



December 1994

Hello and Season's Greetings!

I hope your past year has been healthy and happy; mine has. It's been another exciting year where I've managed to have fun and get through without "growing up."

It's been a year of asking some questions of myself, some changes, new friends, and new experiences. After a couple of years of being unable to find a suitable pilot job, I decided in January to move to Denver to free-lance flight instruct. I managed to find a couple of students, but not enough to make a living. Because of the continuing pilot job market frustrations, I had been trying to find a new direction to go in, something with a "future" where I could live in Colorado. I decided to investigate physical therapy. I found part-time work in a clinic to get a feel for the profession, but learned it would take 4-5 years of school (I'd have to retake all the basic science courses I took 20 years ago) and decided that was too big of a chunk of time. So I visited a career counselor to see if he could guide me in a productive direction. One thing he told me after hearing of my varied job history, was that not everyone fits into the norm of what society expects. That actually made me feel more at ease. He did suggest sales, which initially turned my stomach. After explaining he didn't mean selling used cars or real estate, but working as a manufacturers rep for an outdoor product company, I started to listen and have slowly began to investigate.



In the meantime, I found fun and educational work in various jobs. I worked the baseball season as a vendor at the Colorado Rockies games and absolutely loved it, selling cokes, peanuts, and Cracker Jacks, messing with the people and kids, and watching the games when I could. I hope to return next season (if there is one). Another job resulted from my desire to learn more about bike mechanics, so I found work in a very respected Denver bicycle shop as an apprentice mechanic, mainly assembling the new bikes. The "punks" in the shop (as the X-generation service manager explained to me - everyone who works in a bike shop is either a punk or a graying Deadhead) have been very helpful to this inexperienced "old fart." Whether I've earned more there than I've spent is another story.

The nice thing about these jobs was it permitted me flexibility, which allowed me on short notice to return to the Canyon in July to work a trip for AzRA. It was one of the best trips I'd ever done there, working with an old friend and sharing the river with the absolutely wonderful people who were on the trip. The scary thing was, by Day 2, I knew I was "home" and that I wanted to return to working there.

So my goal of not being a 40-year-old boatman may not be realized if I am able to get back on AzRA's schedule. Part of the enjoyment of returning may be that I sold my Forks river business; it was time. It has been a relief not having to worry about snowpacks, reservations, and whether the van would work. I have several rafts complete with rowing frame and oars for sale, so if you know of anyone who would be interested, please let me know.

This was also the first time I had spent a spring and summer in Colorado since 1978, and I was determined to take advantage of it. Every free weekend found me backpacking, bicycling, or kayaking or rafting Colorado rivers I'd never done. I also managed a short trip to Nashville to visit two great old friends, and another Cycle Oregon bicycle tour. This time it was without my Dad as he was involved in a serious bike wreck in June. Fortunately, his helmet worked, but it was a summer of recovery for him.

Since October, I have been working as a seasonal driver for UPS. This will last till Christmas, Then the next chapter will start. What that'll be, who knows. And for fun I have been working as a guard at Denver Nugget games - with pretty outrageous seats. My spot is at the end of the Nugget's bench right on the court.

It's t-minus 3 weeks till my next marathon, the Disney World Marathon in Orlando, Florida. Running has become a fulfilling part of my life, as relaxation and exercise, and as a competitive outlet (me against the clock). I'm also doing this marathon as a fundraiser for the Leukemia Society, which I am finding to be one of the more satisfying things I've done since the Friends of the River fund raising trips I did in the 80's. I was matched with a local 5-year old leukemia patient and have become friends with her and her family. I am closing in on my fund raising goal of \$2500 due to the very generous support of friends and family. I have been blown away with the response and words of encouragement I have received and am extremely grateful. I will be trying to qualify for the 100th running of the Boston Marathon in 1996, which has been on my "list" (the one I'm sure we all have, of those outrageous things to do or places to go we dream about and never think we'll be able to) ever since I watched Frank Shorter win the Gold Medal in the Munich Olympics in 1976. Little did I know it would 20 years later and I'd be in my 40's. It's surprising looking back how many of those boyhood/grown-up dreams I've managed to check off my list: rafting the Grand Canyon, bicycling New Zealand, becoming a pilot, "living" at the ball park, and running marathons. If only I had Jack Kerouac's writing abilities, I might actually be able to make a living at this.

All my best to you and your families. I hope next year is a great one for you, and you are able to fulfill some of your crazy dreams. As a sign in a restaurant I saw cycling in Oregon said: "Eat desert first; Life is uncertain." Seems appropriate to me.