

CARLTON M. CAVES
(505) 350-8963

KAREN L. KAHN
(505) 235-8619

JEREMY K. CAVES
(505) 263-1241

ELEANOR M. CAVES
(505) 239-5931

22 EAGLE NEST COURT NE
ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO 87122-2025

kahncaves@info.phys.unm.edu
(505) 856-6522

2005 April 1

A New Mexico Diary

Saturday, 2003 October 4: Carl rides his bike along the Tramway trail early in the morning on the first day of the 2003 Balloon Fiesta. Emerging from behind the Sandias, the sun shines fitfully through ragged clouds, and a light rain, little more than enough to wet the ground, falls on the bikers and joggers and walkers on the trail. As the sun clears a cloud, a rainbow grows out of the horizon, inching its way across the sky till a full bow arches above the hundreds of hot-air balloons hanging in the sky below, their bright colors shining through the veil of intervening mist. It's a spectacle too trite for a painting, but rare and wonderful when Nature paints it, and over too quickly to find a camera.

Friday, 2003 November 21: Jeremy returns from two days of a Model UN Meeting at the state capitol in Santa Fe. Jeremy's team, one of three from La Cueva High School and thirty at the meeting, represented Israel in a turbulent UN Security Council meeting. The Israeli delegation sponsored resolutions on disarmament in North Korea, the deteriorating situation in the Horn of Africa, and the situation in Chechnya and the Caucasus. Jeremy's team won the Best Delegation award, Jeremy won one of three Best Delegate awards, and four other members of his La Cueva team received Honorable Mentions.

Saturday, 2003 December 6: La Cueva High School wins the state football championship in Las Cruces, beating Mayfield High School of Las Cruces as Eleanor watches from her perch in the band. La Cueva beat Mayfield handily earlier this fall. In fact, they beat everyone handily, piling up well over 500 points during the season while giving up fewer than 50. In this game, however, the team has to display grit as well as skill, coming from behind to win 24–21 with a field goal in the final seconds.

Monday, 2003 December 29: Jeremy, Carl, and Walter Lamberson try a day of skiing at Ski Santa Fe. The conditions are terrible—bitterly cold, with nearly all man-made snow, and that only on the lower half of the mountain—so they leave after half a day, something Jeremy has never done in his entire skiing career. Catastrophe looms as Jeremy and Carl cancel all further local skiing plans till more snow falls. Fortunately, they anticipated the catastrophe last week and escaped to Wolf Creek for two days of skiing. Perched on the continental divide in southern Colorado, Wolf Creek always has plenty of snow, and it did not disappoint.

Tuesday, 2003 December 30: Eleanor returns from four days in Phoenix with marine camp friend Kate Naranjo. She lounged by the pool at Kate's house as the rest of us shivered in Albuquerque.

Friday, 2004 January 2: We're in Knoxville, Tennessee, for the wedding of Carl's nephew Jeff to Diane Berry. The two Rice graduates, who live in Atlanta, are married in an evening ceremony at the Foundry, located at the site of the 1982 World's Fair. The Berry and Caves extended families have turned out in force for the event, all enjoying a splendid set of pre- and post-wedding activities. This morning the Caves family took advantage of the gathering of the entire clan to put on a brunch celebration of the 23rd birthday of Carl's niece Natalie and the 80th birthday of the family patriarch, Carl's father Morris (whose actual 80th birthday was last November 2).

Saturday, 2004 January 3: On a cloudy, but surprisingly warm post-wedding morning, we set out from Knoxville, accompanied by wedding guests Don and Irene Golembiewski, to see a bit of the Great Smoky Mountains. Venturing onto the Appalachian Trail at Newfound Gap, we find the trail too muddy and so descend to the drier Alum Cave Trail for a very pleasant mid-winter ramble, which ends with a picnic at the grand view from Alum Cave Bluffs. After lunch, most of the party returns to Knoxville, leaving Jeremy and Carl to continue the assault on 6,593-foot Mt. Le Conte. The trail ascends steeply, eventually emerging onto a rounded summit, where clouds crouch thickly on two feet of rapidly melting snow, lifting occasionally to provide glimpses of the surrounding rugged terrain. Returning to Knoxville after dark, Jeremy and Carl drive through the garishly lit town of Pigeon Forge, a tourist mecca that is a monument to a singular American tastelessness that achieves its gaudy apotheosis in the South. As the day ends, the remnants of the wedding celebrants, including the newly married couple, gather at a Knoxville cafe to enjoy a delightful outdoor dinner, courtesy of the exceptionally warm winter weather.

Saturday, 2004 January 10: Eleanor plays her French horn in the All-State Concert Band in a concert at Popejoy Hall on the campus of the University of New Mexico. One of four All-State Bands and Orchestras, the Concert Band plays the four pieces they mastered during two days of rehearsals on Thursday and Friday.

Sunday, 2004 January 18: Along with 175 friends and family members, Karen celebrates her 50th birthday (the real date is January 26) at Albuquerque's Madstone Theaters. Carl, with indispensable help from a five-person party committee, has arranged a party centered on a special showing of *On the Waterfront* ("I cudda been a contenda"), the Academy-Award-winning Best Picture in 1954, the year of Karen's birth. The guests, treated to popcorn and drinks on arrival and desserts from *The French Corner* afterward, sit spellbound through a movie that has aged as well as Karen and is still compelling after 50 years. As the movie ends, Hadassah Lieberman arrives to give a special birthday greeting, she having discovered that a good fraction of the people she wanted to meet and greet on her visit to Albuquerque are at Karen's party.

Last Friday a group of out-of-town and local guests made the long trek to Crownpoint, New Mexico, for the monthly Navajo rug action. As the guests bought rugs right and left, Carl thought about nominating himself for the governor's economic development award.

Friday, 2004 January 23: The *Albuquerque Journal's* society reporter, Charlotte Balcomb Lane—isn't that just a great name for a society reporter—puts Karen's birthday party at the top of her regular Friday column about goings-on in Albuquerque.

Sunday, 2004 March 7: Jeremy and Carl get in a day of spring skiing at Ski Santa Fe. Though the local resorts finally have plenty of snow—last weekend we were skiing in a blizzard at Sandia Peak, with conditions so cold and windy that everyone quit early—it's been pretty much a failed season in New Mexico, with the arrival of good snow too quickly succeeded by spring skiing conditions.

Saturday, 2004 March 13: Jeremy and partner Scott Ray win the state debate tournament in Public Forum, often referred to as Ted Turner debate because it's based on *Crossfire* and encouraged by Ted Turner. They beat arch-rival (and good Jeremy friend) Troy Schuler and partner Colin Grant in the final round.

Eleanor plays in her first water polo game, her La Cueva High School girls' team beating Sandia High 14–6.

Monday, 2004 March 22: It's the last day of our annual skiing trip to the Salt Lake ski resorts. With all the snowboarders gone, Jeremy, Eleanor, Carl, and Carl's brother Doug ski at Alta, a skier's paradise that has resisted snowboarding. Jeremy and Doug ski with assurance on all the terrain Alta has to offer, while Carl and Eleanor work to come up to their level. It's been great spring skiing for the whole trip. Most of the time we've been wearing just a single layer, and even that has sometimes been too hot. We've skied at all our favorite resorts, Solitude on Friday, Brighton on Saturday, Snowbird on Sunday, and Alta today. On Saturday evening, we celebrated Doug and Sherry's anniversary and Jeff Caves's birthday with dinner at *Bambara*, a first-class restaurant in downtown Salt Lake. The chocolate-banana sherbet is worth the trip.

Monday, 2004 May 17: Eleanor has been playing in the Albuquerque Youth Orchestra this past year. Two weeks ago she auditioned for a spot next year in the Albuquerque Youth Symphony, the top youth orchestra, and today she finds out that she has made it.

Friday, 2004 May 21: Karen's niece, Anna Kahn, is escorted to the wedding site on the beach at Kitty Hawk by father Jay. There she and Casey McHargue exchange vows as the sun sinks behind the two beach houses to which the party adjourns for dinner and celebration. Jeremy, Karen, and Carl are in attendance (Eleanor stayed home to take finals), staying at another beach house with Karen's brother Wally, brother Ken, his wife Mary and son David, and cousin Debbie Rothschild.

Thursday, 2004 June 3: It's hard to believe, but we're in Sydney again. Dinky die. Today is an oddly truncated 20th anniversary for Karen and Carl, as we left Los Angeles yesterday, arrive in Sydney at 8:30 pm today, go straight to our hotel, and promptly fall asleep.

Monday, 2004 June 7: After a couple of days in Sydney, we flew across the country to Perth yesterday. Today we catch the ferry from the downtown Barrack Street Jetty along the Swan River to the port of Fremantle and from there across 20 kilometers (12 miles) of Indian Ocean to Rottneest Island, named by a Dutch explorer in 1696 for the large "rats" found in abundance on the island. The rats are actually a small wallaby called a quokka, and they're still abundant on the island, though there are not many left elsewhere. We see plenty of them before leaving the main settlement at Thomson Bay to tour the island on bicycles. On a day of intermittent sunshine and brief, sudden squalls, we see magnificent white-sand beaches, a disheveled pile of sticks piled high on an offshore rock, which turns out to be an osprey nest, a bobtail lizard, and the strikingly colored Australian shelduck.

Friday, 2004 June 11: A huge emu darts in front of our rental car as we approach the entrance to Northwest Cape

National Park in mid-afternoon. After a week in the south of Australia, we fled to the tropics this morning. Our destination, the Northwest Cape, juts out of the west coast of Australia, just as the coast bends to head northeast, like a bent right thumb juts out of your hand. The Gulf of Exmouth occupies the space between thumb and hand, and the Indian Ocean lies on the outside. Our base of operations is in Exmouth, a small town near the inside tip of the thumb, whose original *raison d'être* was as a service center for the Harold Holt Communications Station north of town, which keeps US nuclear subs in touch. The flight from Perth was filled with Americans who will be refurbishing the thirteen very tall radio antennas over the next few months. They turn out to be almost the only Americans we encounter in Western Australia.

The Northwest Cape is a harsh landscape of red earth covered by low, scrubby vegetation and dotted with occasional termite mounds, kangaroos, and emus. Its 300-meter (1,000-foot) high spine is dissected by magnificent gorges extending to the gulf on one side and the ocean on the other. The jewel of the Cape, however, is the Indian Ocean coast, where the outer barrier of the Ningaloo Reef lies just a few kilometers offshore, sometimes approaching within half a kilometer. In the sheltered lagoons inside the barrier, coral grows almost up to the beach, making snorkeling just a matter of putting on your gear and paddling away from shore. As the shadows lengthen this afternoon, we enjoy an hour or so of snorkeling at Lakeside Beach, confirming that the coral and the multi-colored fish are worth the effort and that the air and water temperatures are perfect, allowing unlimited snorkeling without discomfort.

Saturday, 2004 June 12: At 8:30 am, we are ferried from Tantabiddi Landing, on the outside tip of the cape, to our boat, the *Blue Horizon*. The boat proceeds through a gap in the reef, whence it encounters enormous, but well spaced thirty-foot swells, shipped directly from Antarctica. As the boat bobs up and down, the waves produce a spectacular show of turquoise crest and white spray on top of deep blue as they crash on the outer fringe of the reef. Our objective today is to swim with a whale shark, and as the first shark is spotted by a plane overhead, our group of ten snorkelers is positioned at the rear of the boat, awaiting the signal to jump in. "Go, go, go!" We jump in and swim as fast as we can behind our guide, directly toward the approaching shark. Suddenly, it's there, its two-meter-wide mouth agape as it browses on in its small-scale sustenance, and we turn to swim within a few meters of its spotted body. As the morning progresses, we manage eight such sorties to three different sharks, all longer than seven meters (23 feet). One sortie is a dud, the shark having dived just before we get to it, and each of us messes up one or more other episodes, but we all get in multiple sorties swimming alongside or just astern of an enormous shark, generally swimming flat out for a few minutes as the shark cruises effortlessly at a speed just within our swimming abilities. It is the promised "experience of a lifetime," only available here and worth the cost and effort of the entire trip to Australia. Exhausted, we kick back and enjoy lunch while the boat chases two humpback whales for well over an hour. The whales surface regularly, each time leaving the big, oddly calm footprint and once rewarding us with a full fluke display.

Monday, 2004 June 14: At sunset we sit on a small deck perched on the dunes above the beach in front of the Ningaloo Beach Retreat, in the heart of Northwest Cape National Park. We will be spending the night at the Retreat, not in roomy permanent tents like the other guests, but on the ground, each of us in a swag, originally the bushranger's bed roll, these days consisting of a sleeping bag inside a waterproof canvas shell that incorporates a foam pad on the bottom. The swags here are a deluxe version, extra roomy, with an extra thick pad and a duvet inside instead of a sleeping bag, thus providing a painless introduction to what will be our main sleeping arrangement till we reach Darwin at the end of the month.

Yesterday we snorkeled at Turquoise Bay, and today we snorkeled from the beach right in front of the Retreat. Both were drift snorkels: paddle out to the coral, do nothing if you wish, drifting with the current, find yourself washed up on the beach, walk the few hundred meters back to your starting point, and do the same thing again . . . and again . . . and again. Each time there are the familiar colors of fish and coral, yet each time there's something new. As the sun sinks into the Indian Ocean, we enjoy drinks and hors d'oeuvres provided by the staff of the Retreat and tot up our sightings: fish and coral, of course, plus blue-spotted rays, a leopard shark, a tawny nurse shark, white- and black-tipped reef sharks, a green turtle, rock lobsters, giant clams with a black-polka-dotted, bright blue interior, and an octopus.

Friday, 2004 June 18: At noon we stand on top of Mt. Bruce, at 1,235 meters (4,052 feet) the second-highest point in Western Australia (it's sometimes called the highest for convenience, because 1,251-meter Mt. Meharry, about 60 kilometers southeast, is considerably harder to get to). Far below on one side lies the enormous Mandaroo iron-ore mine, and on the other the rugged country of Karijini National Park, the rusty red ground dotted with bunches of green spinifex grass and grey-green eucalypts. We're on a bus tour from Exmouth to Broome with our guide, Hopper, and an eclectic group of Europeans and Aussies. Yesterday we explored the famous gorges at the

heart of Karijini, and today we're up early to climb the western spine of Mt. Bruce. Just so we don't forget that this is the outback, a highly venomous king brown snake slithers off the path as we begin the ascent.

Saturday, 2004 June 19: Dawn finds us atop a rock rising 30 meters (100 feet) above the surrounding plain at Indee Station, an enormous cattle station about 50 kilometers (30 miles) south of the Indian Ocean. The rock is littered with petroglyphs, pecked into the rock by the aboriginal inhabitants of the area and similar to the Anasazi petroglyphs we encounter at home. Though the petroglyphs are our reason for being here, our attention is drawn to the horizon, which is rimmed in all directions away from the rising sun by a fantastic collection of mesas floating in the air or attached to the ground by thin spires. It's all a mirage, called a superior mirage, the opposite of the usual desert mirage, and caused by a temperature inversion in the lower atmosphere. Objects below the horizon are projected above it, grotesquely distorted vertically and sometimes appearing in multiple images, some inverted. Like any good mirage, ours turns out to be a house of cards, vanishing suddenly as the rising sun heats the ground.

Sunday, 2004 June 20: We're enjoying a three-day break from bus touring, spending the time in the vicinity of Broome, historically a pearling center and now a small resort town, the only one on Australia's lonely northwest coast. This afternoon we walk the four-kilometer length of Cable Beach, named for the telegraph cable that came ashore here from Java in 1889. As we trudge back along the beach, the setting sun lights up the sky with orange, pink, and mauve, and the beach echoes the show, its glistening sands, stretching at low tide far out to the Indian Ocean, shimmering with reflections of the same shades.

Tuesday, 2004 June 22: We get up early to take the Bush and Plains Tour behind the Broome Bird Observatory, after spending a very cold night in the BBO's guest house. On our arrival yesterday, we made up the entire Shorebird Tour, spotting shorebirds, waterfowl, and raptors from the cliffs overlooking the turquoise waters of Roebuck Bay. At the communal bird count this morning, we review our sightings and find that we've seen 59 species, including the black swan, rare this far north, Australian hobby, black-shouldered kite, and great bowerbird. As we prepare to leave the BBO just before lunch, we spot number 60, the black, red, and white mistletoebird, and we let a foot-long walking stick, its long, bright green legs splotched with yellow, clamber across our forearms.

Friday, 2004 June 25: We're traversing the Gibb River Road, the dirt track that runs across the Kimberley region of northwestern Australia. Our guide, Vanni, drives the large four-wheel-drive Mitsubishi, while the rest of us bounce around in the 20 passenger seats. We start the day at Silent Grove, right in the heart of the Kimberley. To ward off the chill on these winter mornings—we're well into the tropics, yet it's cool in the morning—Carl and Karen drink coffee and tea, but Jeremy and Eleanor enjoy a cup of Milo, a chocolate-malt-flavored Australian drink. The previous tour ran short of Milo long before the end—and they needed it, because there was frost on the swags in Karijini—so this time they acquired a private stock before embarking. The Kimberley is famous for rugged country, stupendous rainstorms and biblical floods during the Wet (fortunately this is the Dry), boab trees (imagine a squat, jug-shaped trunk topped by spindly branches that make the worst bad hair day look good), and spectacular gorges, where waterfalls fall into deep, limpid pools. Today we hike to Upper Manning Gorge for lunch and a swim in the bracingly cold water.

Saturday, 2004 June 26: Not long after leaving our bush camp, we stop at a grove of grevilleas with bright orange flowers. Soon everyone is enthusiastically partaking of the bush candy: shake the flowers onto your hand, and lick up the sweet, buttery nectar, which tastes a lot like a popcorn-flavored Jelly Belly.

Monday, 2004 June 28: The Gibb River Road far behind us, we arrived yesterday in Purnululu National Park, 52 kilometers (32 miles) from the paved Great Northern Highway on the worst road we've encountered. It was three hours of bouncing, interrupted by violent bouncing, but turns out to be worth every minute, for at the end of the road lies the world-class scenery of the Bungle Bungle Range, a deeply dissected plateau of orange rock, stained blue and green and black, dizzyingly narrow gorges, and beehive-shaped domes.

The morning is devoted to exploring the northern gorges, and at mid-day Jeremy, Eleanor, and Carl hop into a helicopter for a 30-minute overflight of the inaccessible top of Bungles. In late afternoon we hike up a trail at the southern end of the range, wandering among the distinctive black- and orange-striped domes. A white-necked heron takes flight in front of us and lands on top of a nearby dome, standing on one leg in stately dignity, as still as a statue. The trail ascends into Cathedral Gorge, which ends in a large chamber with a sandy bottom partially covered by a stagnant pool. Each of the national groups on the tour serenades the rest with an appropriate song, we four Americans choosing to give a rousing rendition of *Oklahoma*. As we head back to camp in the evening, three juvenile dingoes scamper across the road in front of us. Two brown and one black, thin and athletic, with a rear half like a greyhound and a front like a German shepherd, they pose for us on a ridge west of the road, silhouetted against the evening sky. For our dinner, Jeremy, supervised by Vanni, prepares two loaves of the dense bush bread

called damper, cooked in a Dutch oven over our open fire. Some camp food you eat because it's there, but damper is just plain good.

Tuesday, 2004 June 29: Tonight we stop at a roadside camp in Timber Creek, the only town along a 500-kilometer (300-mile) stretch of the Victoria Highway between Kununurra in Western Australia and Katherine in the Northern Territory. This being our tenth night in swags since leaving Exmouth two weeks ago, all trepidation about sleeping on the ground is long gone, yet there is something different about tonight. Our group campsite is next to the croc-infested Victoria River—a brief excursion to a walkway over the river reveals plenty of orange eyes staring back at our headlamps—and the only place to put the tarp we all sleep on is right next to the river. A comical scene ensues as every member of the tour tries to position his swag as far from the river as possible. Karen loses, but survives the night anyway. There really isn't any danger, of course, because all the crocs are harmless freshies, as opposed to the fearsome salties.

Wednesday, 2004 June 30: Not long after leaving Timber Creek, we take a short hike to the top of the escarpment overlooking the Victoria River Valley. Returning to the vehicle, Jeremy and Carl spot a large black wasp with bright orange wings hauling a mouse spider away from the trail. There's a reason it's called a mouse spider, and it's not that mice eat the spider, so the wasp is a pretty fearsome creature. As evening approaches, our tour arrives in Darwin, having traveled 3,300 kilometers (2,050 miles), half on dirt roads, since leaving Broome.

Thursday, 2004 July 1: We spend a hard day of shopping for aboriginal art and other Australian artifacts in Darwin. The day ends with a spectacular fireworks show at Mindil Beach, ostensibly celebrating Territory Day, but for us, putting a gigantic exclamation point at the end of our vacation in western Australia.

Saturday, 2004 July 3: Leaving a small farming community at 9:00 am, Jeremy and Carl drive southwest, passing through a pastoral landscape of gently rolling hills. Neat fields of harvested milo and corn alternate with groves of tall trees and broad pastures, where cattle graze peacefully. Toto's ears prick up, but Dorothy leans low to whisper, "No, Toto, this isn't Kansas. The trees are eucalypts, those birds on the power lines are kookaburras, the pigeons all have crests, and the crows sound ever so much like they're dying, though they must not be, because there are always so many of them. We're driving mainly on the left side of the road, the town we just left had palm trees in the median strips, and the temperature this morning—this is the dead of winter, Toto—is nearly 60° F. Oh, Toto, I don't think there's such a thing as the dead of winter in this place! This isn't Kansas. We're still in Oz." More evidence accumulates as the car climbs into the Bunya Mountains, a tiny range that rises precipitously from the surrounding landscape and is capped by an island of subtropical rainforest, complete with colorful parrots, a luxuriant growth of epiphytes, the opportunistic strangler fig, and the menacing giant stinging tree and home to the eponymous and enormous bunya pine, found nearly nowhere else. Jeremy and Carl amble along a trail through the forest, occasionally piercing the sharp boundary into the surrounding forest of tall gum trees.

Meanwhile, Eleanor and Karen have escaped from Oz, but not from yesterday, which began for all of us at midnight in the Darwin airport, as we waited for flights departing just after 1:00 am. For Eleanor and Karen, mid-day occurs as their flight from Sydney touches down at dawn in Los Angeles, and the marathon 40.5-hour day finally ends at midnight at Abby Hellwarth's house in Santa Monica, just as Carl and Jeremy return to Kingaroy at sunset, ready for another taste of night life in this small town, peanut capital of Australia, 200 kilometers (125 miles) northwest of Brisbane. Last night they saw *Spiderman 2* at a tiny, packed theater in the town's two-theater cinema, which they promptly dubbed "Sequel Cinema," as the other movies showing are *Shrek 2*, *Cody Banks 2*, and *Harry Potter 3*.

Saturday, 2004 July 10: Jeremy and Carl are spending the weekend in Lamington National Park southwest of Brisbane, back at O'Reilly's Rainforest Guesthouse after a break of two years. They set off from Binna Burra this morning to walk the 23 kilometers (14.3 miles) back to the Guesthouse. As the hike begins, thin clouds are broken by occasional patches of blue, and the forecast calls for intermittent light rain showers. Shortly thereafter the clouds thicken, and the rainforest lives up to its name. The rain grows heavier as the day progresses, and the promised big views from the southern edge of the Lamington Plateau vanish into a featureless grey. The rain is good for the forest, which is suffering through a fourth year of inadequate rainfall, but it turns the hike into a long slog through a wet, green tunnel. As they approach O'Reilly's after six hours on the trail, the rain abates, leaving the sun shining weakly through a thin veil of clouds. The only rain since Perth falls almost entirely on this hike, but it takes more than that to dampen Jeremy's spirits. What it does take is his inevitable departure from Australia on Monday.

Friday, 2004 July 23: Eleanor returns to Albuquerque after three weeks of camp at the Catalina Island Marine Institute. This year she got her rescue diving certificate and took a class in seafood cookery, a tough assignment for someone who doesn't like fish or seafood.

Tuesday, 2004 August 3: Jeremy flies to Minneapolis, where he is to meet Uncle Doug and Aunt Sherry, tour

Carleton College tomorrow, and then proceed to Wisconsin for an end-of-summer week at Doug and Sherry's house on the Wisconsin River. On arrival in Minneapolis, he retrieves his luggage and calls Doug and Sherry, finding that they are still a couple of hours from Minneapolis. "No worries," he thinks, "I'll just get a bite to eat for lunch," only to discover that the only food in the airport is in the secure area. Encountering the first TSA agent at security, he displays his boarding pass from Albuquerque to Minneapolis and is politely told that to pass through security, he needs a boarding pass for leaving Minneapolis, not for arriving. Thinking quickly—perhaps too quickly—he replies that his mother has already gone through security with his departure pass. The agent swallows this fib whole and waves him through.

Sunday, 2004 August 22: Jeremy, Carl, and Walter Lamberson set out to climb East Pecos Baldy, a year minus a day after they were chased away from the final ascent by a stupendous hail and lightning storm. This time they succeed on a day of grand skylines. Intensely blue skies are punctuated by big, white clouds that march off to the horizon and threaten, but never produce any rain.

Thursday, 2004 September 30: Carl begins posting political and social commentary on his web page:

<http://info.phys.unm.edu/~caves/commentary/commentary.html> .

Writing essays is mainly therapy for his unhappiness with the country's direction. Should you decide to consult the essays, please beware: the opinions are unvarnished and definitely blue.

Tuesday, 2004 October 12: Jeremy and Carl are in Claremont, California—Jeremy to be interviewed at Pomona and Harvey Mudd Colleges and Carl to give the physics colloquium at Mudd—so they miss Karen's morning discovery: 28 Bush-Cheney signs scattered haphazardly around the yard. A Republican prank or a subversive action to remove all Bush signs from our neighborhood? Either way Karen knows what to do; she puts the signs in Jeremy's room for safekeeping till after the election.

Thursday, 2004 October 21: Our house finally crosses the bridge into the 21st Century, with the activation of a wireless DSL modem. While still in Australia last July, Carl discovered that Qwest, the local phone company, was no longer rejecting internet DSL enquires for our phone number, so Karen quickly purchased DSL service before a sale expired on July 31, only to have Qwest inform us in early August that, "Well, we haven't gotten to it yet. We'll have service for you by the first of October." Suspicion thicker than a London fog greeted the recent arrival of the modem, but today everything is installed, and it works. Eleanor, Jeremy, and Carl enjoy the speed of a broadband connection—Karen is addicted to her Treo and doesn't use a computer at home—and Jeremy and Carl have the added convenience of connecting their laptops anywhere in the house.

Monday, 2004 November 22: Carl is made a Fellow of the American Physical Society, an honor accorded to no more than 0.5% of the Society's membership in any one year. It's not nearly as good as being in the Fellowship of the Ring—he doesn't get any access to the One Ring to Rule Them All—but it's safer and a nice recognition of his 30 years of physics research.

Eleanor calls Karen to complain that the extended Kahn and Caves families don't have enough genetic disorders—myopia and hypertension are the best we can come up with—and asks if she can make up a few diseases to decorate the genetic family tree, giving it a bit more pizzazz when she hands it in to her anatomy teacher. She is enthusiastic about the anatomy class and after a class section on sleep, is thinking about becoming a sleep scientist.

Thursday, 2004 November 25: The entire Caves family gathers in Muskogee for Thanksgiving at Carl's parents' house, celebrating Carl's mother Mary's 80th birthday (which was actually a week ago on November 19).

Saturday, December 4: Today is the Albuquerque Youth Symphony's luminaria day. (Luminaries are paper sacks filled with an inch of sand and a candle, de rigeur in New Mexico for outdoor Christmas lighting.) Months of time have already been devoted to booking orders and folding the sacks just so, ready for filling. Symphony members and their parents gather today at work houses around the city, preparing and delivering 130,000 luminarias to customers all over Albuquerque and netting the AYS more than \$60,000. Karen and Carl spend the entire day, from 7:00 am till after 6:00 pm, pouring sand into sacks and delivering the finished luminarias, small cogs in an enormous effort.

Eleanor skips out of the luminaria work to join the La Cueva High School band at the state championship football game in Clovis. The La Cueva Bears defeat Clovis decisively, 40–0, to win the state championship for the second year in a row. The victory is not unexpected, since the Bears were 12–0 going into the game, having outscored their opponents 550–21. During her two band years, Eleanor has never seen the Bears defeated.

Monday, 2004 December 13: This past October Jeremy applied Early Decision to Rice University, and today he receives the letter of admission. Happy and relieved, he looks forward to not preparing college applications during the Winter Break and to not worrying about college admissions during the spring semester.

Friday, 2004 December 17: Karen is made a partner in her law firm, Modrall Sperlring, becoming the first part-timer to be made a partner in the firm's history.

Saturday, 2004 December 18: After zealously safeguarding the Bush-Cheney signs from further depredation for two months, Jeremy gives them away as a white-elephant present at a holiday party.

Saturday, 2005 January 15: Eleanor spends the weekend in Ft. Worth with the Albuquerque Youth Symphony. The AYS presents a concert this evening at Ft. Worth's Youth Symphony Hall. Last weekend Eleanor played her French horn in the All-State Concert Band.

Thursday, 2005 January 20: Four more years—it sounds like a funeral dirge. Jeremy and Carl wear black armbands to mourn the loss of their country.

Saturday, 2005 January 22: Deciding to remake Jeremy's wardrobe, five of his friends, Anthony Chen, Stephanie Chu, Hannah Flake, Sarah Rovang, and his girlfriend, Shannon Rogers, take him shopping at *Banana Republic*, *Express Men*, and *The Gap*. Jeremy's good sense shines through in the final purchases, all of which were on sale.

Wednesday, 2005 January 26: Confirming that he made a good move in deciding to dress a bit sharper, Jeremy learns that he has been selected to receive a "superlative" in the La Cueva High School yearbook, in his case, Most Likely to Succeed.

Sunday, 2005 February 6: The Albuquerque Youth Symphony, directed by Amir Kats, has just finished its winter concert at UNM's Popejoy Hall. "That was awesome!" is Eleanor's impromptu review of the AYS's rousing rendition of Tchaikovsky's Fourth Symphony, in which as fate would have it, Eleanor and the other French hornists get major playing time.

Saturday, 2005 February 26: Jeremy and Carl ski at Angel Fire with friends Steve and Marjorie Rogers. It's been a spectacular year for New Mexico skiing, all that Southern California rain turning into piles of powder by the time it reaches our mountains.

Monday, 2005 March 21: The first day of spring finds Jeremy, Eleanor, and Carl skiing in wintry conditions, up to their knees in powder at the Alta Ski Area in the Wasatch Range just east of Salt Lake City. It's the last day of the annual Salt Lake skiing expedition with the Madison Caves, Doug and Sherry, and their kids, Kevin and Jeff and Jeff's wife Diane. Doug and Sherry's daughter Josie planned to join the party, but was stranded in Madison when bad weather forced cancellation of her flight from Minneapolis to Salt Lake. Yesterday the weather turned even worse in the Wasatch, but nobody is complaining. Thinking (correctly, as it turned out) that our rental cars couldn't make it up the canyons to the resorts on the Salt Lake side of the Wasatch, we skied yesterday at Park City while it snowed well over a foot on us. On the Salt Lake side, Alta got just over two feet, so Jeremy, Eleanor, Kevin, Doug, and Carl head there today, only to have it snow yet another foot, making for powder so deep that you risk sinking out of sight and turning into a mogul. We put off the end of a good thing as long as possible by skiing till well after 4:00 pm. As we complete our final runs above the Wildcat base, the clouds part, and the sun shines out of a deep blue sky. Everyone agrees that this Utah day belongs on the list of best skiing days ever.

On Saturday evening, the group enjoyed an upscale Mexican dinner at *The Red Iguana*, an apparent hole in the wall on the western fringe of downtown Salt Lake. The restaurant, discovered by Diane on a business trip to Salt Lake, had a big crowd waiting outside when we arrived. Fortunately we had reservations, something you don't get at a hole in the wall.

Monday, 2005 March 28: Jeremy is awarded one of 2,500 single-shot \$2,500 National Merit Scholarships.

Best Wishes,

Eleanor

Jeremy

Karen

Carl

CMC/TeX

P.S. The photo shows us, along with artist Janet Long Nakamarra, in the Aboriginal Fine Arts Gallery in Darwin. Ms. Long painted the spectacular canvas behind us—wouldn't you just love to have it—and also the one we're holding, of which Jeremy is the proud new owner. Karen and Carl acquired a painting called "Seven Sisters Dreaming" by Gabriella Possum Nungurrayi, daughter of perhaps the most famous Aboriginal painter, Clifford Possum.