

# Seasonal Greetings

**Main Plaza, Taormina, Italy**

# Best Wishes for 2007

I hope you're all healthy and looking forward to this new year. I'm a little bit late getting these greetings out this year; at this point I can't even dignify them as New Year Cards, as I've tried in the past. I was even thinking of giving up, but procrastination is a gift that shouldn't be wasted. Being late does have its advantages. Unlike most years, I have already opened all the cards that you were nice enough to send to me. In the past I've waited as long as June (same year, though) to open them. To be honest, Holiday cards frighten me.

I've also been frightened of bifocals, but I broke down this year and finally tried a pair. I realized that I couldn't read the Auto Club maps in a car (when stopped, of course) without changing to reading glasses. I also make sure to stop to use my cell phone, but in general I've given up on cell phones except as emergency devices. For various reasons I don't carry a cell phone regularly nor check the voicemail, so it's no longer a good idea

to try to reach me via cell phone, plus the numbers have changed. Why I have 4 cell phones is a long story.

I decided to start using my oven (it's there, and it must be good for something other than storage) and after much experimentation I can produce a banana cake based on an instant mix. If you want a non-scratch banana cake, I'm good for that, but nothing else except for persimmon cookies. I started making persimmon cookies since I was up to my armpits in persimmons this year. My father planted four persimmon trees, which I tend in his memory. After a barren 2005, the trees decided to make up for it in '06! My mother said that my father didn't really like to eat persimmons; another mystery that will go unsolved. As for my mother, I'm having some success forcing her to eat more vegetables and to exercise. She claims it's elder abuse.

I continue to bicycle, hike, tend my farm of obsolete Macs, work in the yard (it doesn't really qualify as gardening), collect DVDs, model kits, and figures (a.k.a dolls). I'm trying to get more serious about photography, and I ride a motorcycle to work almost every day. For a vacation this year I wanted to visit Jordan and Egypt, but decided that wasn't a really good idea until maybe after 2008. Instead I visited southern Italy. Photos at <http://www.ikemi.info/mytravel.html>, along with photos from other travels.

Last Christmas Eve (2005) we had to put away my mother's 15 year old Australian Shepherd, Harley-one of the best dogs I've known. His successor is Bart, another oversized Aussie. He's currently going through his hole-in-the-lawn phase, but he's a surprisingly good house dog for an 80 pounder.

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