

241 West Mulberry Ave.
San Antonio, Texas 78212, USA
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Dear Friends,

Sorry for this late “Christmas letter,” but late and xeroxed information is better than none at all. It’s been so long since we communicated with some of you, even old news will be new. Let’s start with the family: We have three kids, at last count, and right now none of them is actively driving us crazy—as good as it gets.

Our older son, Nate, calls himself “John” now, his middle name. He’s 24 and still living in Berlin, working on a degree in history (specialty in Latin American studies) at the Free University there. Right now he’s in Finland for the Christmas holiday with a new girlfriend. The trip to Finland included a ferry ride from Rostock (northern coast of Germany) to Helsinki that took 29 hours! We didn’t realize how far it is—more than 1000 kilometers. He’s in Joensuu, another 300 kilometers north and east of Helsinki.

Our younger son, Ian, who still calls himself Ian, is 22 and has had a job in Dallas since August. He finished a degree this year from DigiPen Institute in the Seattle area. DigiPen is a weird school that specializes in video games—Ian’s degree was like a mathematically-oriented computer science degree with a big video game project each year. For his senior project, he and two others wrote a complete video game from scratch, with 3D graphics, and playable in multi-player mode over a network—more than 20000 lines of C++ code. His company in Dallas is called Terminal Reality. It’s small (fewer than 100 employees) and founded in 1996, which for the game industry is prehistoric times. They recently got the contract to create the new Ghost Busters game, so they’re doing quite well. They also market their own game engine. Ian is on his own, with a new cat and car to go with the new job. It seems the only evil is that the job is not disagreeable enough for him, not a good introduction to the terrible world of adult employment. Everyone is nice, and he can even come in as late as 10:30 am.

Our daughter Bethany, 17 years old, is finishing her senior high school year at a private school here in San Antonio. As for school next year, she’s all over the map, so we’ll just have to see. She wants to major in environmental studies, and then go to law school to become an international environmental lawyer. Just a couple of steps and she’ll be done. She spent her sophomore year in France, so part of the “international” above is to play the French card. Last summer she worked as a volunteer for 5 weeks at a Gibbon rehabilitation facility in Thailand—cleaning cages and generally taking care of the gibbons. It was quite an adventure. Right now she’s working in the “tiny tots” area of the San Antonio Zoo. She started volunteering at the zoo two years ago; then went through their training to become an animal handler; and finally now is getting paid.

Neal has been retired for a year and a half, just puttering around with various projects, including, umm, writing this letter, and other writing such as for an Episcopal newsletter. Fourteen months ago he visited Nate in Berlin for two weeks, all prepared for nasty weather, but that fall was the warmest ever for Berlin.

Debbie is still working in the same pediatric emergency department. While working full-time the past two years, she also completed a master’s degree in health care administration at Trinity University (a local, highly regarded, school here in San Antonio). It was a lot of work, but she had a good time, and enjoyed her classmates and (most of) the faculty. She also got to visit Nate in Berlin in 2003, and recently spent time with Ian in Dallas. Sadly, Debbie’s father died on January 2nd. He had been ill for some time.

It would be nice to wish for world peace and prosperity, but our expectations have been lowered, so we just wish to get through the coming years and work toward more progressive societies.

So (belated) Merry Christmas and (belated) Happy New Year.

Debbie, Neal, Nate (now John), Ian, and Bethany

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