

Merry Christmas 2003

There is a rumor going around that people all over the world are wearing a path to their mailbox looking for our notorious Christmas Letter. I know these rumors are going around because I started them! Unfortunately, the Christmas Letter fund drive has been a little slow. I scanned and e-mailed myself a twenty dollar bill to prime the pump but even that has not had much effect. This, as all my Christmas Letters, is written with “tongue-in-cheek” because I learned a long time ago from my Mom who learned it from her Dad that the best way to face the problems of life is with a smile. As long as we can see the humor, we can make it through. This year has had more than its share of humor!

We started this year about mid-February. We planned to start in January with everyone else but somehow that New Year’s resolution along with the one about starting a diet didn’t seem to materialize. Oh well, there is always 2004! I’m not sure why we even started the year in February because it was relatively uneventful. We even cut the month short to get a head start on March and the beginning of Spring. If I had to sum up the events of 2003 in a couple words, they would be work and stress.

I gave up my inspection business this January because it was just too much stress. In a time when honesty and integrity are lacking in many businesses, my in-depth inspection was more than the realtors wanted to promote. Many went out of their way to try to keep me out of the process promoting other “less picky” inspectors. I resumed my previous business of home remodeling and repair and have had more work than I care to do at prices that make it worth while. So, I reduced the work-stress but increased the work-work!



On the home front, we decided to remove the old tree in the front yard which was home to several families of raccoons and more than its share of rodents and insects. That led to a new porch, new landscaping, and a completely new look to the house. We think it is for the best but it was a lot of work.

Pat is still working for the Secretary of State. She enjoys her work with seniors and does not miss the stress of her old job with the School of Medicine (SIU). It is a good thing she changed jobs because that SIU department was phased out.

There are times in life when it is not wise to ask “what is wrong”. Pat made the mistake of asking the Doctor and she found out she has arthritis, tendonitis, carpal tunnel, high cholesterol and diabetes. “Sorry I asked” was her reply. For that very reason, I’m not going to the Doctor!

Krystal is in the Chicago area teaching high school English to freshmen at Plainfield South High School. She lives with a guy she has known from early childhood. Actually, she is just on a spy mission to find out the ingredients in the Oh’s family restaurant’s hot and spicy chicken. She eats there as often as possible but so far the recipe is still a secret.

Kim is a Junior in Southeast High School. She and another fellow student have been trading off first and second place class rank. Needless to say we are proud parents. It reminds me of what I could

have done in high school. Most of her classes are advanced placement classes which makes her eligible to test out of college classes. At this rate, she will probably enter college as a senior. She finds boys a pleasant distraction but not worth wasting too much time on. I know it is a dangling preposition, it's Christmas, think of it as a decoration for the sentence.

Kim spent her summer working for the Secretary of State's Information Technology Department. She made corrections to the SOS web site so fast that they still have not been able to catch up implementing all of her corrections. Her computers are her major distraction considering they are much more dependable than her boy friends. She hosts her own web site on one of her computers and there is even enough bandwidth for me to check my e-mail if I wait until the middle of the night.

My Mom, the last remaining grandparent in the family had to go into a nursing home last fall. We knew there was a problem when we found her on our front porch preparing for a party with six glasses of punch. When asked who was coming, she named relatives and friends we have not seen in years and some of whom were only around in spirit. Now I am open minded enough to accept the fact that they might have been there but they sure weren't drinking any of the punch.



The first week at the nursing home, she tried to break out the window to get away. This led to another hospital visit. After returning to the home for about a week, she fell and broke her hip. Now for the average person of her age, this is the beginning of a downhill trend. But my Mom is far from average. She was sneaking off without her walker in less than two weeks. It has been a little over a month now and she is walking around as good as new. Pictured above, she is seen telling Santa that she wants a Model "T" Ford for Christmas. It is probably part of her new escape plan.

I know how a parent of an unruly kid must feel. Every time the phone rings, I worry it is the nursing home calling to tell me she was taken into the principal's office for doing something terrible. One time she stood up in the middle of breakfast and shouted out "Don't eat the food, it is poison!" I can imagine how well that went over. They tried to move her to the more restrictive Alzheimer's wing but she packed up her bags and moved herself back to her old room. She told the nurse she didn't belong with the crazy people. Her memory is fine and she remembers all her friends and family; but some days you are her friend and other days you are part of the conspiracy trying to do her in. Just last week, I got a call from our favorite nurse. She told me that Mom had barricaded herself in her room with the bed blocking the door. When Mom finally got to the phone, she told me the reporters were there to take pictures and write a terrible article about her so she wasn't letting them in. I finally convinced her there were no reporters and that if she didn't cooperate, they would move her back to the other wing. She didn't want that so she said she would do what I told her. I told her to move the bed back! Now picture this: an 85 pound, 89 year old, little old lady moving furniture around at will. As I said before, she is not your average octogenarian.

Now, as I sit here listening to Christmas music on my computer, I know it is all in Gods' hands. It is all as is should be for each of us to grow. Only the seed that can break through the shell can go on to become a towering tree and reach for heaven. I wish you enough trials to make you strong, enough love to give you purpose and the vision to see the light.

Merry Christmas and Best Wishes for Happy New Year 2004.

Love and Light,
Dulany, Pat, Kim, & Krystal