



## Christmas 1998

Dear Friends and Family,

Merry Christmas 1998!

Christmas here is mostly uneventful, as usual. Bonnie is again outbaking Pillsbury. From November through January she keeps every square inch of counter top covered with flour, sugar, icing, pots, pans, sprinkles, chips, flakes, nuts and food coloring. The other night--this is true so help me--I opened the frig and there was a giant container of dough that had expanded, popped its lid, and was in the process of enveloping the refrigerator and no doubt the house. I'm having nightmares about this. Not satisfied with simply retaining her "no cookie unbaked" title, she has also adorned the house with the requisite 74 boxes of Santas, stockings, bells, angels, garland, lights, bulbs, ornaments, decorations, wreaths, ribbon, candles, nutcrackers, music boxes, trinkets, chrysanthemums, bells, dough art, ginger snap snowmen, and lighted ceramic trees. Bonnie is also making dough outside the

home. Well, not much in this case, but she has fun. She is the program manager for "The Academy at FSU," which is for seniors, and it operates out of the FSU Claude Pepper Institute on Aging and Public Policy. If there's anybody to keep you young it has to be her so it's probably a good match.



I'm still taking classes which means Bonnie gets lots of practice in typing up my papers at the last minute. Also, after more than two years of close study, I think I've figured out how things work here. It's called the collegial model of governance. This means we are all jolly good professional

associates who value each other's opinion, and no one is more important than anyone else. We call each other by our first names, don't make a decision unless everyone is satisfied, and avoid saying anything (in public) that might ruffle feathers. Of course nothing gets done, but I think that's part of the model also.

Robert's time, other than school, involves practicing tennis, downloading and playing computer games, and pretending not to be interested in girls - which appears to be a winning strategy-his youth group leader refers to him as "the magnet." He's been driving since August and does well, except for the '69 VW Beetle. You'd think someone who could effortlessly and endlessly juggle soccer balls with his feet could manage to get those same feet off the clutch and brake and onto the gas without stalling-out the car or having it roll backwards three car lengths.

Anne is adapting well to freshman life in the dorm. Grades were good enough to retain her scholarship, and she has the best of two worlds: partying weekdays at school and resting up weekends at home while Bonnie does her dirty laundry. Of course she does make time during the week to let Bonnie take her shopping. Her school papers are pretty rigorous. You

see, it's a rigorous walk to where Bonnie works to have Bonnie help her with the first half of the paper; and a rigorous walk over to where I work to have me do the second half of the paper and get it polished up for submission.

Parts is parts. And now we have a "parts" expert in the family, since Sandra moved up in the food brokerage world and now works for Tyson Chicken. So now she's tuning up her corporate skills ... like golf. I'm disappointed that the samples she can bring home will be limited to but one product, but I'm looking on the bright side: she could be the statewide rep for ExLax. Steve is also into parts--computer parts that he sells with apparent ease. Just take four of your best clients up for a long weekend at a mountain cabin for a little poker, fishin' and fun, and watch the purchase orders roll in. If only I could be half as smart.

Karen proved that earning a master's degree was no sweat. Well, maybe a little. You see it was a matter of finding the right study formula for the comprehensives. Once she decided that rather than 85% worry and 15% study, it should be the other way around, no problem. You could hear her shout with joy for miles when she got her results. Yep, never any doubt. The ceremony was December 12th and we celebrated by letting her win at Q-Zar that evening. We are required to play laser tag at least annually to keep in training in case I get called back for some really major military mission.

Bonnie didn't think I had enough to do with work and school, so she signed me up to coach Rec League soccer. It's nice to be out with Robert, but trying to get and keep the attention of 15- and 16-year olds is harder than herding cats. And trying to get them to play their position is like getting butterflies to flutter in formation.

Well, we hope you've had a good year and we send our best wishes for a great holiday season and a truly happy 1999.

Jay, Bonnie, Robert, Anne, Sandra & Steve, Karen and Beau the (spoiled) cat

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