

Season's Greetings!

This is Tony, the American Tiger airplane that Rob and Ann use to buzz around the country. I gotta tell you about this year! As most of you know, last year's letter ended with Rob searching for a new car. Rob (but definitely not Ann) thought he had the perfect, "ride to work" deal going. Who wouldn't like a toasty van picking them up in the dead of winter? Finally, on Ann's birthday December 15th, Rob bought another Eagle Talon Tsi AWD. Rob has now owned one of the first (1990) and last built (1998) Talons. After \$4k of obligatory modifications to make the new car as "cool" as the old one, Rob has deemed it drivable.



Work is going well for both of them. Picker bought Elscint for \$275 million, so it keeps Rob on his toes and for the most part, out of trouble. Multiverse moved it's administrative offices recently, so Ann is still adjusting to the new space. The office is on the 15th floor and offers a great view of the lake.

Of course we took many trips this year! In February we went to Potsdam, NY for a weekend visit with Ann's family. Rob admired the cement taxiway, but it turned out to be a solid sheet of ice left over from the ice storm in January. Because of Mother Nature's warped sense of humor, "Ice Storm 98" sent Ann's mother to a shelter for five days. Needless to say, it was an experience Upstate NY doesn't care to repeat. May saw Rob dropping off Ann in Potsdam for a week's visit with her family. Her mom had hip surgery and Ann went to help out at home. She is doing well, although we don't see dancing in her immediate future. July 4th weekend Ann started playing golf, something she had been talking about for years. Tiger Woods has nothing to fear, but she did manage to take 20 strokes off her game over the course (excuse the pun) of the summer. Ann has some gray hairs from playing, but has decided each one is well deserved. Rob attended a racing school at Mid Ohio racetrack in June. I guess these things do 130mph one inch off the ground and "fly" (snicker) around corners close to 2 times the force of gravity. In August, Rob made his annual pilgrimage to OshKosh, WI with a friend from Potsdam. It was great for me to sit in the parking area and catch up with my plane buddies, while Rob and Matt explored for stuff they could buy me. I was in the hospital for my yearly checkup when Rob and Ann went to Potsdam for a family gathering in September. Ann's sister and her husband were celebrating their 25th wedding anniversary. There was a nice dinner and surprise party; a good time was had by all.

Congratulations go to Rob for getting his "fly-in-the-clouds" license in September! Taking nine days off from work to study with a professional instructor was very intense. As events would have it, Rob used his new skills going to Kentucky for Halloween. He enjoyed popping out of the clouds 800' above the runway but, I don't think Ann liked it very much. In November, we had *fun* visiting Rob's aunt and uncle. After staying below the clouds enroute to Washington, D.C we proceeded to climb through them. By the time we got to 8,000 feet we were covered with a 1/2" of ice. As if that wasn't bad enough, in the process of climbing, I started making unusual (as Ann described it, along with other choice expletives) sounds. Of course Rob blamed it on Ann's rattling golf clubs in the back seat. Upon landing, we discovered that ice had built up on one of the antennas. The added weight worked it back and forth, tearing my skin. Rob was having the alternator replaced during our visit, so he also put my cosmetic surgery on the work order. Even though I do cause problems for Rob he still refers to me as "friend". Too bad I frequently hear the words, "money pit" out of Ann. Rob keeps telling her that everyone needs a place to put their money, a bank is what I think she had in mind. On the bright side of the Washington trip, Ann played golf at a private country club. A White House golf ball found on the fairway made a good souvenir. Playing in the nation's capital is more intimidating than the backwoods of Kentucky! Speaking of intimidating, remind me to tell you about Rob and his encounter with Gore's secret service agents. All in all we had a fun year together. We hope this letter finds you happy, healthy and looking forward to the New Year!



Happy Holidays.