

Tennison Christmas News

Thirty-sixth Edition

2003-2004

A very Happy, Holiday Season to you and yours this year. We trust you have had a good 2003 and 2004. Yes, 2003 was incredibly busy, and somehow it all got away from me before I managed to get our annual news sent out. Since I keep in contact with most folks via email, by Christmas our news is old news. Last year we kept busy with two children's weddings and our own choosing, building and moving into a new home.

SQUARE DANCING

Square dancing continues to be one of our favorite pastimes, and these past two years were no exception. During the winter months we danced in Mesa, Arizona and enjoyed meeting new friends from all over the U.S. and Canada. We reconnected with many folks we had danced with previously and ventured up another level of dancing.

HOUSE HUNTING

All of this prompted us to seek a more permanent residence for our time in this Valley of the Sun. The dance season in Mesa is over by the end of March, and by then we were feverishly looking at homes in the area. Yes, a home without wheels for the months we square dance was what we had in mind. So, by mid-April we had chosen an area, picked out a lot and made the multiple decisions involved in building a new home. Our plan was to make the decisions, leave town and return in the fall to a completed home. We had to finish up everything in Arizona and get back to California by May because. . .

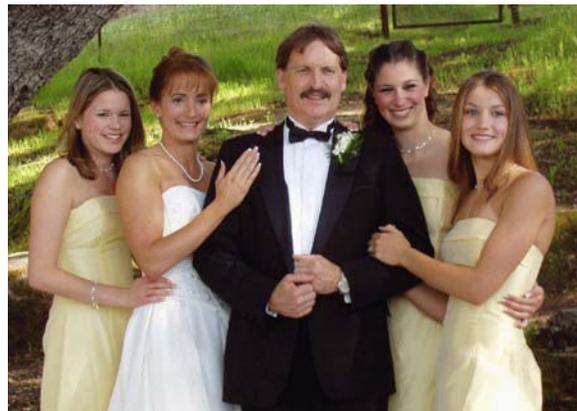
Gail's May 2003 Wedding

Yes, Gail's wedding in California's Gold Country took place on May 10. She and Thomas Seidman wed at an historic homestead on a lovely evening in May with family and friends there to witness the event. Monica and Tom's daughters, Shelley and Nicole, were attendants.

Gail, Tom and the girls live in Walnut Creek, a short distance from where Gail and Monica lived for years. Tom is a talented jazz musician whose engineering background has him at work in the roofing industry.

Shelley is a freshman in college this year and Nicole is a high school junior. Our Monica is a senior in high school, if you can believe that!

Here's Tom with his harem—left to right, Monica, Gail, Tom, Shelley and Nicole.



10th Anniversary Celebration

Eleven years ago we celebrated the marriage of Bev and Rick, so following the May 2003 festivities, they took an early anniversary trip to Costa Rica while we stayed with Selina and Rico. They enjoyed their trip, and we enjoyed spending time with our grandchildren.

On the Road Again

Time to hit the road again. We stayed west of the Mississippi spending time visiting national parks and wonderful scenery in Colorado, Wyoming and Idaho. The majestic Rocky Mountains kept us fascinated in Colorado's Black Canyon of the Gunnison, Telluride, Royal Gorge, Pike's Peak, and Garden of the Gods. Stops in Wyoming included Cheyenne, Casper, Cody, Yellowstone, and the Grand Tetons.

An extended stay in Yellowstone enabled us to savor sights like Old Faithful, Mammoth Hot Springs, Yellowstone Lake and Fishing Bridge. Continuing south, we stayed at the base of the Grand Tetons soaking in their grandeur. Idaho's Craters of the Moon National Monument was another interesting stop.

PAUL'S SEPTEMBER 2003 WEDDING

While we were wandering around the mountains of the West, Paul called to tell us he and Robyn were planning a September wedding on Mackinac Island, Michigan. It was a private affair with just the parents in attendance. Receptions followed in both Michigan and California. They spent their honeymoon in Ireland.

Robyn is a native Michigander, as they say. Robyn was working in public relations when she and Paul met. She was handling publicity for one of Ford's products. Ironically, they met in southern California. In addition to Robyn's master's degree in communication, she has one in hotel management.



Following Paul and Robyn's wedding we visited with friends on the Oregon coast. Then we proceeded with the move into our new home in Gilbert, Arizona. The move was exhausting. I thought we had disposed of our unnecessary items, but there were still lots left. Items we hadn't seen since 1999 had to be dealt with—find a place for it or get rid of it!

2003 Holidays

Mark and Pam were able to join us for Christmas in our new home, so we scrounged around for some decorations to make it seem festive. The year drew to a quiet close after so many big events. Lloyd joined Gail's family, Paul was with Robyn's, and Bev was with Rick's.

Meanwhile, the rest of the family...

Lloyd continues his computer business which has expanded more into communications and promotions these days. His working hours are atrocious, but it doesn't seem to bother him.

In 2003 he acquired a cat from Gail's new family, and in 2004 a "puppy" was added to the family. The puppy is now a very large puppy, but still a puppy. The local dog park gives them both a bit of exercise.

Mark moved to San Diego from Sacramento early in 2003 and lives in his condo practically on the trolley line to Tijuana.

His pursuit of aerial transportation outside of an airplane continues to flourish, and in February 2003 he participated in a World Record Jump in Arizona. Continuing in this vein, in February 2004 he traveled to Thailand where skydivers from all over the world, in conjunction with the Thailand air force, completed a new world record of 357 parachutists in Takli, Thailand.

Mark's work these past couple of years has taken him to England and the Netherlands and various cities throughout the USA.

Because San Diego is about a five-hour drive from our Arizona home, and because Mark visits someone nearby, we enjoy visits from him from time to time.

Pam enjoys teaching and gets very involved with her students. Additionally, she is sort of the ex officio legal counsel to the school. She loves working with the students, regardless of their age level. Line dancing and swing dancing take up her limited spare time.

We loved that her teacher's schedule allowed her to join us in our new home for Christmas in 2003. She and Mark were here to help make our first Christmas special. And it was a treat to spend time with one of our busy adult children. Seldom is that possible.

Gail's work as a pharmaceutical rep gives her continued success in her field. She has won various awards and trips as a result of her endless hard work. She even called us one time while we were on the road with her adrenalin at full speed to let us know on a company sponsored bowling outing she had bowled nine strikes! Not bad for someone who keeps in shape by running, not throwing balls down alleys.

Her family takes a great deal of her time and energy, and she and Tom are experiencing the joys of teenage parenting. Each of the girls in the past twelve months had an auto accident, but thankfully no injuries. Ah, I remember those days!

Gail and Tom's social life keeps them busy when teen-age crises are not being handled. Tom's pastime when he is not working or playing the saxophone is fishing. So, when his gaggle of girls gets to him, he just "goes fishing."

Bev's busy lifestyle is reminiscent of earlier times with the madness of little ones, but somehow these modern mothers seem to add even more by being constantly on the go. They have school, after-school activities, play dates, scouting. She is in charge of a Book Discussion group at Selina's school which meets at 7:15 before school. There are more than 100 members who attend this.

Bev has a wide circle of friends through a Mother's Club and other activities who offer a great support group and friendship. She squeezes in time at their fitness club, belongs to an adult Book Club and recently took up tennis. Starting in December she is working for Prentice-Hall, publishers of text books, and will do staff development with teachers introducing them to new texts. She and her best "buds" from high school enjoyed a trip to the Mendocino coast in October.

Rick's work on the homestead is legendary. Their outdoor space has been enhanced by a Bocce Ball Court, and their garden is flourishing. New crown moldings in the house are elegant, as are some new doors and woodwork. They entertain frequently, and Rick is the ultimate "grill master." His work still takes him to exotic places like Singapore, and his golf took him to Cabo San Lucas.

As a family they have traveled to Florida and San Diego for visits with Rick's family. And in March 2004 they visited us in our new Arizona home where we did the local sights, and they enjoyed a spring training game between the Cubs and the Athletics. Talk about mixed allegiances.

Paul and Robyn's nice docile lifestyle is going to change drastically in January when they will have a new addition to the family. Their two pug dogs and new kitten will seem like a walk in the park when the baby arrives. We are all thrilled with the prospect.

Ford Motor Company had Paul running from city to city for a while, but things are now settled down, and he just works very long hours, which is normal for him.

Their water-skiing this summer was curtailed drastically due to Robyn's pregnancy, but I suspect it will resume next year.

Robyn teaches at a local college two days a week and works out of the home the remainder of the time. Her situation is ideal for when the baby arrives.

We managed a quick family baby shower at Thanksgiving in California.



From left- Paul, Lloyd, Monica, Ray, Joy, Gail, Tom, Bev, Rick, Pam, Mark, Selina and Rico

Our Grandchildren

Our traveling lifestyle is one we enjoy very much, but we do miss the obvious advantage that stay-nearby grandparents have to visit their grandchildren frequently. But on the other side of the coin, we enjoyed a visit from then sixteen year old Monica to Arizona last February. We spent more time with her during this visit than we had since we used to babysit when she was little.

Monica attended her first prom in 2003, and when it came time for the 2004 prom, she asked me to make her prom dress which she had designed. So, I dragged out the sewing machine which had been in storage for five years, and Voila!

During the summer months she works as a camp counselor. She traveled to Mexico on a charitable venture to help the less fortunate. As class Vice President once again Monica is busy at school and out. She babysits daily after school and is involved in all the normal high school activities. She was just recently accepted to Chico State University, her mother's alma mater, and is thrilled about that.



Monica's Junior Prom

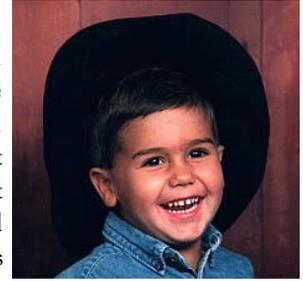
Selina is an active second grader involved in school activities, after school activities, sports and Girl Scouts. She studies Spanish, attends gymnastics, is a Brownie Girl Scout, plays on a soccer team, and is an exemplary student.



She is just beginning to outgrow the "Disney Princess" stage but remains our little princess. During our visits to California we stay with Bev and Rick and enjoy the company of our little ones, even though our stamina isn't what it once was. At a parent-teacher conference Selina was described as a "girley-girl." That is certainly an apt description of our flower and heart drawing gal.

Rico

Yes, he is that animated. Ever on the go and into everything, this ball of fire keeps everyone worn out. While planning our Thanksgiving visit, Rico wanted to talk to Grandpa on the phone to let him know he wanted to play baseball and football with him when we got there. When he turned three last February, he played on a preschool soccer team. He now attends gymnastic classes.



2004 ACTIVITIES AND TRAVEL

We spent the first three months of 2004 dancing our hearts and feet out in Mesa. We utilized our fitness center, entertained friends and played cards. Ray helped form a new Computer Club, and I tried to catch up on some things that had lain dormant during our full time travel.

At Easter we flew to California to celebrate with the family and then returned in May for some medical appointments. By June we were finally on the road and visited Monument Valley in Arizona en route to Denver where the Square Dance National Convention took place.

Next stop Mount Rushmore and the other sights of South Dakota. We pressed east with a stop in Niagara Falls before reaching our intended destination of the Canadian Maritime Provinces.

We spent most of the summer touring New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia. We enjoyed the trip very much. At summer's end we moseyed through New England and Quebec, did some genealogy in Ontario, and saw some plays in Stratford. We visited Paul and Robyn, went to a square dance convention in Louisville, and Ray attended a high school reunion in Chicago.

By then it was November, we returned home only to turn around quickly and go to California for Thanksgiving. So, the Christmas decorations are up, the shopping almost done, and a Newsletter now complete. Life is good.

We wish all a very Merry Christmas and a truly Happy New Year.

Love,

Joy and Ray