



Christmas 2000

Dear Friends and Family,

Merry Christmas 2000!

Hello, this is Jay and Bonnie Braden, reporting from Tallahassee, Florida, the state where our voters can manage 13 BINGO cards simultaneously and flawlessly, but cannot figure out how to line up an arrow and a hole so as to get a punch card right. And if you think we vote bad, watch us drive. Well, we've had enough: If you don't like the way we count then take I-95 north and visit one of the other 57 states.



The city was been pretty exciting beginning November 7th and for the next 35 days or so. I drive home on the road that goes between the Florida Supreme Court and the State Legislature's Office Building, so you probably saw me wave in the background. If in doubt, I was the one waving with all five fingers.

Last year I threatened to go from a Christmas Letter to a Christmas CD. In the interest of the environment you see that I've gone over the edge - a web-hosted Christmas letter. So - one less piece of paper to overflow your trashcan.



Of course the good news is Savannah Shae Roberts, born to Steve and Sandra on March 27th. Shortly before "the day" Sandra declared that after the baby was born, she and Steve would reclude themselves for four days of bonding, after which the new family would be "open" for visitors. Of course, that declaration didn't survive the first day as Sandra came to quickly appreciate the helping hand of Grandma Bonnie and Auntie Karen.

Sandra gave up the Tyson Chicken business (my to our refrigerator's regret) to be a stay-at-home Mom for a while. She's taken up selling Mary Kay cosmetics so be careful not to

send her your address, phone number or e-mail listing because she won't hesitate to try to put you on her client list. Steve is still in the parts business, though not chicken parts, unfortunately. He is still the master salesman for computer components, and he remodels the home in between massive orders. Oh to have a pinky worth of that talent.

Savanah, now nine months, is just wonderful. Bright red hair and the greatest laugh. Bonnie and I get to spoil her rotten and then hand her back. Ah, payback is sweet.

Robert is off to college. He selected Georgia Tech for a number of reasons, but mostly for the damage his attendance there does to our pocketbook. There his status is "out-of-state" (our status is "out-of-mind") and his Florida scholarship is worth nothing. He is majoring in computer engineering. When we visited Atlanta for orientation, the students there talked about putting in 40 - 50 hours a week on

homework and studies. Robert didn't believe them then, but he became a believer shortly after he got the results of his first round of tests. Helloooooo reality.

By the way, you might be wondering how Robert got admitted to GaTech. It might have been scholarship or leadership, but we think it was his [admissions letter](#), where he described his greatest accomplishment as being able to survive growing up with three older sisters.

Anne's major this week at FSU is nursing. She has classes she likes, but that doesn't mean anything. Careful to ensure that studies don't become too much of a demand on her time, she got herself elected as Vice President of her sorority. We really think the only degree she's interested in is the MRS. In that regard she's had a few great boyfriends who would like to get serious, but we've been unable to pawn her off so far.



Karen is still with Florida's Department of Children and Families in Tampa. (Think of Tyne Daly in "Judging Amy" but a younger and better version.) Karen gets along well with everyone in her office and in the system except for the one judge who happens to sit on all her cases. Who says life is easy?

Bonnie is doing great, as usual. I just hope I don't accidentally run out of the Ridalin I slip into her coffee each morning. She still loves her work at The Academy, and views everyone with gray hair as a potential member or a potential instructor. At home she is the Martha Stewart of about any project, and has kept JoAnn Fabrics in the black this year with sewing projects for the kids and Savannah.

I still try to play racquetball 2-3 times a week. Not too long ago I lost a close game, but immediately called for a recount, declaring that my INTENT was to get the ball back to the front wall but that since all the walls looked pretty much alike, anyone could see how I might become confused. It was clearly a design fault - a bad court decision.

By the way, I pointed out to Robert and Anne that after completing four (or more?) years of college and accumulating massive debt, they will - no doubt - get great jobs that just might make in a year what shortstop Alex Rodriguez will make in one at-bat.

Well, we hope you've had a good year and we send our best wishes for a great holiday season and a truly happy 2001.

Jay, Bonnie, Robert, Anne, Sandra & Steve & Savannah, Karen, and Beau the (spoiled) cat
BradenClan@aol.com