

O come, O come Emmanuel...

MERRY CHRISTMAS 2003!

2003 was a grand year for us. September 29th we wed in a small civil ceremony in Rome, Italy. Mary's client **DORA** –a Roman by birth whose family all still live in Rome—acted as interpreter. Dora's brother **CARLO** was best man and daughter-in-law **KIM** was maid of honor.

The noon ceremony was in the *Complesso di Vignolo Mattei* --a former church building, now the place where all civil wedding ceremonies in Rome take place. Then off in our hired car with driver who took us to all the typical tourist sights for wedding-day photos. Dinner hosted by **DORA** crowned the day at the *Boscolo Hotel Exedra* in the *Piazza della Repubblica* –the same place where the grandson of the last king of Italy had his wedding reception just a few days before! Dora's nine siblings joined us for the dinner!

Our Roman wedding adventure had many turns. The Italian bureaucracy lived up to every stereotype and our friend from Bari, **CORRADO**, calls the “pumpht, pumpht, pumpht” of the rubber stamps, “Italian music.”

The paperwork negotiated, our plans were nearly overturned by a wholly unrelated interruption. Having missed the great New York City blackout of 2003, we caught the biggest electrical failure in Italian history the day before our wedding! The night of Saturday/Sunday, September 27/28 --designated *La Notte Bianca*, the first of an intended annual event-- shops stayed open all night, museum admission was free, and lights blazed at all night street parties. White raiment and everything evocative of light and whiteness ruled at the party we joined until 3:30 a.m. when the lights in all Italy went out.

With no power we could get no news of what had happened until our dear friend **LAURA**, who had a battery-powered radio at home in a Roman suburb, called to say that wind-storms had taken down transmission lines from France. Power in central Rome returned before noon and the rest of the country over the next several hours. Our wedding could go ahead as planned!

In addition to our wedding, 2003 brought other good times, travel, and celebrations with family and friends –and in all, a few loses and sad times as well.

Perhaps cabin fever struck in the long snowy winter (Presidents' Day 27.5-inch snow fall was the largest in Boston history), for David --who stepped down as Cambridge GOP chairman (1994-2002) for a break from

politics-- agreed in February to be chairman of the *Boston Ward Three Republican Committee*.

Also aborn of those winter days was the *Robert Benchley Society*, which we founded in March. See our website www.robertbenchley.org for more. So far the RBS has celebrated Benchley's birthday, sent a delegation to *Parkerfest*, the annual gathering in New York City of the *Dorothy Parker Society*, and met several times to enjoy Benchley movies and essays.

Work took David, this summer, to sub-Saharan Africa. We do mean *work* --13 airplanes in 15 days. The one day off was spent on safari. **South Africa** is a beautiful country with very friendly people, but unemployment is over 40% and security --while secure-- makes an American uncomfortable. **Mauritius** is a beautiful tiny island nation with only three industries: textiles, sugar cane, and tourism. The beaches are beautiful beyond my power to describe. **Madagascar** was a first exposure to a lesser developed country (less than \$1,500 per annum per capita income). They love Americans in Madagascar. Last year they elected a new president, but the old president refused to leave, resulting in civil war. The U.S. was the first major country to recognize election winner, leading to the flight of the former president and the beginnings of recovery.

Mary's salon, *Mary for Nails, etc.*, continues to prosper in Andover. In addition, Mary is now writing a bi-weekly Beauty Culture column, *All that Zazz*, for the *Post-Gazette*, the English-language Italian-American paper published in the North End.

In May 2003 we lost our friend **KAY** --Kay whom we met in Athens in 1998 and who split her time between Greece and Florida. We last saw Kay Christmas 2002 in Miami, with Mary's father **ALEC**.

May 2 all New England mourned the Granite State's natural rock formation, *Old Man of the Mountain*. First seen by white men in 1805, it is now but a pile of rubble.

Looking forward to 2004 we wish you all health, wealth, and happiness --as Mary's dad always says, "The best is yet to come!"

Your servants,

DAVID and MARY TRUMBULL