

Happy Holidays! While this letter will reach you in 2012, we wanted to share with our family and friends some of the joys, challenges and victories from 2011.

In January we headed to Juneau for our 5<sup>th</sup> tour of duty as legislative staff in Alaska's grey and rainy - but very friendly - capital, Juneau. The split of our life between two very different cities provides us with both a change of pace and change of social scene that could not be more different! Between January and April we bundle against the Juneau rain and wind, work long days 6-7 days a week, and enjoy the company of people heavily invested in politics and the future of our state. Back in our hometown of Fairbanks, we enjoy long, warm summer days and long, cold winter nights. We love our Fairbanks friends dearly - they are always planning amazing trips to the Alaska wilderness, working on great projects in our community and lending a hand to one another to make it all possible.

In the summers of 2009 and 2010, Joe's parents put up a gorgeous yurt on our property to serve as a guesthouse for them and our other visitors. Unfortunately, an electrical fire destroyed the structure in April, while we were still in Juneau. Thanks to lots of help from our friends, we were able to clean up the debris and get the spot ready to rebuild. Joe's folks drove up a U-Haul full of household goods in September, and are planning to start on another cabin this coming summer.

We enjoyed a wonderful summer of slightly cooler temperatures than average, but a very successful garden. Anna continued her on-the-side bookkeeping business, and greatly enjoyed her first year on the Board of Directors of our local volunteer fire department. Joe volunteered with several local government races, spent a lot of happy hours in the garden and greenhouse and continued to hone his skills with Alaskan foods in the kitchen.

In July, we headed south to Anchorage to attend the wedding of Anna's cousin Walter and his fiancé Michelle. In early August we traveled to Colorado for the Shoemaker Family Reunion (Anna's mom's family) and took a great road trip visiting National Parks and other locations throughout Southwest Colorado. We helped organize a trip into Denali Park with a several friends who had won the Denali National Park Road Lottery. Only 800 tickets are drawn that allow the recipient to drive their personal vehicle on one of four days on the Denali Park Road that is otherwise strictly limited to Park Rangers and tour buses. We had an amazing time for four days deep inside the park, camping and cooking with great friends from across Alaska.

Joe's brother Jay stayed with us for most of 2011, working on his cabin. Jay took a great job in October that moved him back to Kansas City. While we miss him dearly, we are looking forward to a long visit from him this summer.

October was a good time for a break from work and house chores, so we headed down to Loreto, Mexico to spend a week relaxing with Joe's brother, Jay, and our dear friends Grier and Amory. The town was quiet, the people were friendly and the weather was fantastic. I'm sure we'll be back!

November took us to Delta Junction for a relaxing weekend with Anna's dad, his fiancé Wanda, and Anna's sister, Carrie. We enjoyed exploring the ranch, celebrating an early Thanksgiving and spending quality time with loved ones.

Since our return home after our honeymoon in August 2009, we have been working diligently on building our house. We are proud to announce that on December 11<sup>th</sup> we moved into and spent our very first night in our new home! We cannot begin to express how good it feels to be moved in - with trim and flooring too! Thank you to the many friends and family members who went above and beyond with helping us through their know-how, brute strength, and time. Anna kept a great photo diary of the project that you can see on her Facebook page.

We'll wind up 2011 by heading out to Eureka, Alaska to help our musher buddy Brent Sass (wildandfreealaska.com) get ready for the Yukon Quest and Iditarod dog sled races. While we are up there, we will prepare all his food for his upcoming races and help out with taking care of his 50+ dogs. Should be a great time!

Wishing you contentment and love this coming year,

Anna & Joe

*Viel Liebe und warme Gedanken für das kommende Jahr!*



*Love, Peace, Joy*

Happy Holidays! Love, Joe and Anna

Wishing love and peace for you and your loved ones.  
May you feel the joy of being truly present in the special  
moments of the season.

Happy Holidays!  
Love, Joe and Anna



100%