

December 31, 2004

***Greetings to All Friends  
and Family,***

Okay, let's get this out of the way first: Hal and Ruth did *not* retire in 2004, despite our best efforts. Due to a combination of extended work obligations and micro-financial calculations, our retirement date got pushed back from August 1, our long-intended 30-year mark with TRW-Northrop-Grumman, to (for Hal) October 1 to January 1, 2005 to March 1 and now to April 1 and perhaps (for Ruth) June 1. We both have lots of vacation, however; Hal has already cut back to an approximately half-time schedule and Ruth intends to use her 9 weeks after March. We definitely intend to make the big leap in the next half-year.

So, having said that (*our big non-news*), here's a Happy New Year from the Harts, for whom the holiday season never ends until February at *St. Hart's Day*, which will be on February 12, 2005. As always, we were glad to have received cards, letters, and (mostly) good news from many of you. News of retirements, married children, and grandchildren remind us of the passage of time.

Back to our Big Plans for retirement: We know that most of you (like most of our work colleagues) are probably expecting us to shout "*April Fools*" when the time arrives, but we really are determined to make this happen next year. We have both written ourselves out of our respective projects' financial planning, and this will help enforce the decision. Fortunately, Northrop-Grumman came up with a very reasonable pension transition (in which legacy TRW employees get to "keep" everything they've earned via the attractive TRW retirement formulas through 2004 and optionally through 2009), so that isn't a factor in the timing of our retirement. We are looking forward to traveling more in retirement (we figure one foreign vacation, one or two RV trips, and a cruise, plus visits to kids, is just about right), and also doing more of the things at home that we each like to do. A major goal will be beginning to clean out the 28 years of "stuff" that we have accumulated in this house.

Erika (age 26) is still living in Providence. Her company, Tazz Networks (website [www.tazznetworks.com](http://www.tazznetworks.com)), still appears to be doing well. British Telecom is using their product, and they actively market to other telecom and networking companies. Her house seems to be a magnet for cats, as she has two part-time cats (Jingles and Little Thing) in addition to permanent residents Mouschke and Josh. She came home on Christmas Eve for two weeks.

Alison is 23 (as she puts it – as close to 30 as she is to 16) and a May graduate of Washington University in St. Louis. Unfortunately, she has been unable to find a job, so she is not completely "off the books". During her last year, she changed her focus away from her major, Biology, and is now applying to grad schools in Public Policy Analysis, so we expect continued change in her life. She is still living in St. Louis, but came home for three weeks over the holiday, together with her boyfriend, Jerry, and adorable (and large – 11 pounds already) 9 month old orange cat, Graham. Fortunately, Graham has adapted well to the house and is coexisting with the permanent residents, both feline and human.

The four of us were reunited twice earlier in 2004, first at Alison's graduation in May (*the end of an era when most vacations center around college events?*) and at the end of July on an Alaskan cruise. Ruth's mother, Helen, joined us in St. Louis, and at 84, was a trooper, putting up with crowds, walking, and 90 degree heat and humidity in order to see her younger granddaughter graduate from college. In Alaska, we stopped at Juneau, Skagway, Ketchikan (where Alison's

new digital video camera unfortunately got stolen when she set it down for a minute in a souvenir store), and Victoria, BC, and spent a day sailing through Glacier Bay. Although the weather was not the best, the scenery was spectacular and we enjoyed the time together. *Plus, Hal ended up hundreds of dollars ahead at BlackJack.* ☺

For a second consecutive year, not much has changed at work. Ruth remains as Software Deputy Manager on the *Advanced EHF* project, which is developing a satellite payload for military communications – next generation *MILSTAR* for those up on such things. The project has recently been stretched out due to two-year-late delivery of a GFE (Government Furnished Equipment) crypto box, which reduced 2005 funding, in turn necessitating personnel reductions; otherwise, the project is coming along nicely. Hal's work assignments, ranging from about 60% on our largest Army project to training & other overhead activities (incl. conference organizing), are virtually unchanged from recent years – but still very stimulating: *"I feel like I'm going out at the top of my game!"* Extracurricular activities: his *Grunion '77* slow-pitch softball team lost their "B" league championship game (as usual) after winning the regular season, his golf game has leveled out not quite down to bogeys, and, for the first time, Habitat for Humanity got a lot of Hal's time – about 25 days. Habitat & golf (*gotta get that index down to under 18*) are going to be retirement priorities. Ruth reads lots of books (and passes certain genre on to Hal), including her monthly book club, does jigsaw puzzles, and spends much time online with Internet friends, chatting about kids, college, and politics, among other things. She was pleased to have met two of her Internet friends in person, discovering that they were just as delightful in real life as they are online. *And we travelled to Vegas the weekend before the election to work a campaign, which was an interesting lesson in the tedium of grass-roots campaigning – but, BlackJack more than paid expenses.* ☺ We anticipate that our early years of retirement will bring more time for reading & movies for both of us, as well as that travel increase, with trips abroad joining the mix.

Hal's mother Vivian (now 88) continues in a senior citizen facility with excellent live-in help about an hour away (Laguna Woods), and it is nice that Hal and his brother and sister can each get there to visit and take her out at least twice a month. Ruth's mother Helen continues to thrive in New York City, and her husband Dave is doing well now in his 90's.

We are down to three resident cats – Bullwinkle, Boris, and Baby. *Rocky*, who 7 1/2 years ago used up his 8<sup>th</sup> life when found paralyzed in 3 legs is still among the living (*now our oldest cat ever at 17 1/2*), although increasingly gimp. He still lives with our neighbors the LaGrelius's although we are awarded custody of him for the several weekends when they were out of town.

St. Harts Day XXXVII will be Saturday, **February 12, 2005**. The first party announced Hal and Ruth's engagement to their friends in grad school; it has naturally evolved over the years and is also kid-friendly; hopefully, there's something for everyone. ♥-shaped pizzas as always. We're always thrilled at the last-minute news that some out-of-town friend is making the trip to the party. Your **St.♥'s Day invitation** is, as always, available as the first link at <http://hart-site.net>, our family website. And please send us your email addresses and/or url's for any of you with your own websites – by email, of course.

**Hal, Ruth, Erika, & Alison Hart**

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