FAMILY NEWS

December 11, 1994

The Latest:

Yes, you can think of this as your Christmas Card. No we did not give up on our Newsletter. Yes, we still have you on our mailing list. Whew, so many questions. I hope I've managed to answer some of them. Now its time for the latest:

Let's start with Kathy. She had to get glasses this past summer. She's started her own business and the glasses are from staring at needle work and computer screeens. Her business is a computer consultant. She is working out of the house for now and staying pretty busy. She has been averaging 2 jobs a week for the past two months. Her jobs have been a mixture of trouble shooting and upgrading. When it comes to hardware she has surpassed my abilities and only uses me for problems with software and only then when she has a problem with a specific program she hasn't learned yet.



Kathy at the top of Pike's Peak, Colorodo Springs. Denver is in the background about 70 miles away. ——>



This past April Kathy flew for the first time. I had to fly to Colorodo Springs and somehow I managed to talk her into flying with me. We took a train to the top of Pikes Peak. It was 70 degrees at the bottom of the mountain and 30 at the top. When we flew out there was 10 inches of snow on the ground and it was late April! We had a great time, but I don't think Kathy enjoyed flying.

Speaking of flying, I flew to Ft. Worth in September (business again). I've also been to Atlanta twice this year, and New Orleans. The trips were higher than usual because my company was looking for a new vice president. I went on the trips as a fill in until we found someone. I should drop back to my normal two trips next year.

Last March I traded in my VW Beatle for a new bicycle. I've been riding 7 miles a day to and from work since then. As of this week I've logged over 800 miles on it. It only takes about ten minutes longer each way and I enjoy the slower pace. Its simplified life a little by cutting out gas, insurance, and maintenance on another vehichle.

We still have our Ford Escort wagon. About two months ago we were not sure if we would or not. We thought the insurance company would total it after an accident coming home from church one day. We were driving in the left lane on a four lane highway and an elderly man in the right hand lane decided to turn left right in front of us. It had been raining and I skidded right into the side of his pick up truck. It wasn't a hard impact, but was enouch to cause about $1500 damage to our car. We had all of the kids with us, but nobody was hurt.

Speaking of kids (don't you just love my transitions between paragraphs), its time for KIDS CORNER:



This is a picture of all the kids taken from their school kindergarten photos.

TJ:

TJ will be 17 on the 17th. He is a Junior in high school and has his class ring to prove it. He will be flying to Indianna on his birthday. Instead of taking the smaller flight through Nashville he will be flying via Charolette and Pitsburgh.

He still has not gotten his drivers license. He doesn't like driving our car because it is a standard shift. It won't bother Kathy and I if he waits to get his license because it keeps him at home with us. Although there have been a few times when a third driver would have come in handy.

Everyone warned us how much trouble teenagers would be. But if the rest of the kids turn out like TJ we won't have any problems. He has a good head on his shoulders and doesn't seem to follow the norm for teenagers.

He tutors a neighbor's 11 year old girl in math, his favorite subject. He is planning to major in Computer Science or something involving computers. No we did not pressure him one way or another. We only have one computer, but with all the activity on it we are thinking of giving the kids there own computer.

Perry:

Perry is 14. He is as tall as Kathy. This past summer he was in a basketball league. He suprised me at how well he did. I'm not talking about how well he played. He and TJ are both good players. I am referring to how well he listened to his coach and followed the rules.

This past summer he got a taste of work. He has always HATED doing dishes at home. But that was his first job, doing dishes!! Guess the money made a difference.

Perry has also turned out to be quite a horse trader. Both last year and this year when he went to buy new tennis shoes we told him he only had so much to spend. Both times it wasn't quite enough for him to buy the status symbol shoes he wanted. But both times he negotiated with the guy in the mall to get what he wanted!

He still shows great inventiveness. He built a "cycle cart" from scraps just laying around. He still draws and loves his legos. He has two shelves in his room lined with models he has put together.

This past summer the whole family went to a water park. Somehow he and TJ talked their Mom into going down a slide 50 feet up in the air. It spiraled down in great circles and Kathy says she'll never do it again.

Justinn:

Justinn is 11. She is in her last year at elementry school. She too continues to be very creative. She came up with what she and Marc would be for Halloween this year, a TV and a Remote. The costumes turned out so well they had their picture in the local paper again. We went downtown trick or treating and they both were interviewed on the local radio.

Each six weeks her class takes well behaved students roller skating. She has gone twice now and can make it out to the middle of the rink by herself. Guess we haven't taken the kids skating as often as we'd like to. It was just last year we took them to their first movie at a theater. It was so much fun we've been two more times since then.

She took money she got from Christmas last year and bought a puppy from the Humane Society. After a couple of weeks it got sick and we had to take Sparky to the vet. He gave him medicine and said the puppy would be okay. But three days later the dog died. We told the vet about it and he felt so bad he called the Humane Society and let Justinn pick out another dog. He gave the new dog all his shots at no charge. And now Bud is a member of our family along with 4 fish, two cats, two birds, and one other dog.

She has written an electronic story and illustrated it on the computer. I hope to place it on America Online and if people like it she will ask them to send her $5.00. She also continues to do stories on paper by hand. I hope to scan them into the computer so we can make copies.

Marc:

Marc Thomas is 8. He and Justinn were on the same basketball team this past summer. Kathy was an assistent coach and I have some great video shots of their games.

He is in the third grade this year. It is the first year he has gotten letter grades instead of just S or N. He has made the A/B honor roll each six weeks! His teacher writes notes on his report card like: Marc is a joy to teach. And he is a joy to just be around. He continues to be extremely cheerful. I hope he never looses that trait.

He loves riding his bike and playing outside. A couple of months ago he got his kite wrapped around the power line coming into our house. TJ and I got it down. I wasn't about to call down at work and ell them one of my kids wrapped his kite in a line!

The day after Thanksgiving this year our town had an event called Hometown Christmas. They invite crafts people to set up boothes and have food and music and make a day of fun shopping down town. We had a booth this year selling snowflakes Kathy made and our new line of photo candles. We pour our own wax and put a transparent label with a picture or saying on it. Sales were down so Marc took a box of candles, magnets, and book marks the kids had made and walked around selling them like a guy selling hotdogs at a baseball game. He'd bring back an empty box and a pocket full of money. He'd load up and go out again. We split the profits with the kids and he made the most money. Nobody could resist such a cute face.

We put a deck around the pool and he loves running and jumping in. He is a great swimmer and has to be chased out of the pool. If we'd let him he'd probably eat and sleep in the pool.



This is a collection of video shots taken last week of all the kids.

This past July the center of Alberto came right over our house. Although it never made it to a hurricane we were flooded with winds and rain. I missed the fourth of July because I had to work day and night. We lost 12,000 of our 25,000 customers. I took the money I made from overtime and bought a new

card for our computer. It allows me to hook up the video camera to the computer and capture video clips or still shots.



This candle is 6 inches tall.

I video taped it in the dark with it lit.



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I have had a blast with it. We use it to put peoples pictures on our homemade candles. The candle has a hollow center so the flame shines through the wall of the candle behind the photo. I also got a program that allows me to take a photograph and make it look like a hand drawing. Above is a sample of a candle with Justinn's picture.

One of our favorite thoughts:
"To thine own self be true, and it must follow, as the night the day, thou cans't not be false to any man" William Shakespeare

From Our World to Your World:
We have been on America Online for two years now and love it. Should any of you have access to the Internet our E-mail address is: Tomgip@aol.com

I have produced this with Windows Write program (comes with Windows) so if any of you are interested in an electronic version let me know. TG Editor.