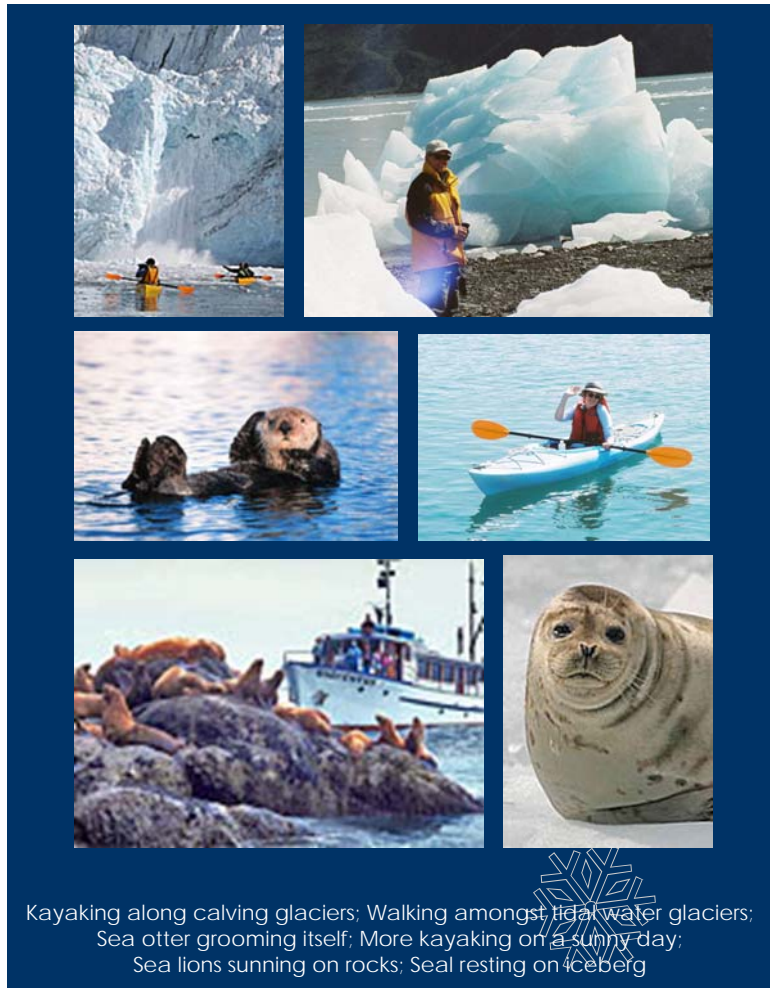
Our Holiday Wish

One recurring theme of this newsletter is the passage of time. It slips by so quickly that we find years have gone by so quickly – too quickly. It is always at this time of year when we realize how long it has been since we last saw you.

We hope this yearly holiday letter finds you well and happy. Know that we think of you often, and hope to get around to seeing you again when our schedules are not so frenzied.

We wish you a happy new year – one of peace, joy and love.

✧ *Mike and Bonnie* ✧



Kayaking along calving glaciers; Walking amongst tidal water glaciers; Sea otter grooming itself; More kayaking on a sunny day; Sea lions sunning on rocks; Seal resting on iceberg

