Family News

December 15, 2004

You are reading the 2004 edition of our Family Newsletter. We hope everything is going well and that you and your family are in good health. Take a few moments to relax and let us share some of the things that have happened in our lives since last year. I will try not to bore you, but just as a precaution do not read this while driving in case it does put you to sleep.



I suppose I must start with the active hurricane season we have had in Florida. We were only impacted by Ivan while many of our extended family felt the furry of three big hurricanes. It was an amazing and unusual year for hurricanes especially for those in central Florida!

In March Kathy's grandmother passed away and we went to Orlando for the funeral. Her sister Lori and husband Bill were kind enough to let us stay with them. While it was a sad time it was a chance for her to get to see her Mom and siblings.



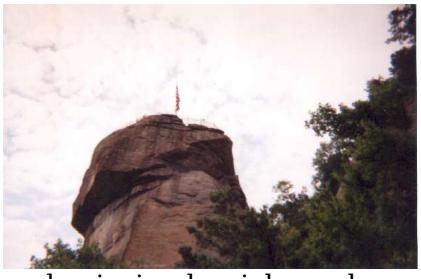
We went to a family reunion at my Aunt Lorreta's in June and had a wonderful time. Our clan took over most of a fishing camp on the St John's River near Astor. The people in the camp went out of their way to make us feel at home and to help cook and feed our big clan. Like the song says 'people on the river are happy to give' and we are grateful. On the way home we decided to take a detour to St Augustine. Here are a couple of photos of Kathy and Justinn at St Augustine.

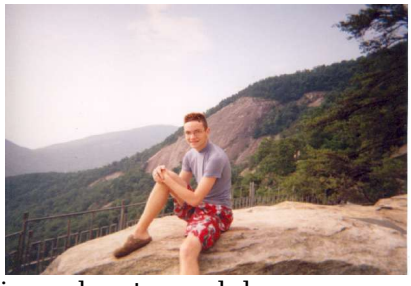


In July Kathy and I drove up to northern PA to pick up Marc (see below) and enjoy some wonderful southern hospitality with the Adams family (yes I know it was PA, but they sure made us feel at home). We camped out on their mountain one night and experienced temps in the 40's in July. Our last day we had an big cookout and homemade ice cream. It was a wonderful visit.

On our way home from PA we stopped at Chiminey Rock in NC:







Kathy is still working at Walmart and enjoying her job much more since she stepped down as a manager. She has been there nine years and she seems happier working there now than at any other time. I think she is still the most beautiful woman on earth, but especially when she smiles a lot. :) She still loves animals and this year she rescued a kitten she named Buddy. She is nearly done with remodeling "her" room where she does her sewing, quilting, and craft projects.

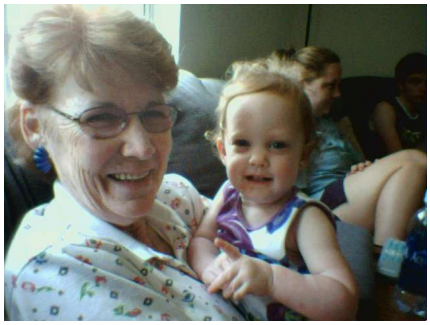
In 1998 I went to work for a subsidiary of the electric coop I have worked for since 1987. I had my dream job writing computer software and loved every minute of it. This past fall I returned to my old job at the coop where I am their Planning Analyst. This year I celebrated 10 years of riding my

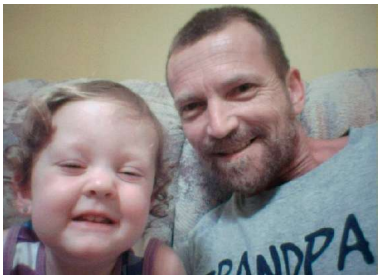
bike to work. If you add the 8 miles I ride each day it comes out to about 160 miles a month. Do the math for ten years and I should be pushing the 20,000 mile mark soon.

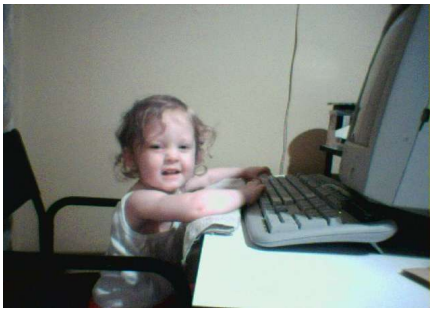
We have had a dog named Lucky since 1991 and she passed away this year. We have a new dog named Charley. She is about the same size as Bailey (our Yorky) and makes a nice addition to our family. Since getting Charley Kathy and I put both dogs on a leash and take them for a walk in the front yard most nights when the weather permits.

Back in 1992 when we began this newsletter we wanted to share some of the things that happened to our children. None of them are children any longer. I will still try to fill you in on their lives, but in addition I have decided to create a section for grandchildren. Since Taylor is our only grandchild she gets the spotlight.

Taylor turned two this past June. She is talking and showing a very creative imagination and she LOVES to dance! I am putting in several photos of her because ... I can. That is my privilege as both proud Grandpa and the editor. :)





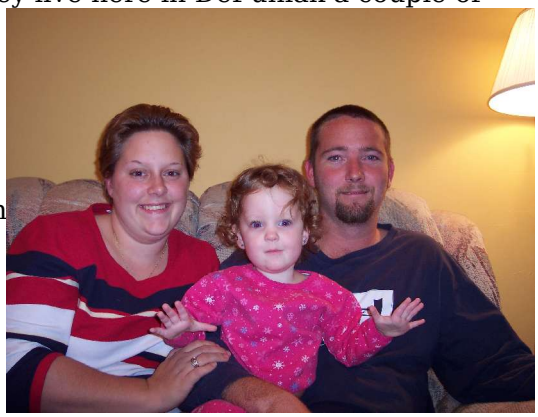



TJ turns 27 this month and is still living in Kansas. Tiffany is still in the Army. She returned from Iraq a couple of months ago after being there for over a year. She was able to come home for a couple of weeks this past June and she came by for a visit. She was able to tell us what life is like in Ramali, a town west of Baghdad in Iraq. The photo to the left is Tiffany posing with their Syrian interpreter. We are very thankful for her safe return. We get to talk to TJ now and then, but have not seen him in over a year and a half. Since we do not have any new photos I have dipped into the photo archive for the photo to the right.





Perry (now 24), Michelle, and Taylor are beginning to get their new house broken in. They have been in their new house for a year and a half. Last Christmas they invited us over for a wonderful Christmas meal prepared by Michelle. They live here in DeFuniak a couple of miles away from our house. Perry is working in Freeport and I think he is still growing. He always has a smile on his face and it is fun to just sit around and listen to him talk. Michelle has her hands full taking care of Taylor (and Perry) each day and she does an excellent job at both I might add. They are carving out their own place in the world and I think Taylor is very lucky to have them for a mom and dad! They enjoy going to a local race track on Friday nights and they will celebrate their wedding anniversary this month. Kathy and I hope they enjoy the family life as much as we have!





Justinn is now 21 and has been in Louisiana for over a year now. She left the ranch where she was living and working last year. She came home last June to have her tonsils removed. Then she moved in with three other girls in an apartment that is a couple of miles from the college (Southeastern Louisiana) she has been attending. During the summer she got a job working at a donut shop (Southern Maid Donuts - the only company Elvis Presley did a commercial for).

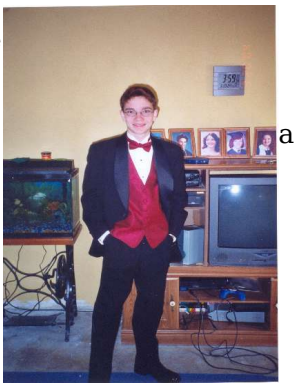




This past October Kathy, Marc, and I were able to visit her and see where she lived, worked, and went to school. We got to meet all of her roommates and they are all wonderful Christian girls. We also went to a football game while we were there and had a GREAT time. When she first got her job and I asked her how she was getting back and forth to work she told me one of the first things she bought after going to work was a bike with a basket. She rides it any time she needs a ride to work or class. Thats my girl! :)



Marc turned 18 this year and has had an active year since last Christmas. In the spring he went with his senior class to New York City where he went to the top of the Empire State Building, saw the Statue of Liberty, a Broadway play, a Mets game, sat in the audience of the Today show, and bought a great rolex watch for a very cheap price <g>.



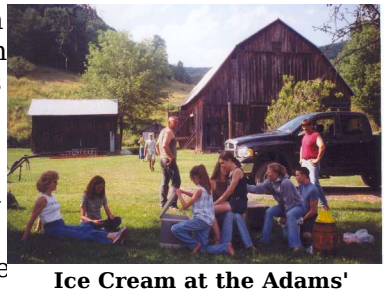
He graduated from high school in May and part of his graduation gift was a plane ticket from Atlanta to Buffalo. It was his first time flying commercially (he was the only one in our family that has never done that). He was met at the airport by the Adams family and stayed with them at their house in northern Pennsylvania for three weeks before Kathy and I drove up and brought him home.



Marc began attending Okaloosa Walton College last August. He is living at home and driving 40 miles to the Niceville campus. He surprised us when he applied for and was awarded an academic scholarship in August. He got it because he had good grades in high school and the scholarship is good for any college in FL as long as he keeps his grades up. We are VERY proud of him.



He also surprised us last spring when he began writing and singing his own songs. I know I am biased, but they really are very good! He plays the guitar and some keyboard and is learning to record and combine different tracks by mixing them. He has had the run of the house this past year since he was our only child living at home. He and I have played tennis every weekend this year and sometimes twice a weekend. It seems like I won more a year ago. He is either getting better (thats my thought) or maybe I am just getting slower. We also enjoy a good chess match a few times each month.

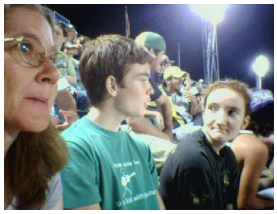


Ice Cream at the Adams'



Guess how this ride ended





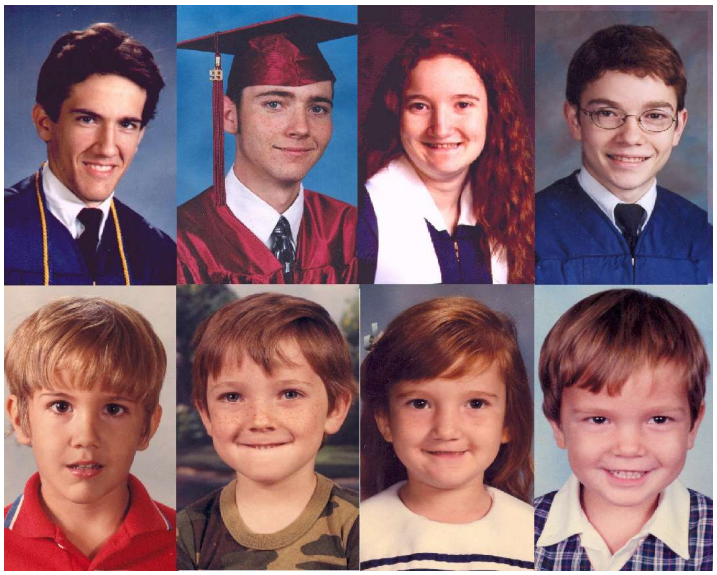
Kathy explaining how to hit a home run at the football game.

The Gipsons
1963 Juniper Lake Road
DeFuniak Springs, FL 32433



Email: tomgip@yahoo.com
Online version: www.atfar.com/fn

Merry Christmas and may God Bless You!



They have all graduated!!! :)