

December, 2000

Dear Friends,

Seasons Greetings!

My year really started out last December with my 6-week trip to New Zealand. I spent the first 3 weeks bicycle touring around the North Island. My cycling took me around the Coromandel Peninsula and through Rotorua (their Yellowstone). Then I took a bus up



to the Bay of Islands, where I spent Christmas Day sailing. I then returned to Auckland where I walked around the America's Cup Village – no racing that day unfortunately. The Kiwi's winning the America's Cup is like the Broncos winning the Super Bowl – the country goes NUTS!

New Year's Day found me in the town of Hamilton to participate in the Millennium Marathon. This was a wonderful event as there were participants from over 35 countries who ran in the first marathon of the new millennium. While the day started out overcast and drizzly (we were unable to see the sun rise on the new Millennium), it eventually cleared



and was a wonderful day. The best thing about participating was the fellow runners I met. I made new running friends from Denmark, Norway, Israel, Wales, Germany, Scotland, and England. I even ran into a couple of folks from Denver.

The day after the marathon, I flew to the South Island to "tramp" for 3 weeks. The first track I did was a beautiful 4-



day backpack along the coast in the Abel Tasman National Park. The trail alternated between dense, lush vegetation to spectacular vistas of ocean and beaches.

My next hike was farther south in the Southern Alps outside of the town of Queenstown. I revisited the Routeburn Track where I had hiked on my first trip to New Zealand in 1986. Here I met up with a wonderful French couple, with whom I traveled with for the next



week.

But the absolute highlight of my trip was to be lucky enough to happen upon an opening on the Milford Track. Normally, reservations are required months in advance, but when I walked into the permit office just to inquire, it just so happened that there was one cancellation for the very next day which fit perfectly into my schedule. The Milford Track is advertised as "the most



beautiful walk in the world,” and I would be hard pressed to argue that claim. It was four days of magic. I have seen many waterfalls in my life, and two of the most beautiful I have ever seen were on this walk. The water is so clean and pure, the color so amazing. I watched fat trout swimming around in

pools that were at least 12 feet deep,



yet I could make out the spots on the fish and the individual pebbles on the creek bottom. We were also blessed with absolutely perfect weather due to a seasonal drought in the area (rainfall can be over 300” per year).

My trip, especially my 4 days on the Milford Track, were so wonderful, I am returning in February. This time, I am taking my father. He has always talked of experiencing the Milford Track, and since he is 74, we decided to do it this winter. A gentleman I met who ran a B & B I stayed at during the



marathon will also be joining us. It will be great to share the hike with a native New Zealander.

My employer, Charles Schwab, has been great and is again granting me the time to spend a month away.



The rest of my year has been relatively normal (heck, I had no vacation time left and needed to start saving for my trip in February). I spent time working in the yard of my new home, planting a large garden and canning the fruits of my labor. This fall, I was again involved running a marathon for the Leukemia Society. But this time, rather than fund-raising, I was a mentor for new participants and we did the Chicago Marathon in October. The great news for those of you that supported me in the past, is that Rachael, the

“little girl” that I ran in honor of, is now 13 and had her 5 year leukemia free anniversary this year! So thank you one more time for your support and contributions. Every mile was worth it!



I sincerely hope your year has been as wonderful and full of beautiful sights, sounds, and experiences.

All the best,