



Christmas 2001

Dear Friends and Family,

Merry Christmas 2001

Hello to all from Tampa. Yes, we are back in the same house we lived in from 1989 through the summer of 1992. One difference is that instead of commuting from here 55 minutes into Tampa, I'm driving 65 minutes into Orlando. Well, actually the location is Celebration, (which our family calls Pleasantville) the town on former Disney property, and location of a Stetson University Center where I am Director of Technology Programs.

Our move from Tallahassee meant that Bonnie had to give up her job with the Academy at FSU. She loved the work, and they loved her. It wasn't the money but a chance to make a difference with some senior citizens in Tallahassee. But now she has granddaughter, Savannah, to fill her time and "Trading Spaces" to inspire her towards a series of never-ending projects around the house. How much is she into home repair and remodeling? Well, I can get her excited by asking if she wants to go to Home Depot and look at reciprocating saws.

Karen traded her cubicle for an actual office with windows when she was promoted to Supervisor in the Department of Children and Families. Now instead of working 49 cases (children), she gets to manage eight people. I gave her the speech about the Harvard Business Review article, "Who's Got the Monkey?" so she understood about not taking on problems that do not belong to you. That guidance lasted a nanosecond---and after one day as Supervisor she looked more like a zookeeper! (Maybe she has just traded her 49 cases for 49 monkeys)

Sandra, busy raising Savannah and no longer in the Tyson Chicken business, took up selling Mary Kay products. No, that is not her driving around in a pink Cadillac. The business would have been great had she just 400-500 more relatives to buy her products. If you are interested, she has 28 cases of Cherries Jubilee lipstick that you may be able to get at a discount. As for Savannah, she is absolutely the most precious angel. Of course, you would be too if your every wish was granted.

Steve evidently wasn't getting challenged enough in his computer hardware sales job so he is also opening a tax service franchise (Liberty Taxes) similar to H& R Block. He has been to tax school (translated: 4,000 ways to avoid paying taxes and still avoid jail time) and has scoped out a place to rent. Oh, by the way, he is also in the mortgage business and going great there also. I guess it takes all this to cover the Mary Kay losses. Oh yes, challenges will increase in the Roberts family in mid-January when Sandra and Steve are expecting a son. Nothing like a new baby and a two-year-old to keep you hopping.

Anne got to play ""Towering Inferno" this fall when her sorority house went up in smoke. Actually the fire was relatively minor and no one was injured. But smoke and water damage exceeded \$650,000 and closed the building. So Anne got her wish: living in an apartment. And guess who will graduate in 3 1/2 years (remaining on scholarship throughout) from FSU? Yes, it is Anne, the girl of multiple majors who somehow pulled it all together and who will be awarded

a BS on December 15th. We are thrilled considering we thought she would mainly get a MRS degree. Now if she just had a J-O-B! ("Would you like that Super Sized.....") Remember our '90 Dodge Caravan with dents courtesy of Bonnie, Anne, and Robert; and a headliner that sagged only three or four inches? It got to 169,000 miles and was looking good as a graduation present for Anne, but in a moment of weakness Bonnie sold it for \$800. For those of you who can't relate to that much money, it's two Bonnie trips to Sam's Club.

Robert is a sophomore at Georgia Tech, which is a success story all its own. How is he doing? Well, he recently got a 41 on a Calculus III exam—but that was a B. Go Figure. This semester another of his courses was Digital Signal Processing that I think has something to do with downloading music off the Internet. He is also taking a Physics II course that is so difficult that anyone passing it becomes immediately eligible for work at Alamogordo National Nuclear Lab. He goes to classes as a means of relaxing from the variety of intramural sports that keep him busy through most of the evening study hours.



December marked a significant (five-year) milestone for me — receiving a Doctorate of Education from FSU. Yes, that's right: dual graduations!! Anne and I "walked" in the same ceremony at FSU!! I am not sure if the bruise from where Bonnie had her foot firmly planted on my back (was

that my motivator) will ever heal.

As you can tell, 2001 was a year full of challenges and changes, but God has really blessed the Braden Family and we are thankful for this opportunity to share our lives with our friends.

Wishing you a Blessed New Year! WOW 2002

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

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