

Christmas 2004

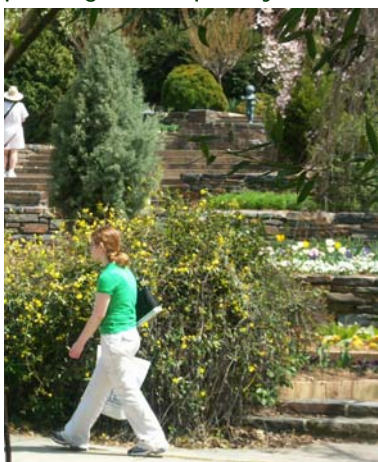


As I look out into the garden, I see snowbirds stopping for a drink at the waterfall. The green holly branches accented with bright red berries stand out from the otherwise bleak surroundings. Ice covers the pond and even the stately Heron yard ornament seems to be shivering in the cold. The lush green potted plants, recently brought inside have to search for the sun through insulated windows.

But the cold crisp air can't chill the warmth of the Christmas tree all decorated and standing at attention by the crackling fire in the fireplace. Carefully wrapped packages fill all the empty spaces around the base of the tree just waiting for the excited hands to rip off their ribbons and bows. It's that time of year again to try to compress the events of 2004 into some kind of an ordered chronicle of events to share with friends and family.



This year started out like most years with January. That is probably a good thing because if it started with, say July, I would have even less time to get ready for Christmas. And I don't know about the rest of you but the older I get, the faster the years go by. This year was no exception. The fact that we spent a lot of the year in the car driving to colleges all across the country might account for the compressed time continuum. Einstein had a formula for it. It was something about mass and speed. I will take a little liberty with the exact formula to say that it simplifies down to: The more schools you visit, in a given amount of time, the more they all seem to run together and this gives the illusion that time is passing more quickly. OK, I took a LOT of liberty with the formula, but I'm sure that



even Einstein would admit that seeing nearly 60 colleges in one year causes the inertia syndrome in man. This states that a body at rest wishes it could stay at rest and not drive another 500 miles. In January, we went to Florida and back on a 4 day weekend. This was a good start with over 2,000 miles and almost 10 colleges on the itinerary. By the second trip during spring break, we had it down to a science. With the laptop GPS manned by Kim, we made our way out to Washington DC and got there in time for the cherry blossoms. Even the thought of them brings the scent to mind. From

there we headed south and took a break in Colonial Williamsburg. Then we pressed on down to the beautiful campus of Duke University. (pictured at left)



that could be a vacation destination by itself. We completed the loop going across South Carolina and Tennessee and then back north and home. This loop took in 33 more colleges. (At Right, Kim at Berry College) Several other weekend trips completed our quest. This should all give you a look at the inner workings of Kimberly's in-depth



mind. I think Kim could sum up her 2004 as the year to get ready to go to college. She has narrowed the list to 5. She has applied to 3 so far and has been accepted at all three. She is leaning toward University of West Florida but her sister is trying to convince her that her alma mater, Augustana, should be her choice. She is presently #1 in her class and President of National Honor Society at Southeast High School. No matter where she goes, I am sure she will do well and we are all very proud of her.



Krystal will also start on a new journey this year. During her spring break, she was proposed to by Steven Oh while they were having dinner at the Italian restaurant in Epcot Center in Disney World. The wedding is scheduled for August of 2005. This year for them has been dominated by wedding plans. I always thought Pat was organized but she couldn't hold a candle to Krystal and Steve. They have an organizer for their wedding organizers. They have more complete plans than a major corporation



at a stockholders meeting. If that were not enough, they are now looking for a new house to go with it. Talk about a full plate. She is teaching Freshman English at Plainfield High School and Steve is climbing the corporate ladder rather quickly at ICON in Deerfield. They presently live in Darien. For a look into their wedding plans and pictures, go to the sriner family website www.sriner.com and click on the link to Krystal's page.

That brings us up to Pat. As most of you know, Pat had breast cancer surgery in January. They removed a small mass and while it was a rather routine procedure, any surgery takes its toll on everyone involved. Pat was able to continue her positive outlook throughout the entire ordeal. The surgery was quick but the radiation therapy

was not. As the radiation exposures increased, so did the discomfort. We can all remember getting a sun burn. Now think what it would be like to keep exposing the sunburn to the sun until the blisters had blisters. That might give you an idea of what it was like. Now you might think that would get anybody down but not Pat. She decided she might as well be recuperating from carpal tunnel surgery at the same time. That would be more efficient. And let's not just do one hand, let's do them both. Talk about being helpless. Now you all know that we try to look on the bright side for all life's challenges. After all the radiation, if I can't find Pat in the dark by following her snoring, I can look for the dim glow emanating from below the covers. This gives new meaning to "glowing bride". She is still with the Secretary of State, Senior and Community Services and loves her job.



In order of importance, we now come to me. Being 58 going on 100, I can't remember much of anything that I did this year except work. I spent much of the year getting mom's house ready for rental. Even simple projects turned into major renovations. A loose tub surround turned into a new wall, window and tile. A plumbing leak grew into all new copper piping.

Even after all the college trips, we felt the need to get away and Pat and I took a week off and went to Colorado camping. I also had

a major kitchen/great room remodel (at left above) that took a good deal of my time and attention. Now, things have slowed down - almost to a stop! It is feast or famine in my work. We are planning a quick trip to visit friends in Florida after Christmas. I have been spending a lot of time taking pictures and working on one of my web sites. Pictures from our 40th class reunion (sample at right) can be found at www.shsclassof64.info



Now, after passing the tests of 2004, we can all get ready for a new year and new challenges. May we all have the strength to overcome the challenges ahead, the wisdom to learn from the trials and the humor to face them all with a smile and a hardy laugh.

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May 2005 bring good health to your body, wisdom to your mind and peace to your soul.

Love and Light,
Dulany, Pat, Kim