



The Taylor Times



Holiday 1998

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E-mail: myoozik@aol.com

The Newsletter with "Schmalz"

Seattle, Washington

A YEAR OF CHANGE

1998 has proven to be a year of changes, as expected. In January, I finally bought a house in Seattle, after Mimi and I had rented in Kirkland for six years. In August, Mimi bought a condo in downtown Kirkland. We are both stretched to our limits, but also are both enjoying our respective new homes.

My house is located in a neighborhood known as West Seattle, a fairly isolated peninsula-like protrusion on the opposite side of Elliott Bay from downtown Seattle. I'm actually at the south end of the area, quite a way from any views of the city, but a mere 12 blocks from the Fauntleroy ferry dock, which leads to Vashon Island and across Puget Sound to the Kitsap Peninsula. A few blocks farther is Lincoln park. Large and heavily forested, its landscape varies from

gravelly beaches covered with washed up logs, to sandy beaches in the protected cove, to 300 foot bluffs overlooking the Sound and the Olympic Mountains. It is part of my regular running route and serves as a reminder of why I wanted to move to the area.

Mimi's condo is right in the heart of downtown Kirkland on the eastside of Lake Washington. It's a relatively small, but very comfortable unit on the fifth floor facing the new library and performing arts center, baseball fields, and Park Place shopping area to the east. It's limited access makes it very safe and she has convenient secure parking and storage inside the building. Excellent restaurants, shopping, and close proximity to the lakefront parks all make it just what she wanted.

While both of us are currently somewhat strapped in our spending abilities, the values of both our homes have already risen in this low-supply housing market. Knowing that we could always sell for a profit makes trying to maintain a little easier, and pride of ownership is still a reward in itself. Meanwhile I continue to keep tabs on my house in Denver which has increased dramatically in value over the last few years.



The house at 3735 SW 98th Street.

LIFE UNDER THE MEXICAN SUN

For the Thanksgiving holiday, I spent the week in the condo at Paradise Village in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. I needed to use the condo before the year ended and had figured that whomever I was working for when the holiday came around would have at least one, if not two days off that

week, so I would not have to take much extra time. Going down alone, I planned on concentrating on three things in particular: relaxing, exercising, and writing music, in that order. The first two were accomplished easily, including the acquisition of a pretty reasonable tan in just the week. The last item was a bit more elusive, though I did manage to

(See "Mexico" on page 2)

CHIYODA CLOSES ITS DOORS

ASIAN ECONOMY TO BLAME

Chiyoda International Corp., the engineering company for whom I worked for more than six years, is closing its Seattle office even as this is being written. Most of us were convinced that concentration on Japanese clientele without sufficient pursuit of American projects resulted in the troubled Asian economy dragging CIC down with it. The mother company in Yokohama lost a great deal of money last year and was not only no longer able to contribute any financial assistance, but required a significant bailout from a Tokyo bank themselves. Offices throughout the world have been or are being scrutinized for possible closures. As a result, I was laid off in mid-August, but the severance package was generous and the remaining summer was very nice, giving me an opportunity to work on some house projects and play a few rounds of golf.

In October, I started working at R. W. Beck, located as Chiyoda was, in downtown Seattle. Ironically, I had worked for their Denver office nearly twenty years ago, so it's been a relatively easy process getting comfortable in the new surroundings. Unfortunately, there are a few drawbacks. First and foremost is the fact that this particular area of downtown has the most expensive parking, enough so that I can no longer afford to drive to work, relegating myself to the Metro buses. Maintaining a disciplined schedule and having to leave the office at exactly the same time each day, often requiring that a project be put away incomplete for the night, has been uncomfortable if not exasperating, as has been the commute itself. Had Seattle a public transportation system that was not affected by the inconsistencies of highway traffic, it might not be so bad.

(See "New Job" on page 2)

New Job Both Good and Bad

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Secondly, I am currently a "special employee" having been hired for a specific project and having no additional benefits beyond the hourly wage. The company has been gradually rebuilding its staff after a reduction a few years ago, and if all goes well I may be moved to the full-scale payroll early next year. I'm hoping new projects will develop to help the company

MUSIC WRITING CONTINUING

While the early part of the year was pretty well consumed with the needs of the new home, the last few months have seen increased efforts in my music writing. I may finally be ready to release the String Quartet after again revising the slow movement, and work has been progressing well on a sonata for tuba and piano, as well as some other piano music. For those with connections to the Web and any interest in hearing them, mid files of some of this work have been posted at the newsletter site.

SUMMER IN SEATTLE

This summer mom and dad were joined by brother Scott in the annual pilgrimage to the great Northwest. While trying to make it a relaxing trip for all, we also wanted Scott to see the sights, having never visited here before. Among our activities were a return to Tillicum Village on Blake Island [see the 1996 newsletter], visits to the National Volcanic Park at Mt. St. Helens and Boeing's Museum of Flight, and a quick trip to Vancouver, British Columbia after visiting Uncle Frankie in Bellingham. Of course, we could not have managed without throwing in a little golf as well.

MIMI'S JOB SECURE FOR NOW

Despite Boeing's announcement of 48,000 jobs to be eliminated over the next two years, Mimi's job there appears to be secure. Her particular position is one of keeping the customers happy with the seat designs for their airplanes, and very few people in the company do or know her job. Even during lean times, with fewer planes being built, her skills continue to be needed. And with recent orders that have helped compensate for losses from Asian airlines, the cuts may not end up being as severe as originally thought.

Mexico Vacation

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make some small additions and changes to music I've been working on recently. The weather in Seattle since the first of October, has been frightful, with what seems like nonstop rain. Only the severity seems to change. The trip to Mexico took place during a particularly bad week in the Northwest, which probably made it that

PALM SPRINGS REVISITED

In May, my folks, Mimi, and I all met again at the Trendwest condo in Palm Springs. Once again we had a beautiful room overlooking the pool and the mountains to the west. This year we found a new golf course, Desert Willow, that was exceptional and should prove to be one of the better courses in the area in the years to come. We also visited the art museum in the heart of town and enjoyed our old favorite restaurant haunts. We'd like to make this vacation a regular occurrence, but conflicting schedules will determine. And, oh yes, it actually RAINED on us in the desert this year.

much more enjoyable. With luck, a few days in Florida during the Christmas holiday will help me through the remainder of the cool, wet, and dark days of winter. Once the days start getting longer, Seattle may again emerge from the dreariness to become a great place to live.

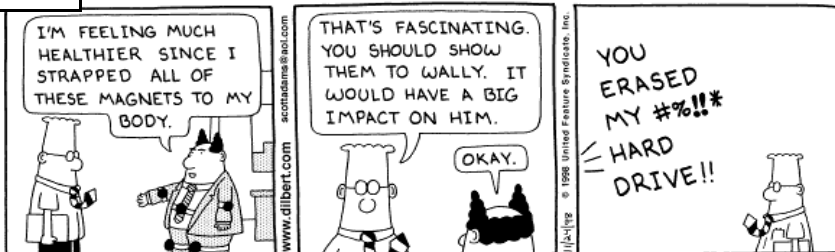


The new Tikal Tower at Paradise Village



Scott, Dad, Mom, and me about to embark.

DILBERT



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Holiday Greeting
While this year has seen many changes, both good and bad, changes are what keep us alive and growing. Happiness can neither be achieved nor appreciated without the experience of turmoil. I know many of you have similarly experienced major changes this year. My wish for all this holiday season, is that these changes have all served to improve and enrich your lives. With heartfelt wishes for a blessed and joyous holiday and a fulfilling and positive new year.

Check out the expanded newsletter at <http://members.aol.com/taylorlms/1998news/ttimes.htm>