



ROCKY'S HOLIDAY GAZETTE—2002

From Rocky, Leonor, and Jesse

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A Year of High Highs and Low Lows

2002 was a year that brought us a lot of joy, a painful tragedy, a few surprises, and some pride in accomplishments well done. We managed a little travel, had only mediocre success in tennis, and reestablished long lost connections.

Rocky Phelps & Leonor Allison
7114 Zircon Ct SW
Lakewood, WA 98498
253-582-3288
rockyp@rockyp.com
http://www.rockyp.com

A Tragic Passing

Leonor's daughter, Jesse's mom, Debbie, passed away suddenly on Jan. 12 at age 39. She had suffered from asthma for years, and an attack that morning was just too much for her heart. We all miss her terribly.



Jerry and Jesse with flowers on their mom's birthday.

We Visited Spain and Paris and JoAnn in May/June

We traveled to Europe—first Spain then France—with our neighbors and good friends, Jim & Bev O'Rourke.

In Spain, we stayed on the Costa del Sol, enjoying the sun, the Mediterranean Sea, and the "White Cities" in the mountains.



Note how we dressed very carefully to avoid looking like tourists.

JoAnn flew in from Paris to spend a few days in Spain with us. She was glad to have a kidless vacation.



We also managed to fit in a day trip to Morocco, in North Africa. That was a guided tour, so we basically only saw what they wanted us to see and had no chance to really see the country.

After a week in Spain, we drove north along the eastern coastline of Spain into France. We spent another week in southern France, including Provence, touring Medieval walled cities and other beautiful sights.

Provence is truly a wondrous area, with its picturesque countryside, amazing architecture, and friendly people.

We reached Paris, surprise, just in time to see some of the French Open tennis at Roland Garros. Our stay in Paris was less than a week. We spent much of that time visiting JoAnn and her family, and sightseeing was of secondary importance.



One of Spain's "White Cities". This is Frigiliano on the Costa del Sol.



Here is our Moroccan tour group being herded through the maze of streets to the market



We stayed in B&B's along the way. This one is near Dijon, France.

The Paris Part

The time spent in Paris with JoAnn and her family was the highlight of the trip (for me, anyway!) We were there on June 3, which was JoAnn's and Zoë's birthday.

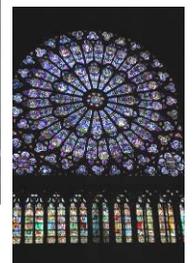


JoAnn, Ian and Zoë.

We also managed to see—again—many of the Parisian highlights, Versailles, Notre Dame, the Louvre, and more.



Hall of Mirrors, Versailles.



Stained glass in Notre Dame

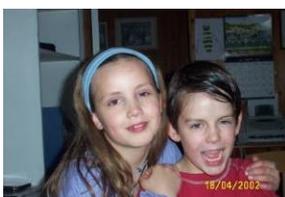
Some Pictures of the Grandkids...



Jennifer's Carly and Nick



Jeremy on his 6th birthday, with big brother Jesse



JoAnn's Zoë and Ian



Jeremy and Jesse hunting for Easter eggs in our front yard



Leonor and I in France



Nick's first day of school (kindergarten)



A Reunion

I was excited, pleased, deliriously happy, and just plain thrilled to be contacted and reunited with my first grandchild, Ingrid. She is a beautiful 18-year-old young woman.

She is studying art in Seattle, and we are looking forward to renewing our

Puerto Vallarta

Just two weeks after hurricane Kenna hit the West Coast of Mexico, we visited Puerto Vallarta. Not sure what to expect—in the way of damage from the hurricane—we were happy to find our hotel had had only minor damage. The winds had blown down the fences around the tennis courts.



Most of the hurricane damage was in the center of the town of Puerto Vallarta, where the tsunami (violent ocean waves) had all but eliminated the main beach area (the Malecon) and severely damaged the street level stores. It didn't detract from our enjoyment of PV, however.

Visiting My Roots A Trip Down Memory Lane

When I saw the announcement of a programming class that I wanted to take, and saw that it was going to be held in Kansas City, I immediately knew this would be my chance to visit my Mom and Dad's home towns and my aunts, uncles and cousins whom I hadn't seen in several years. So in mid-August I spent three days in KC in class, and was lucky enough to have an evening dinner visit from my cousin Jeannie (Mom's sister's daughter) and her husband Leslie.



Rocky, Jeannie & Leslie Watson



We kids used to play in this barn at Gus and Elsie's farm



My Mom was born and raised in this farm house just outside of Cambridge, NE.

After the class ended, I flew to McCook, NE. There, I visited all my dad's living sisters and brother, as well as several of my cousins. I haven't enjoyed three days like that for years—it was so warm and friendly to see those wonderful people again. I decided that a visit to McCook every two years or so would be in order. So get ready, you guys, I'm coming back!



My Aunt Elsie, Cousin Carol, Me, Aunt Mary and Aunt Marge



Dad's 94-year-old brother Art, and Marge.



Kansas City sure knows how to welcome a guest!!