

Family & Friends!

Christmas 2009

Hope you like the new Christmas Card in our collector series – *and “no” we didn't eat Curly! He's enjoying life as a “free range” chicken on a nearby farm.* He was a product of our new & improved Chicken Ranch – with our incubator, we got about 16 chicks out of 24 eggs. A pretty high hatch rate as the say in the business! We gave most of them away, but kept five for ourselves – *always entertaining!*

After the Chicken massacre by the neighbor's dog last year, we built a new coop with 4x4 posts set in concrete and surrounded with heavy duty welded-wire. A mountain lion couldn't get through it! To show we have a little 'class' we also put in a 4x6 foot masonry pool with red brick walls – *only the best for our birds!*
<http://picasaweb.google.com/jmurtari/ChickenReport> (click on slide show)

We picked up a new bunny, Leo the “Lion head” rabbit. A breed with an actual lion's mane around their neck – you can see his pictures at above. He's potty-trained and has the run of the kitchen – pretty good life for a lagomorph (*for city-slickers, that's the taxonomic order that includes rabbits and hares – not to be confused with nasty rodents!*).

Inside our home we finished the bathroom with a nice vinyl floor. It required pulling up the toilet and then re-seating it. We had a problem with some leaky gaskets and Dom had to re-assemble it by himself about three times. I would have loved to help, but had some email that needed answering!

We ate well from the garden with plenty of lettuce, cucumbers, onions, potatoes, and strawberries. Later in the summer there were tomatoes, pepper, pears, beans and raspberries. There was a lot of grapes! In the fall I made about 25 gallons of wine – *it not only tastes good, but it's good for you!*

Oh, let me back up to the Spring. One thing I've discovered about the legal system, it may not solve your problems, but it provides a lot of entertainment value! As many of you know, at the close of last year's Newsletter I had stopped driving due to a license suspension. I was also VERY tired of being labeled a \$100,000 child-support deadbeat. I prepared a pretty thorough petition showing how much money I actually made and how it was spent on Domenic and a lot of long distance visits.
<http://www.akidsright.org/support/petition.pdf> (*because it's on the web Hiromi became Adrienne and Colorado turned into California*).

I was really hopeful we might be able to settle the whole thing. It was not to be. The “Support Magistrate” through me out of Court after about 5 minutes. She said there was no need to even have a trial – which is suppose to mean that if everything I said in my petition was true, it still would not justify any changes. *Oh well, walking is good exercise!*

Dom & I enjoy watching Food Network. Last Christmas we made a terrific Prime Rib Roast and a Yorkshire pudding out of the drippings. We ate so much we got sick of it! But we noticed they were taking video auditions for the next Food Network Star!

Well, who could resist that? With Dom as camera man I was ready – and what did Food Network need? Not another way to make an omelet or cook chicken breasts – *something new, original, & alcoholic! The Merry Winemaker was born!*
<http://www.Murtari.org/winemaker.html> – to see the video.

Dom's a Junior now at Fairview High School in Boulder. It's a 'mega' school and he enjoys playing the clarinet in their marching band. They participate state wide in precision competitions and went to the State semi-finals this year. He is also becoming quite a skier! Copper Mountain is his usual spot. Spends a lot of weekends on the slopes and can handle the black-diamond trails – I just warn him not to lead with his head! He's driving a used Subaru with a stick shift -- so far no car troubles – *and he can drive around here!*

I don't know if I can pass on the sense of relief & joy I felt as Dom and I were together this summer. Starting with the divorce and relocation so many years ago – it was like walking through a mine field and finally both getting to the other side! I hear from so many parents who didn't make it – what a tragedy to be alienated from your own kids?

I had to close my web hosting business over the summer since I couldn't get to the office. I have some elderly and sick Aunts (my mother's sisters) in Italy who I can't visit – since my passport is suspended. Not being able to even drive is an indignity. I feel like a 'bag lady' in my hometown as I walk home with my groceries (thankfully a store is close by!). There was a little money left from the business, enough to last till about May? Oh, and I got a reminder from the "Child Support Collection Unit" that I owe \$104,000! The interest alone is now larger than the money they want every week. Wow!

If your wondering about a Christmas gift – send me a few lottery tickets and some luck! I am working on some new business ideas. Got an article I wrote published in a Computer Magazine and started a new business web site: <http://www.ExtSQL.com/>

Many ask how I can risk arrest in an attempt to reform the system. Now, I have to admit it has gotten easier with recent events. I thank God for answering my prayers so many years ago and giving me a loving family & a wonderful son. *I would have promised anything else in return and still felt I got a bargain! I'm just giving back with a smile!*

As I have told some close friends, "We all have our hidden faults that we just can't see. If I'm so uncaring and insensitive to be deserving of this train-wreck – well, I deserve to be in jail. Better if I embrace it myself and hope in God's mercy. And if I don't deserve it, to have Faith in his justice. Not doing anything is the worst option."

Perspective. I went to some calling hours this summer. A high school friend had lost a young son in a car accident. It was a tragic event and while I like to think I have Faith; I don't know how he & his wife got through it all and keep going. *Problems?* I don't have ANY problems compared to facing that and I'm sure every parent feels the same.

Christmas is my favorite season of the year! Dom will be here on the 19th and staying till the 31st – it should be a very nice time. I don't need to think long to realize what a tremendous difference the Faith of Jesus of Nazareth has made in my life. I'm so thankful for his love and wisdom and courage. His undying belief that in God we have loving Father who cares deeply for each us. *I'm looking forward to the New Year!*

Love,

John & Domenic Murtari

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More pictures: <http://www.Murtari.Org/>

P.S. *Looking forward to getting your Christmas Cards (especially pictures)! We need them for decorating!*