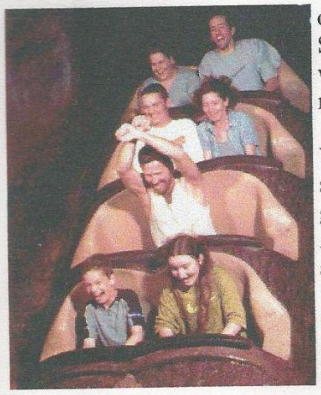
Family News

Merry Christmas!

December 15, 1999

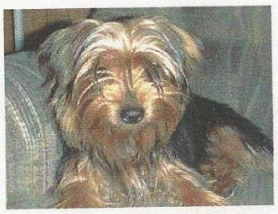
Well here it is our last newsletter of the century! We hope you are healthy and happy as we take a quick look at some of the things from our lives in 1999.



This past year has been fun for our whole family. Several years ago on a visit to Orlando we were able to take the kids to Universal Studio. Justinn wanted to go to Disney and I promised her some day we would. Early this year she reminded me she would not be a kid much longer and still had not been to Disney.

We tightened our belts and saved some money and made plans for a summer vacation. Its amazing that Kathy, TJ, Perry, Tiffany (TJ's girlfriend) and I were all able to take off the same week in August. And so for the first time in our lives our family spent 7 days 24 hours a day together. And we had a WONDERFUL time!

This photo will always remind of us what will probably be our last vacation with the whole family. If you ever stop by our house for a visit remind me to pull out the Disney pictures and show you Kathy's face when we rode the Rockin Roller Coaster!



This past April we had an addition to our family named Sparky (right). Kathy has wanted a Yorkshire Terrier as long as I've known her. Sparky was her birthday present this year and recently Kathy has been thinking about raising Yorkys. Sparky has become an expensive dog because we had to put up a new fence in the back yard just for him (g). Below is a picture of Kathy getting dressed in her Victorian gown for a local event.



She is still working at Walmart and I am still writing computer programs. We both enjoy our jobs most of the time, but we have days when we wish we could open our internet laundry mat. Its an idea we had where people could get on the internet while they wash clothes. We figure we've got enough kids to help staff it and we would not even have to pay them minimum wage (g). Last April I started riding a bike to work again after a year's absence. Sure feels good to be back on two wheels. I've logged over 5,000 miles riding a bike since 1994.

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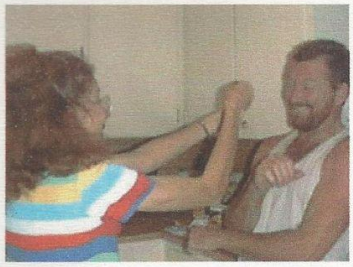
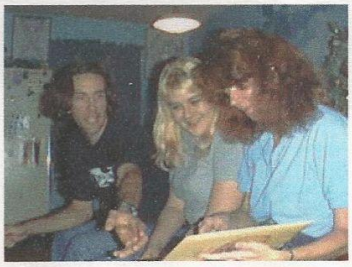


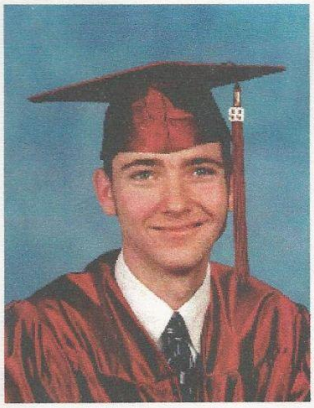
TJ turns 22 this month, but he is still Kathy's baby. Even though he is now a handsome, quiet, young man I still have to be careful when I talk about him or Mom gets a little aggressive. Although I out weigh Kathy I freely admit I am no match for her in a fist fight (g).

TJ works at Walmart on the night shift. We do not see him as much since wakes up around the time we go to bed. He likes the night shift because the pay is better. He enjoys getting on the internet. He has his own computer and phone line in his room.



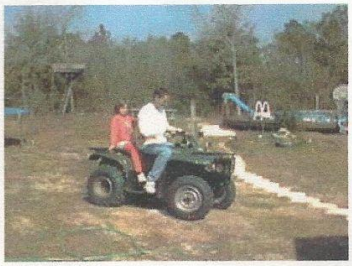
His girlfriends name is Tiffany. They have been dating for over a year. TJ brought Tiffany home to meet the family last New Year's Day. Before the night was out Kathy had pulled out the baby pictures and was proudly showing them to Tiffany.

We had Thanksgiving at our house this year and Tiffany helped Kathy out in the kitchen. Bet she never realized what she was getting into when she first met TJ (g).



We are PROUD of this photo. Perry graduated from High School last year. He worked very hard for his diploma. He too is still working at WalMart in the tire and lube department. He is now 19 years old and has become a mature young man with a great sense of humor.

Perry's Dad gave him his old truck. Perry bought a car just for the motor and has spent the past three months putting it in his new truck. He got it runnig a couple of weeks ago and last week he transfered his tag and insurance to the new truck. He suprised me and gave me his first truck so that I could add it to my collection of things from '76. I always knew he would turn out great! He likes country music, nascar, and hunting. He still enjoys playing golf, but doesn't get to play very often because he usually works on the wekends.



He saved his money last year and paid cash for his truck. By February of last year he could not stand being the only one in the family over 18 without payments. He went out a bought a 4 wheeler just so he could be like the rest of us and have monthly payments. Thats him to the right giving cousin Juliann a ride in our back yard. I like to borrow it when we have family gatherings here at our house. I give people a ride they will never forget. I give people a fun ride, but a safe ride. Just ask my Mother. She got her first ride on the 4 wheeler last spring.

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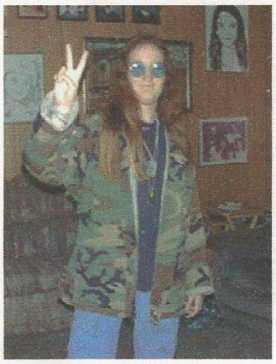
Justinn is now 16 years old. She is in her sophmore year of high school and still sports a cap and head phones. We were very thankful both TJ and Perry waited until they wer 18 before wanting to get their drivers license. But there was no holding Justinn back. She has her license and asks to drive every chance she can. She has started working at a Bible camp about 30 miles north of here in Alabama. She spent a total of 4 weeks at camp at different times over the summer. She is averaging one weekend a month attending camp retreats or working at them. The first time she went to camp 4 years ago I was sure we would get a call from her wanting to come home. Instead it has become her home away from home.



I have not played golf as much this past year, but when I do she still enjoys driving the golf cart. She stays on the internet as often as possible visiting chat rooms and making web pages. Thats how she stays in touch with her friends from camp. She is almost as good as Dad at designing web pages. She now wants to make a film and make enough money to start her own Christian radio station. I think she should do a web radio station, the transmiter is much cheaper (an internet connection) and she would have a world wide audience. We finally got a school picture where she is actually smiling and you can see her teeth. She doesn't like it. I think she thinks it goes against her hippie image.



Marc Thomas is now a teenager. He is 13 this year and will start high school next year. Even though he is a teenager he is still a loving, fun person who is always smiling. He got a set of golf clubs for Christmas last year and he and I play partners against my brother and cousin. We play best ball in a scramble format and there are many times when we play his ball because he got a better shot than me. If you ever talk to him about golf I'm sure he'll tell you about a great shot he made 100 yards from the hole. He skippid the ball across the top of a lake and it landed within 10' of the whole! He still has some work to do on his drives, but if you check back in 5 years he'll probably be driving it farther than Dad. We fixed his bike up with a rack over the back tire and lights just like mine. We let him ride it to school for a couple of months this year. The school is about a half a mile from where I work and we would ride together in the mornings.



I would let him lead and I would follow. I always thought the father was supposed to lead and the child was supposed to follow. Guess I've always done things a little different (g). He would ride home alone and I was on pins and needles until he called me at work to let me know he had made it home. He enjoys riding his bike to school and would do it year round if we would let him. I just don't think he is up to it everyday especially this time a year when some mornings the temperature can get down in the twenties.



Last January I was reading Walden's Pond again (an annual ritual) and decided to build a home away from home. I constructed a tipee out of small pines and plastic canvas. Its down near the lake far away from the noise of the house. Last Summer we got a new tag. ATFAR has been a phrase we use when something happens that we may not understand All Things For A Reason.



The Gipsons

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Favorite Thought: "We haven't the time to take our time."..... Eugene Ionesco

From Our World to Your World:
You can still reach us at tomgip@yahoo.com or kathy@atfar.com

This year's newletter was done as a web page. For those we know who have internet access we have emailed you our web address. If you have access to the internet you can view this online at: http:\\atfar.com\fn.htm

Guess that wraps it up for this year. Thanks for allowing us into your home and we'd like to wish you a

Merry Christmas!