

# Christmas 2005

*Julie R. Neidlinger*

Merry Christmas!

This has been one heck of a year for me, and I know you're dying to know all about it so I'll just jump right in.

I've been busy traveling all over the place this year. Believe you me, I've been putting the sunblock to good use - all those exotic locales...I almost feel like I'm retired!

The beginning of the year found me still working as a reporter, busily uncovering graft and greed in high places. I nearly won a prize for an expose I did following a particularly raucous county commissioner meeting. Because of the legwork and because I basically put my reputation on the line, I ended up losing my job. I guess some boats just aren't meant to be rocked!

Don't you worry about me, though! I landed back on my feet and pushed full-throttle into my online art business. This year was a year of pushing myself and really challenging my art and theory skills. I found myself breaking new ground and I am really excited at the direction my art is taking.

Never fear! I haven't let any of my other fabulous skills go to waste, either! My graphic design enterprise is still gunning for the stars, with the design of a book and CD cover safely under the belt. I also recorded my first CD of piano music, to the delight of thousands of fans who had been clamoring for such an offering.

My writing hasn't suffered from all the excitement, either. Three of my short stories were selected to be included in an anthology. You can expect to see that book, the book I created the cover for, I might add, on best-selling shelves near you!

I also created a stellar new literary character and can proudly say that I am a successful, published writer in every sense of the word. Bob, my character, is taking the reading and publishing world by storm. Haven't heard of him yet? Where have you been?!

I was also a winner in the recent National Novel Writing Month contest, a prestigious honor indeed. I have the rare and delicate certificate proudly hung in my writers nook just to remind me, in those rare down days, how successful I am!

Right.

That's a total lie.

The county extension agent ticked me off and so I quit.

Pet portraits. Lots of them.

Trust me, it's just not like it sounds.

I was on the anthology selection committee. Pretty much everyone made it in.

I self-published the book for free online and have sold maybe six copies.

A winner, along with about 80,000 other people around the world. I taped the downloadable certificate printout to my bedroom door.

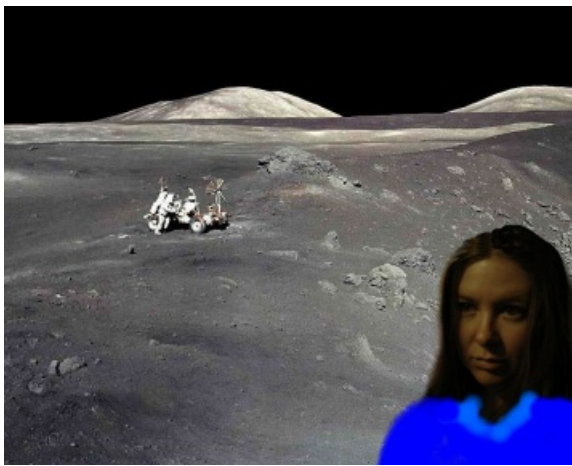


*You can never have too much mismatched clip art.*



All in all, it's been another year of smashing success and excitement and I just couldn't wait to share it with you. You are such a close friend that I knew you'd feel nothing but delight and joy at my personal and professional accomplishments this year. It never occurred to me that if you had a crappy year, such a letter like this might make you feel even crappier and more pathetic because there's just no way your life could ever measure up to mine and the thousands of exclamation points that trickle down through each day! Wow! Everything is perfect and dandy here! How about you?!

Yeah.



I rode the space elevator to the moon. What an experience! The moon natives were delightful and I bought many hand-made trinkets. And bananas.



Antarctica was a blast! Thankfully I took up knitting this year because boy was it cold down there! The Antarctica natives were delightful and I bought many hand-made trinkets. And whale fat.



My cat, Brutus, was voted sexiest cat ever. Plus, because of his ability to self-medicate, he won a prestigious intellect award. He's the smartest cat ever, and he was free.

Here's a few photos from this past year. I know you want to join with me in all the excitement.

Enjoy!

