



Christmas 2010



Dear Family and Friends,

Brrrrr. It's been unseasonably cold here. Imagine; we went four days with the temperature under 75°. The shelters were filled! But it's helped spur on the economy with everyone buying long underwear, artificial chimney logs, space heaters, ear muffs, and fire bowls for the patio. I don't know what we'd do if it ever went under 70°. Personally, I was worried if the car would start. Speaking of the car – it has 236,000 miles on it; I tell it, "Hang in there; I know how you're feeling."

This year was a real eye opener in terms of my political perspective. I found myself much more attuned to entitlements since I got my first Social Security check. Okay, well I paid into it for 45 years so for now I've just begun getting my money back. I'm considering living to 115 just to be able to start spending someone else's money. At that point I'll get some tips from Bonnie since she's been spending *my money* enthusiastically for years.

The triplets: Braden, Skyler and Daylin, turned four in November. Some of their activities this year included ballet (Daylin, Skyler), Tae Kwon Do (Braden) and YMCA sports (all three) that included soccer, tee ball, and flag football. We have had some great laughs watching them play. They attend Limona Chapel Pre-School and they love it. Karen is trying to remember what it's like to have a few hours free time to herself each day.



Sandra moved from pre-school part-time teaching to full time with Valrico Elementary, where Seth and Savannah attend. It is a tremendous amount of work setting up a classroom with bulletin boards, libraries, and learning centers. And then there are lesson plans to be written, student progress books to set up, materials to be created for the various activities – a tremendous amount of work. If you want to know for sure, just ask Bonnie and Anne who *did it all* while Sandra attended orientations.



Anne's second year as a Reading Coach serving two schools in the county has been even better than the first; especially as the word got out that teachers who sought her help had students who did much better on the state-wide reading test. Duh. She still keeps Ann Taylor in business—got to keep the economy going.

This year's family get-together in early August was this time on a ship—all 17 of us. Seven days at the buffet table and 24 hour-a-day ice cream. We don't remember where we went but we can tell you each night's menu. Thanks to Nanny who made the trip possible.



Bonnie, Sandra, Anne, and now Savannah made their annual "Girls Gone Wild" trip to the Big Apple. They came back with all kinds of stories, but mostly about eating Junior's Cheesecake and running wild in the streets of New York after midnight.

Recently I became aware that Bonnie has special ring tones on her cell phone. Even some I recognize. I found out that I was *Macho Man*,

which is nice, but with her Christmas spending it should probably be *Here Comes Santa*. I'm putting her on my phone as *Wild Thing*.

Robert, Natalie, and Benjamin continue to do fine in England. Their campus outreach called *Canvas* may have to be re-named *Phoenix* since in mid-year the property owners of their ministry buildings sold them. After much scrambling alternative facilities arose from the ashes in time for the fall semester so they are again active with Bible studies and church-lead leadership activities for University of Birmingham studies. And Benjamin is walking and almost talking, and otherwise keeping things interesting around the house.. We are the virtual grandparents on Skype to him—We play video peep-a-boo. Benjamin has the greatest laugh.



I've continued to stay healthy enough to keep playing racquetball regularly. In March I played singles in the Polk County Senior Games and came in **first** in my age group. Then I got invited to play in the Florida Senior Games in Naples, so I registered, waiting for the sponsorship calls from Wilson, Ektelon, E-Force, or Pro-Kennex. I didn't really have my mind set on anything special. Maybe four or five racquets, some shirts and shorts, a couple of pair of high-tops, some headbands and wrist bands, and a very, very large gym bag to hold all this gear. The latter was really the only important thing 'cause I heard somewhere that ladies like men with big packages.

No, I didn't even place. But it wasn't completely my fault; someone posted my game strategy on WikiLeaks. Just wait for next year . . .

Seth and Savannah are now into basketball, and Steve is coaching, which is great. I helped coach Seth in baseball this fall, but you don't want to see me play basketball. People who have seen *me* play must think I should be in the masonry business because they say I'm only good at throwing bricks.



I'm still with Stetson. This year we have watched Stetson and its new administration transition hopefully into the 20th century. Last summer the university offered a **10-course** pilot program for online academic courses. Now there's an idea you might want to pick up on. This summer the number might hold-on-to-your-seat DOUBLE to 20.



Bonnie and I continue to play volleyball once or twice a week. Bonnie remains faithful in her trips to the gym two or three mornings a week. She still plays in the church tennis league and volunteers regularly with the Deaf Ministry. We are also continuing our twice-a-month volleyball sessions at a nearby home for girls called Steppin' Stone Farm.

That's it for this year. May you continue to grow in God's grace, mercy, and love. We are so thankful for all our blessings.



The Braden Family: Jay, Bonnie, kids, grandkids, and (spoiled) kat
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