

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS, 1991

This year began with most noteworthy activities centered around geology. I took on the job of Project Chief of the Pacific Northwest Mineral Resource Assessment and was team leader on a study and publication of tracts permissive for the occurrence of undiscovered copper deposits in the Cascades. The map we did showed where there is likely conflict with habitat of the Northern Spotted Owl and it turned out that a full 71 percent of the owl habitat has zero potential for copper deposits. I went to the Washington D.C. area 3 times in 5 weeks to make Congressional Briefings on wilderness proposals for BLM lands and to Portland to brief the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on the copper paper.

In June, Chris and I spent an extended weekend in Yosemite Valley and up on Glacier Point. We set up our tent at Camp Four, drank beer at the lodge, hiked to the top of Vernal and Nevada Falls, and had brunch at the Ahwanee. Chris decided that the new Honda was more fun to drive than his old Datsun.

In July, Barbara and I went to Hawaii as part of her job (I know, "rough") and saw the solar eclipse from shipboard about 30 miles west of Kona. It was an amazing sight; while we looked on, a hunk of a prominence about three earth diameters off the Sun's surface leapt away and fell back in. It got dark, cold, and windy in the middle of the morning and the colors were intensified by the ash in the air from Pinatubo's eruption a few weeks earlier.

My field work this summer consisted of going back to the Kern Plateau and putting the finishing touches on work I've been doing there since 1982 (as well as bagging three peaks). I have all the data necessary to publish the Geologic Map of the South Sierra Wilderness next winter. In the middle of my field work, I went on a mountaineering trip to Middle Palisade with a couple of my dear friends with whom I've been hiking and climbing since the days of Explorer Post 90, some sixteen years ago. We didn't get to the summit this time so that trip joins the several others where I had a wonderful time not getting to the top.

A couple of years ago I was invited to give a paper at the White Mountain Research Station's 1991 Natural History Symposium in Bishop. I was unsure if they'd have interest in mineral resources but I submitted an abstract anyhow. I ended up giving the talk and also chairing the session on Sociology and Economics that included speakers from Mono Lake Committee and L.A. Water and Power. Because of, rather than despite a wide range of views, the session went off well. Barbara, two of her friends, and I finished off the summer with a hike from hut to hut in the Yosemite back country that ended at Vogelsang High Sierra Camp where I went up my 4th peak of the summer.

In the Fall, the 4th biannual Humboldt State University Boot 'n Blister (hiking) Club reunion backpack took place. We had a record 44 people on the trip with nearly all of us making the 15-mile, two day trip to Canyon Creek Lakes. The age range of overnighers ran from 5 years old to not-quite 50; the gathering at the roadhead extended the age range another 20 years. It is a real joy to stay close to the people who were and are part of my life as the years go on; I'll continue these trips either as a hiker or a roadheader from now on.

In November, I sent my 298-page Congressional briefing book on Oregon minerals to the print shop and gave papers on my copper study at both the U.S. Forest Service *Geofiesta* in Albuquerque and at the Northwest Mining Association meeting in Spokane. I am up to about 76 publications now, but none of them are as significant as Chris' achievement this fall. He passed his oral exams before the Politics Board at U.C. Santa Cruz on his first try just before Thanksgiving. He has already finished all of the class requirements for his Bachelors in Politics and, as soon as he finishes 20 more units (by the end of March, 1992), will graduate with a ceremony in June.

We wish you love, peace, and happiness as well as a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! Love,

Mike, Chris, Duffy (getting gray) and Dottie (shedding with spots)

This Christmas letter requires a separate note. As of early October, Barbara and I have been separated. We both have our same jobs and now both live near our respective offices. I am at the U.S. Geological Survey in Menlo Park and she is at the Astronomical Society of the Pacific in San Francisco. I hope we both find more happiness apart than we did with each other.