



Merry Christmas 2006!

I just wanted to take moment to update you, since the Christmas card alone doesn't say much! A couple of weeks ago I was Instant Messaging my son, Mot (Miguel), who is currently in Mexico. He asked what I had been up to. My response was, "I wake up, drive the carpool to school, exercise, do chores, kids come home, do homework, make dinner, watch shows, go to bed, do it all over again the next day. Like Ground Hog's Day." And I thought, "That's sounds pathetic! He's going to think I'm suicidal!"

So it made me think of what I actually do. I get to see my kids' beautiful little faces through their successes as well as their trials and tribulations. I enjoy lunch, pedicures, shopping and giggles with my girlfriends. We enjoy Beer Fridays (and usually Wine Saturdays) with our friends. We enjoy holiday dinners, breakfasts and visiting with Grandpa Ray and Grandma Karen. I enjoy scrap booking trips with my girlfriends twice a year. We've enjoyed the Reindeer Run (wine tasting in the wine country), boat in shore tent camping at Lake Oroville and Lake Don Pedro, Marine World, White Elephants, birthday parties, High School Musical, the San Francisco Ballet Nutcracker and so on, with our friends. We've enjoyed family camping trips to Black Butte, Eagle Lake and the Desert. The four of us are going to take a trip to Lake Tahoe and try to get some skiing in after Christmas. I enjoy volunteering at the Elementary School but have scaled way back from my days as PFC President. I now only teach 3 computer classes a week, designed the yearbook cover and am doing the 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Baby Picture pages for the yearbook. And with all this socializing going on, Mike still manages to make a living at BEA Systems in San Francisco! He BARTs in unless he's has to go to the San Jose office, which isn't often. He's not traveling too often, either, thank goodness (although he is in Austin and Atlanta this week)!! Of course, he gets a little perturbed that all the projects aren't getting done but, oh well.

As for the kids, Celina (30 - feels wrong telling a 30 year old woman's age even if she is your child!) is still living in Berkeley, collecting used cooking oil to turn into bio diesel, doing her henna body art and keeping busy. Miguel (27), as I mentioned, is in Mexico. Currently, he is in Guadalajara where he was commissioned to paint a cow. Yes, a COW. No, not a real cow. You can see his work on my website [www.rosystraka.com](http://www.rosystraka.com) or at his myspace page <http://www.myspace.com/misterbouncer>. He has been traveling through Central and South America since mid June, with a group of artists, painting murals in different and assorted towns. You can see those activities on his myspace page or the tour's myspace page <http://myspace.com/trustyourhustle>. He hopes to return to the states (Brooklyn, NY) sometime in January. Nicolas (10), well, he's Nicolas. GATE kid, gets top grades in school. He is still heavy into video games. His current favorite and newest system is the Xbox 360. Thank goodness he didn't have enough money to buy himself the Wii! Actually, he didn't have enough money to buy the 360 either but Mike worked out a loan for him with contracts, interest and payment due dates. He plays with his friends (and even Uncle George, much to Aunt Lisa's chagrin!) over the internet. He still reads like there's no tomorrow. His current favorite author is Tom Clancy. Natalie (9) is the social butterfly of the two. She is right where she should be in her school work. She played Fall Soccer and had a blast. She has so much energy and she's always coordinating something or other. She's become quite the list maker. She's still wild about anything Pokemon. She's like a ray of sunshine - but sometimes, you need to pull down the shade!

I don't see my brothers and sisters often but I do communicate via email regularly with all but Rudy. Zara (Boobie) and her husband now live in Merced with their 2 dogs. Maria (Nena) lives in Santa Rosa with her husband. We had a scare with my youngest brother, Manuel (Little - 38). He got himself into a motorcycle accident in November. Physically, he is fine. Hopefully he'll get the help he needs. He currently lives in El Cerrito. Celia (Eme) lives in El Cerrito with her 4 and 13 year old girls and their dad. Not sure about Rudy (Chacho) although he has been in contact with my other sisters. Also, while Mot was in Mexico City, he got in touch with my aunts, who I had not seen or talked to in over 11 years! So we are reconnected.

All in all, I'd say I'm pretty blessed. As I once told Mike, I feel like I've died and gone to heaven! I always tell people that I'm pretty sure I'm Cinderella...I married a prince, live in a castle and am living happily ever after! Sappy, but true! Love, Rosy Straka

