

February 16, 2005
Ithaca, NY
Marie's Update

The Big One

I spent the past weekend with Rich and Candace in their lovely new digs in Cambridge. The house is cozy and welcoming but not for the faint of heart in the wall hangings department. Vast expanses of empty walls there are not. On the other hand, what an adventure to constantly be seeing new things that I hadn't caught at previous glances.

For me the adventure began with a very exciting arrival in Cambridge. All those years of driving in rush hour traffic in Houston paid off handsomely on Friday night. When the EZ Pass lane is on the far right and the Cambridge exit just a few hundred yards ahead on the far left..... one mentally engages Houston-mode and fearlessly moves in two directions at once. I may have no sense of direction but driving in stop and go traffic I can definitely do.

Upon my arrival we sat down to a wonderful meal. Wine, candles, ambience—clearly Rich has not lost his sense of style. We chatted, got caught up and made plans for the next day.

Saturday brought another lovely day. Candace went off to a retreat at the Society of St. John the Evangelist for part of the day while Rich and I set out in search of food. A relatively quick walk brought us to Harvard Square where we got some bagel-like substances. They looked just like bagels, imagine, but were not quite up to Candace's standards. Still, they were eminently edible. So we did.

Next stop—a lovely little gourmet place called Formaggio which specializes in cheese. Surprise! A quick look-round and off to the adjacent establishment—The Fishmonger. We bought two different kinds of herring out of the four that were available, and marched on home for lunch. On the way we passed Longfellow's house—where George Washington is known to have slept. Maybe. Yes, he probably did. Or at least hung out there with his troops.

Lunch consisted of herring, cheese and bread and the traditional “changing of the wine glasses” ceremony. From white wine the night before we were planning to switch to red with dinner. Now all we needed was the wine. At my request Rich and I drove over to Trader Joe's. I wanted to see what it was like.

Rich bought healthy things like whole wheat bread, organic milk and wine. I bought chocolate. I had to---they had my favorite---the extra-rich Droste pastilles. I even got two! You never know when a gift-giving opportunity might present itself.

Dinner plans changed but not the consumption of wine. Instead of a home-cooked meal, we opted to dine at Atasca, a well-reviewed Portuguese restaurant on Broadway. More fish—this time *caldeirada de peixe* (Rich), *caldeirada de bacalhau* (Candace) and *bacalhau encebolada* (me). Fish, cod and cod, respectively. For dessert, more wine—Rich had a baked apple with port—lots and lots of port—and I had a custard with orange liqueur—lots and lots of orange liqueur. Candace drove home so she had a fruit dessert. Tee hee.

The next day brought my visit to a close. After getting my act together with lots and lots of *café con leche*, I set out in the early afternoon.

This is not so much of an update as it is a glimpse into the lives of Candace and Rich in Cambridge. Just for a weekend. They both look wonderful and peaceful. Rich checks mail and works in the mornings and gets “beamed” in the afternoons. The problem with his right arm seems to not be getting worse and perhaps is even improving a bit. His smile is dazzling as it always is and his blue eyes sparkle with appreciation of life’s many blessings. Candace takes care of Rich and makes food, connections with others and explores both Cambridge and her spiritual essence. Her eyes are peaceful and caring. I went to Cambridge to see them but I saw so much more. I saw their commitment and their hope and their love. It was definitely a big weekend for all of us.