

Two thousand and nine was a year to count our blessings.

Just after we mailed the Ganders Gazette last year, we learned that Larry's Mom had died in her sleep. But she lived an exemplary life for 86 years that was chock-full of entertainment and volunteer work on behalf of cancer patients, the developmentally disabled, sick children, and the elderly. And she left three children and five grandchildren with families that are committed to continuing her legacy. We miss Betty Ganders very much, especially during the holiday season, but we know that her spirit will live on within us.

Our blessing is that we vacationed in Kauai, Hawaii this year. Robin, who found \$157 air tickets to Lihu'e online, was so pleased that she threatened to stand up in the airplane and taunt the other Seattle passengers about how much more they paid. Gratefully, she did no airborne taunting. But we spent a fantastic ten September days of swimming with green sea turtles, spotting an endangered monk seal, touring the lush rain forests and canyons, and just enjoying the warmth of the island.

Our children continue to be successful, happy, and the move. Cara, who works for the Fred Hutchison Cancer Research Institute near Lake Union, was sent by her employer to Honolulu for a conference this year. She loved the tropical vacation sunshine but everything seems to be brighter for her at home as well. She moved from her Wallingford basement apartment to a Ballard two-story home that features regular-height ceilings and windows through which real natural light beams. Best of all, she moved without our help! Yeah! Most admirable, she has continued her grandmother's tradition as an active volunteer.

Aaron and Amy continue to thrive in Michigan. They purchased a boat and a travel trailer this year. Their Suburban recently had an untimely collision with a deer. But always the innovator, Aaron set aside his disappointment with the minor car damage and quickly called "dibs" on the road kill meat. Their freezer is heaping with venison, hunting season notwithstanding. The Lansing economy is picking up a bit and they are considering moving to acreage that has its own wildlife, so he doesn't have to rely exclusively on road kill for his sport.

Adam hopes to graduate this spring with his master's degree from Washington State University in sports management. He swapped his graduate assistant position for a permanent full-time job with the university as assistant ticket manager – dispelling Larry's lingering

fear that a sports management degree would never lead to a real job. The job allowed him to trade his clunker car for a Nissan Frontier pickup. He's arguing that it's the perfect tow vehicle in case Larry wants to give him a boat for Christmas. He has moved from his campus apartment to a Pullman home with his girlfriend, Hannah. And they didn't need help moving either. Yeah again.

Tiffany has retired from the Oly Rollers roller derby team but is now a player-coach of her own team. She and her boyfriend Dylan have done an amazing job renovating a vacant home they have moved to in the Boston Harbor area. Varnished hardwood floors, freshly painted walls, and lots of soap and water have converted the dwelling to a cozy Olympia home that rightfully makes them proud. And they didn't need help moving, either, and that makes us proud!

One of the year's thrills was watching our niece, Mia Yoshida; she performed the lead role of Miss Saigon at the Coeur d' Alene Theater. Her career is certainly on the move. But that would come as no surprise to her grandmother.

We're spending Christmas at the Boisen ranch in Northern Idaho and Spokane this year. There we know we will find chilly, snowy weather that is traditional for the season and the warmth of family and friends.

Despite whatever the holiday weather brings, our wish is that you will be moved and warmed by your own blessings.

*Merry Christmas
and Happy New Year*

Larry & Robin

And that yappy schnauzer, Tuney Anderson Ganders

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* To view our family holiday album online, check the family web page out.
<http://www.ganders.net>