

*Whether you are celebrating Christmas, Hanukkah, Yule, Kwanzaa, Festival of the Sun, Day of Enlightenment, Winter Solstice, Chinese New Year, Festival of Lights, Eidul-Adha, Festival of Fire, Sadeh, Festivus, or Saturday, Happy Holidays!*

2010 has been a year of ups and downs, losses and gains. Through it all, I hope I've grown a little wiser, because I know I've grown a little older; as have we all.

I spent a lot of time travelling, starting the year in Toronto, then to Winnipeg, Canada, then to Antalya Turkey. I managed to miss the snow in Winnipeg, the windiest city in North America, but on my February trip to Toronto, I left my coat in the car in Orlando. I was very thankful that winter was mild last year. On most days, I didn't need the coat I borrowed.

My most distant project was in Antalya, Turkey. The culture there is very different, but the food is wonderful and most of the people I met were happy to practice their English. The project was intense, but I was able to see a few sights. The picture to the right is me riding a camel in Aspendos. The one below is the Duden Waterfall. The background picture on this letter is the Mediterranean Sea, shot from the balcony of my hotel room.



The upside of all the travel is that I have been able to visit family in New Hampshire more often. After my last trip to Turkey, instead of returning directly to Orlando, I flew to Boston so I could spend Christmas and New Year's with Mom and my sisters. While in Turkey, if I wasn't working or sampling the wonderful Turkish cuisine, I was in the Bazaars looking for interesting Christmas gifts to bring back with me.

There were a few adventures in Orlando this year, too. On my birthday, I visited Universal Studios to see the Wizarding World of Harry Potter. Unfortunately, everyone else was there too—the line was wrapped completely around the park. I will see WWHP next year.

My Irish cousin, Fr. Anthony O'Connell visited Altamonte Springs, Florida, in September. Since this is only 30 minutes from my home, we were able to spend a couple of afternoons catching up and solving the problems of the world.

The losses this year were the loved ones that moved from on from the physical plane. In March, I lost Wags, my very old, very loveable Chow. She passed over the "rainbow bridge" to join my boxers, Buddy and Bernie. In April, my mother's sister, Mary Anctil, passed away at the age of 90. In August, my brother-in-law passed away suddenly. He was a loved member of the family, but he was the world to my sister. He will be missed for a very long time.

In my "spare" time, I have been working towards project management certification through the Project Management Institute. I'm also working on a non-fiction book project that I hope to publish in the Spring.

During one of my sillier moments, I created a little dance on elfyourself.com: Click the link below to see Elf Bernadette, Elf Kathleen, Elf Madeleine, Elf Ruth Ann, and Mother Elf, Ann, do the Christmas Hip Hop.

<http://elfyourself.jibjab.com/view/lbLGNuDja4bOKcds>

May your Holiday and your year ahead be filled with Love, Light, and Joy.

*Bernadette*

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