

Merry Christmas

Friends & Relatives,

1993 was an eventful year.

Mary Ann Holst (the *wife* of a Norwegian foreign minister) succeeded where Warren Christopher failed and persuaded the Israelis and Palestinians to formally recognize each other.

Sheik Omar Rahman and Mohammed Salameh blew up the World Trade Center. An appropriate sentence for this group, or for any terrorist organization on US soil, would be a one way ticket to Bosnia.

27 Americans were killed in Somalia as a direct result of an inept, reclusive foreign policy. Officially, the mission has never even been changed from preventing starvation.

The Hubble Space Telescope underwent major repair in orbit, a significant accomplishment.

Wisconsin passed a law to cut off welfare recipients after 2 years; it's a start.

David Koresh killed 84 people in Waco, Texas.

The entire state of Iowa was declared a federal disaster area and the East Coast was hit by the biggest storm in a century. \$10 billion in losses and 20,000 homes destroyed. Sometimes man is reminded that Mother Nature is still in firm control of the most basic of elements.

The problems associated with illegal immigration became painfully apparent as scarce education, health care and welfare dollars were strained. Almost 500,000 illegals enter this country every year. There are 1.3 million in California alone and the taxpayers are tired of subsidizing them.

Prison inmates are participating in recreational litigation by suing the state and federal governments over being denied peanut butter sandwiches and the right to sacrifice to animals. State education funds are being diverted for these criminals. Our method of persecution is fundamentally flawed, when somebody is found guilty of a crime they are simply separated from society; the civil libertarians believe this is punishment...it is not. The average time served for murder or rape in this country is 5¹/₂ and 3 years, respectively. In Saudi Arabia, where the punishment for rape or murder is public execution, there is virtually no crime.

Meanwhile, the US competitive position is improving. Interest rates are at their lowest point in 20 years, worker productivity is up, and quality is once again being associated with American goods and services.

We're still world leaders in software, satellites, aircraft, communications, chemicals, biotechnology, and entertainment...these are the growth industries of tomorrow.

The infrastructure of an American data superhighway and the multimedia it will carry is being built. The ordinary telephone, TV, PC and Fax will merge into a single unit making possible home shopping, telebanking, teleconferencing, on-line information, and access to any kind of library or database in the world. All the necessary components for this industry are being developed and made here at home. No other nation can compete with us on such fronts as high speed microprocessors, fiber optics, networking equipment, data compression & transmission systems, and programming & entertainment services.

As for myself; I now have another college degree, this one is in electrical engineering. Prospects look very good here in the Silicon Valley, I'll be back at work in January. I'm still at the same address:

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There is not one person who will receive this letter who does not have the conviction, determination, vision, and persistence to effect enormous change. Remember: the cowards never start, the weak die on the way, only the strong survive.

Henry David Thoreau once said, "What a person thinks of himself, that determines his fate". Americans are the most innovative people I've ever met, we are the best; maintaining such an attitude is a prerequisite for success.

Merry Christmas and a Happy 1994

Mark A. Cottrell