

June 2004

It has been a busy and eventful time since my last letter. The most significant of these events was the death of my father. He had a benign tumor removed from his brain in April of 2003 in Portland, Oregon. At some point during the process he suffered a stroke, and then a few infections while in the hospital. He was moved to a care facility in Coos Bay, Oregon and was receiving physical therapy for the stroke. He turned 81 years old on July 17th, then on July 20th he suffered what they think was a massive heart attack and died. It was the day of Gisleide and my third wedding anniversary. We held a memorial service for him in Mexico at my parent's house on December 18th. We spread half his ashes there and half were already deposited at Fort Rosecrans in Point Loma, California; overlooking San Diego bay where he grew up. For the ceremony I created a video slide show of the photos we could gather that showed him throughout his life. I even found photos of the two ships he was stationed on during World War II. The photo of his first ship (USS Colhoun APD-2) was taken three weeks before it was sunk, so he was definitely aboard when the photo was taken. I made a DVD of the slide show and the video of the service. I have extra copies if anyone wants one. Also, Gisleide's grandfather died in March. He was in his 90's. She had visited him at his home in the state of Acre, in Brazil, a little over a year ago, which was fortunate for her. She did not go to Brazil for the funeral.

Now, on to the ordinary events of our lives. Gisleide finished with her dental implants in Brazil. While she was waiting for the braces to do their job to make the teeth migrate to their right places, she traveled around Brazil some. She spent carnival in Salvador, Bahia. I did not go to visit with her there, even though I wanted to. She got quite sick with some kind of fever during the carnival, so she did not enjoy it much. She spent some time in the Amazon rain forest, near Manaus. She got recruited to be a translator on a tour group. She was paid with a free helicopter ride with the tour group over the jungle.

Gisleide returned in time for us to make a trip in April to Oregon to visit with my parents, sister and niece. We stopped in Denver on the way there to visit with friends. The whole trip was pretty good, and, looking back upon it, I am very happy we went. My dad had his operation not long after we left. In the summer Gisleide took a trip to east Africa. She planned a short trip, but enjoyed it so much she spent a much longer time there. She went to Tanzania, Kenya, Ethiopia, Sudan, Somalia, Egypt, Jordan, Israel and the Palestinian territories. I joined her for a couple of weeks in Egypt during November. We had a good time there, but were very ready to leave at the end. Gisleide has a web page of photos from her trip at "<http://www.jm.net/~gis/2003/>" and I made a web page for our photos in Egypt at "<http://www.jm.net/~kiefer/egypt/>". Gisleide got home on Dec 15th, we went to my company's holiday party on the 18th, and then we flew to Mexico early in the morning on the 19th. It was a very busy week for us. We spent a week and a half in Baja where we had an enjoyable Christmas and my dad's memorial service. Photos from the trip can be seen at "<http://www.jm.net/~kiefer/dec2003/>". We spent New Year's at home. A few days after getting home we found a house for sale in Georgetown (D.C.) that was not "too" expensive. Gisleide has really wanted to live in Georgetown, so we ended up buying the house. So, our new address is:

XXXXXXX

Washington, DC

Not too long after visiting with my mother in Mexico she had a spell where she fell and cut her forehead. It bled quite a bit. Fortunately she was found by a neighbor and was taken to the local clinic. It was night time and the road is rough into town, so it was quite an experience. The local clinic could not fully handle her, so she had to be taken all the way to the hospital in Cabo San Lucas. She already had two of these types of spells in the previous year. A few weeks after her fall she had a minor spell, and she had some tests done. The doctors determined it to be a problem with her heart, so she got med-evaced out of Mexico. She went to her normal doctor in Spokane, Washington. She has been there for about three months now. They wanted to install a pacemaker at first, but they finally decided to try medicine to correct the problem. It seems to be doing the job. My mom has decided to sell the house in Mexico and move into an assisted living apartment building in Spokane. In the middle of all this Gisleide and I went out for a visit. We went to Southern California for a week first, and then to Spokane for a week. While in SoCal we did a lot of visiting friends and family and a little bit of vacation. My uncle just retired from thirty years of being a Law Professor at Gonzaga University in Spokane. We attended a reception where he was honored for being named a professor emeritus at the school. Photos from the trip to SoCal and Spokane can be seen at "<http://www.jm.net/~kiefer/socalspokane/>". My mom and uncle just left to drive down to Mexico to get the house ready to sell and gather her stuff for her move to Spokane.

On the local scene here there is one new museum, the International Spy Museum. It opened last summer and has been very popular. I have not been to it because the lines are so long to get in. They have all kinds of paraphernalia from the spy trade, mostly from the cold-war era. I think that it is all governmental espionage, mostly from the cold war era, and not industrial espionage. The World War II memorial has opened on the Mall. I have not been to it, but the photos of it look very nice. There have been many changes in our old neighborhood in the four years we lived there. The new convention center is six blocks away. It is two blocks from one of the up and coming night spots in town, on U Street. It has become much nicer and more popular. We are four blocks from a growing commercial corridor on 14th Street. A new upscale grocery store opened there last year. Many new condominium and apartment complexes are being built around there. We were ten blocks straight east of one of the most popular areas of town, Dupont Circle. The housing prices have gone up quite a bit in the entire city since we bought, as it has throughout the country. The Dupont Circle area has become too expensive for most people, so they are spilling over into other neighboring areas. Ours is the most affordable of these areas. We saw a very large influx of people who would rather be living a few blocks west. Actually, we were members of that group. Our neighborhood has improved due to this immigration. There is lots of social and political debate and turmoil over this "gentrification". We lived on the edge of the area where the riots of 1968 destroyed so much property. There are still vacant lots that have not been redeveloped yet, but slowly they are all being filled. The DC government is quite often the impediment since it owns many of these lots. The government also owns many abandoned buildings that it seized from delinquent owners. The current administration is working on getting them sold to private developers, and we have seen this happen in our old neighborhood.

Now is the time for the seventeen-year cicadas to make their appearance. They are everywhere here. They last for only a couple of months and we are about half way through the event. They are very prehistoric looking, and they are very noisy. We will survive the infestation just fine, though.

Here are some photos from the last year and a half.



Gisleide on top of Mt. Kilimanjaro



Kenya



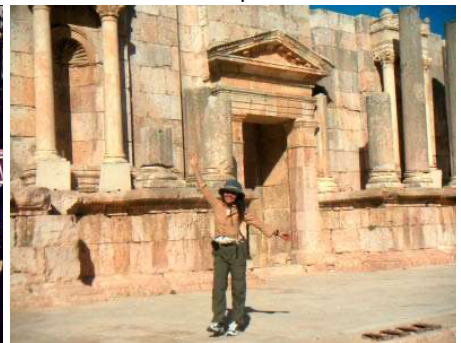
Ethiopia



Sudan



Palestine



Petra, Jordan



Israel



Karnak Temple in Luxor, Egypt



Egyptian Museum in Cairo





Karnak Temple in Luxor, Egypt



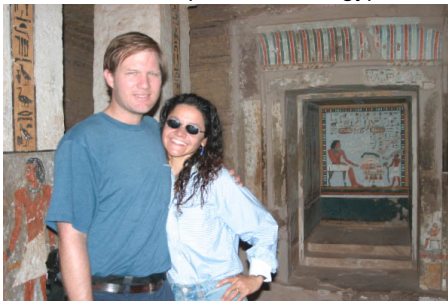
Ramadan Breakfast with Egyptians



Step Pyramid of Djoser: Saqqara, Egypt



Luxor, Egypt



Tombs of the Nobles, Aswan, Egypt



Pyramids and Sphinx at Giza, Egypt



Queen Hatshepsut's Temple, Luxor



Giza, Egypt



The Nile River at Aswan, Egypt



Our new house (the yellow one)



La Jolla, California



With Becky and Cliff in CA



With Hank and Martha in CA



Professor Emeritus Reception



The house in Mexic



My Mom's new home