

Greetings to All Friends and Family,



WE DID IT! As promised last year, Hal and Ruth made the big leap to **retirement** in 2005, Hal on March 1st and Ruth on May 1st. We love this next phase (hopefully the last *third*) of our lives and heartily recommend it to anyone considering it. We are keeping very busy with various activities (more about that later), but the need to no longer spend a third of each day at work has definitely lowered the stress level.

So, having said that, here's a **Happy New Year** from the Harts, for whom the holiday season never ends until *St. Hart's Day*, which will be on February 11, 2006. 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.

We ended our employment with a bang – a great joint retirement party in late April, attended by over 100 of our TRW/Northrop Grumman friends (*and partially organized by Hal at his favorite local hotel, the Redondo Beach Crowne Plaza, where he hosted & organized many professional-society events over the past 16 years*). We were toasted and roasted by many former colleagues we love and respect, and we'll keep the memories of the event, as well as all the fine times in our careers, for many years. As going-away speeches Ruth thanked many people and spoke on important beliefs from her career, and Hal presented a semi-facetious "Top 10 TRW Memories" (*see <http://hart-site.net/hal/top-10-trw>*).

You might ask what we do with all our new-found time. Ruth describes it as being able to "do whatever we want to do whenever we want to do it." Hal has not learned to relax as well as Ruth yet; give him another year or three to fully learn the ropes. One activity that is taking up a lot of time is our participation in a South Bay *learning-in-retirement* organization called "Omnilore" (*<http://omnilore.org>*). It is a group of about 250 seniors in the South Bay that offers self-organized study-discussion groups for retirees. Each "class" of 8-18 people meets for two hours at a time twice monthly for four months. Each class member is required to give a presentation on some aspect of the class material, and sometimes there is a common reading as well. Omnilore members nominate classes to be offered, and there is a huge variety. Ruth has taken classes on "The Fifties" (the decade, not the age), "Religion, Politics, and Economics," and "The Seven Deadly Sins," and is signed up for "The Supreme Court" and "Moral Dilemmas of the 20th (and 21st) Centuries" next time. Hal has taken "Lost Societies," "Shakespearian Tragedies," and "Great Mystery Stories of the 20th Century," and is signed up for "Ancient Engineers." The organization is loosely affiliated with Cal State Dominguez Hills, and there is also a lecture series offered there that usually has to do with film and TV. We enjoyed the series on "Film and TV of the '50s" and have signed up for "The Law as Portrayed in Film and TV" in the spring.

Other than Omnilore, Hal volunteers time with Habitat for Humanity (although not as much as he had hoped), plays golf (although not as much as he had hoped), works out at the gym and walks to the beach (although not as much as he had hoped), still plays on his old *Grunion*'77 softball team (*but generally only keeps score if enough players show up*), and spends every Tuesday filling up trash bins with a small portion of the accumulated detritus of the last 29+ years. Ruth has added a yoga class (for women of a certain age), has dug up most of the remnants of the ivy in the back yard (we hope to have it landscaped sometime in 2006), goes for long walks in the neighborhood (although not as many as she should), and spends way too much time on the Internet. Our To-Do list for house fix-up/clean-up/clear-out projects causes us to realize it will likely take our first 3 or so years of retirement to work off, not the usual "one year" we had heard we should budget. *Sigh*. Hal did find time to turn the big "Six Oh" in April, a dubious milestone with only minor downsides so far...

The travel highlight of our first retirement year was a 10-day Mediterranean cruise. It started in Barcelona, and stopped in Marseille, Villefranche (between Nice & Monaco), Livorno (near Pisa and Florence), Civitavecchia (near Rome), Mallorca, Ibiza, and Valencia, then back to Barcelona, where we stayed an extra day. Needless to say, it wasn't particularly relaxing, but the weather was perfect, and we enjoyed all the

shore excursions. Hal was particularly pleased to have checked off one of the items on his “things to do before I die list,” namely playing blackjack at the Grand Casino in Monte Carlo. We took shorter weekend trips to Death Valley (last winter’s rains produced an abundance of wildflowers), Paso Robles (we combined the TRW Golf Club’s annual “Tournament of Champions” with a return visit to Hearst Castle), and a walnut picking expedition north of Sacramento hosted by a couple we met on the cruise.

In addition to our two theatre series at the Ahmanson and Mark Taper Forum, we’ve also seen quite a few sporting events (Davis Cup, women’s tennis, LA Clippers basketball) and are trying to see as many of the 60s and 70s groups we’ve been listening to since way back then. We’ve seen Neil Diamond and The Eagles this year; next spring, we have tickets for Billy Joel and the Rolling Stones. We actually have 4 extra tickets for the Stones on March 6th, so if anyone is interested in spending \$165 a pop, let us know. We figured it’s something every baby boomer should do sometime.



Both Erika (age 27) and Alison (age 24) are now living in Providence, Rhode Island. Although we don’t get to see them as much as we would like, it is nice that they are so close to one another. Erika is still doing software development at Tazz Networks (website www.tazznetworks.com), a start-up that is still in existence after 5 years. British Telecom is using their product, and they actively market to other telecom and networking companies. She is fortunate to own her own home (something that would be impossible in California), where she lives with her two cats, tabby Mouschke and orange

Josh. She came home on Christmas Eve for two weeks.



Like her parents, Alison (age 24) has experienced big changes over the last year. After graduating from Washington University in May, 2004, she remained in St. Louis working for *Rock the Vote*, prompting her to switch gears. She is now working on a Masters degree in Public Policy at Brown. She is interested in health policy (for which her undergraduate degree in Biology will be a help) and/or education policy – lots of work to be done in both of those areas. She also has two cats – Graham, a huge orange Manx/Maine Coon mix who is spending his second Christmas with us here in California, and Drew, a Tuxedo Cat she adopted as an adult, who is staying with a neighbor. She came home after finals, but will return at the same time as Erika.

Hal’s mother Vivian (now 89) 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. Sadly, *Rocky*, who 8 1/2 years ago was found in a neighbor’s closet paralyzed in 3 legs, died this year at age 18, a week after a fall from our bedroom balcony. It was sad, but not tragic, as he lived a very long and (mostly) happy life and was beloved by two families, us and our neighbors the LaGrelieuses, with whom he lived the last half of his life. Amazingly, the very day that he died, a stranger showed up and asked if we would take a Siamese cat who belonged to an elderly woman on the street below us, who was moving into a retirement facility. We readily agreed; however, *Rambo* is a free spirit who wanders the neighborhood and comes here only to eat.

St. Harts Day XXXVIII will be Saturday, **February 11, 2006**. 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, linked from <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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