

Tanner Family Holiday Letter, 2007

We'll end 2007 as we began it, on vacation in Dominica. Before 2008 is out, Calibishie, Dominica BWI (US Postal Service Country Code 152*) will be our permanent home. Our permanent e-dresses, djt@dan-ruth-tanner.com (Dan) and ret@dan-ruth-tanner.com (Ruth) already work.

* The USPS often confuses the Commonwealth of Dominica with the Dominican Republic, so use the country code on mail sent from the USA.

Our Web site, www.dan-ruth-tanner.com always provides an up-to-date contact page**. We have a cell phone in Dominica; the number is (767) 277-3958. We'll add a land line and a 2nd cell phone. The "contact us" link on our Web site home page will be updated. And, if you use Skype, we're dan_and_ruth.

** The Internet is great! Using the Web has located cousin and noted grand prix auto racing authority Hans Tanner' daughter and a colleague of his and a collector's photo of him, and given us expert identifications of Dominica's flora (Prof. Stephen Hill), corals (Mark Smith), and shells (Leslie Suttly). Check our site.

We won't mail out paper copies after this one. (It would be difficult, expensive, and would require a very long lead time.) If our annual letters come to your work e-dress, please send us your own personal "permanent" e-dress, in case you change jobs.

Ruth & I will be tanned, rested and look better than in these "Simpsonized" pix:



Dan
(Retired)



Ruth
(Office Administrator & Homemaker)



Mathilda
(High School Teacher & Artist)

We've had some new milestones in our lives:

- I've turned 66 (and at this writing am closer to 67) and have retired at last. I've folded my business ProgresSmart and killed my business e-dress. I do as little as I care to without feeling guilty. Stress? Forget about it. I'll concentrate on enjoying Dominica with Ruth and whenever it's possible for her to visit, with our daughter Mathilda. And, of course, on friends and hobbies: music, and on observing and photographing nature. I will commence collecting monthly Social Security benefit checks in January. Experience has shown that we can live high on the hog in Dominica on very little. We'll remain US citizens, with legal Dominican residency.
- Ruth has turned 60, although she is still taken to be in her 40s by people who don't know her, and I swear she'd be able to pass for younger had she not allowed her

naturally silver hair to show. I still have a gorgeous bride! She will retire from her government job at the US Army Soldier System Center in 2008. Around Labor Day she was promoted from her position in the Public Works directorate to be the office administrator in the Garrison Commander's Office. Here she with Mathilda on her birthday.

- And Mathilda turned 30. She is now a tenured teacher in New York City.

We're preparing our house for sale. We'll put it on the market in April.

We both had corrective vision surgery in February. I look different now. Ruth doesn't because she wore contact lenses. We only need "shades" for bright Caribbean days –

no more bifocals or wearing contacts to snorkel and then not being able to take a normal swim or read on the beach. Being "four-eyes" for 60 years, I love having 20/20 vision!

Ruth gave me "The Big Book of Jewish Humor" (8th edition) for Valentine's Day and a flatbed scanner for my 66th birthday. I digitized all of our family photos and thousands of travel slides and added them to the "Our Travels" on our Web site. I also digitized to CD all of the music we had on vinyl and tape for our big move. We're holding yard sales too.

In March we celebrated our 34th wedding anniversary in good style, with a dinner in Boston's Italian North End, with Mathilda coming up from NYC to join us, and my oldest dear friend Dr. Ronald Abramson and his wife K Lowenthal, who live not far from us.

When we returned from Dominica, I told Ruth that I'd go stir-crazy at home in the winter. She said "Why not work as a substitute teacher?" I applied at Westboro high school. After a slow start, in a half the school year (90 days), I substituted 61 days. I control classes well, and that's all they care about. I'm at the top of the substitute list this year.

We were in Dominica June 12 to July 10. We had a fabulous time with dear friends and Dominica's natural wonders. It was nice, too, that our house's ground floor is now complete. We enjoyed having the expanded kitchen, a nice storage space for our luggage and tools and to hang clothes to dry, and our larger bedroom with a new bed and flow-through trade wind breezes. There is a slide show on our Web site all about that at www.dan-ruth-tanner.com/Travel/Dominica/DOM_Jun-Jul07. Soon we'll have a jasmine tree outside the bedroom's east window to make the breeze perfumed.

Thanks to our dear friends Roger & Rita Rekus we didn't miss our usual summer visit to Martha's Vineyard. They rented the cottage that we used to, invited us to visit them. On MV, Rita and I threw a surprise birthday party for our spouses (both born in August) by adding a cake & party hats to a lobster dinner. Good times.

On Ruth's birthday, Tuesday, August 21, Mathilda surprised her by coming up from New York City and was here when Ruth arrived home from work. I made Ruth a dinner of her favorite, Alaskan king crab legs. I gave her a Dremel set so that she can embark on her new 2nd hobby of making jewelry and other things from beads and sea shells. Slides of her new creations in that media are at www.dan-ruth-tanner.com/Ruth_Tanner/Jewelry.



This is Mathilda's 4th year teaching science in special education classes at Harry S Truman High School in the Bronx, NY. She's consistently taught so well that her students outscore the regular classes in exams, and she's moved up with them each year as they progress through high school. This year she hopes to have her classes do well on the NY Regent's Exams necessary for high school graduation.



Reminiscing with Roger on MV this summer, I realized it's been fifty years since Dad and I built a cabin on 2 acres that he and Mom bought in 1956 in Dingman's Ferry PA, in the Pocono Mountains along the Delaware River. We built it using trucked-in materials. We lost it all to eminent domain 12 years later when the US government proposed to dam the Delaware Water Gap. Gladly, it never happened, but the land is still safe from "development" as a national recreation area. A nearby area is known locally as the "Swiss Colony" because so many Swiss immigrants like Dad built vacation homes there. The eminent domain offer either let us own as long as the present owner survived (and Dad was in his late 60s) or \$100 more than our cost of land and building materials! We had to accept. I "got even" by using the place (the dumb government never shut the electric power off!) up until 1970. The photo is of the ledge on our land.



Our Poconoe cabin, by John Tanner, May 15, 1964

This is one of Dad's ink sketches of what our cabin looked like. The ledge in the photo would have been off the sketch uphill to the right – they'd have built their retirement home there. You can see we had an outhouse up a path behind the cabin. We had electricity, but carried our water up from a spring. In November Ruth and I went to the area, met Harold Dingman Arnold Jr. and went to see what the place looks like 50 years on, and about 38 years since I last set eyes on it. For slides of our nostalgic

visit trip, surf to www.dan-ruth-tanner.com/Travel/Poconos.

My nickname in Calibishie is "The Scientist", because I've brought a telescope and have shown people (who are pleased and amazed) the moons of Jupiter, the phases of Venus, the gas nebula in Orion, and features of the moon's surface. I can't wait to show Saturn's rings! I also am known to accept the Theory of Evolution, which gives missionaries fits. To the right: Why dinosaurs became extinct. Seriously, though, I plan to teach science as a volunteer.

Our miniature schnauzers, Ranger and Lyla, will live in Dominica with us. They fly there as service dogs. Ranger has made the trip to Dominica three times, and wows



The real and somewhat embarrassing cause of the mass extinction ... reptile dysfunction.



schoolchildren there with his repertoire of tricks. Last trip, Ranger behaved better than a Homeland Security dog at the San Juan airport; it barked at Ranger but Ranger stayed quiet. There's a slides of them performing at www.dan-ruth-tanner.com/Pets/Org_Day_07. Those Homeland Security dogs...they seem to suspect and "trigger" on anything and everything (photo left).

This summer, CBS launched a ridiculous show called "Pirate Master". Set in Dominica, it was supposed to be a reality show, but it was scripted (extremely poorly). The show could have promoted Dominica, but instead portrayed it as unpopulated and undeveloped, infested with poisonous snakes and crocodiles (Dominica has none of these). Happily, it was quickly cancelled. If crocodiles came to Dominica, they'd be attacked by the savage local dogs, as you see here (photo left).



On December 8 ten days before we departed for Dominica to vacation until January 15, we combined Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners with Mathilda and her boyfriend Pete and Ron and K. Ron has been

my friend since we met in 4th grade when I was 8 and he was 9. Ruth gave Pete a quilt (slides at www.dan-ruth-tanner.com/Ruth_Tanner/Needle_Art). You can also see the quilt that she made for our little friend 13-year old Chelsi in Dominica there.

This will be our final holiday season in this house, after 30 years. Here we are (below): Ruth, Dan & Mathilda.

Well, it's time to close our annual holiday letter, so we'd like to say that we hope that you and yours had a good year 2007 and that 2008 will be a wonderful year for you.

Best wishes & Peace,

*Dan, Ruth and Mathilda
Tanner*

