Feb '92

FAMILY NEWS:

Well we made it through Christmas again. Kids had a blast! Actually we all did. Febuary 14th will be ten years of wedded bliss for Kathy and I. Would not have missed it for anything. She has even broken me from being a football addict. I fell in love with her the first time I saw her, just had a feeling. Since I've finished up the two degrees I've been working on for FOUR years, its her turn. She's going to become an animal care specialist. She has plenty of cats and dogs to practice on too. She does have a way with animals. She got a new car in March of '91. It's a Ford Escort Wagon. We used it when Kathy and I went to Penn State last summer for my lab. I mention this because now that we have a reliable vehichle, we hope to get away this year with the kids and visit. Consider this fair warning.

Eventually we'll try and expand this letter to four pages. Hopefully the kids will make their own contributions. Don't hold your breath if your expecting Kathy to do the same.

We are all doing well. As we sit down to supper each night, and I look around the table and notice how much older each of them is getting, I sometimes think maybe I'll sprinkle some of Peter Pan's magic dust on them and keep them from growing any more. I'll probably be in the dog house for just mentioning it when Kathy sees this. Her favorite day of the year is the first day school starts after their summer vacation.

TJ

He's 14 now. He'll start baseball practice on Monday. He is now about 2" taller than Mom. Today he played football with some of the guys I work with...He caught the winning touchdown!! Of course he was on my team. He still has awhile before he can beat me in basketball.

We won't mention who is better at Nitendo.

PERRY

Perry is 11 and will turn 12 in May. When Kathy and I were married he was barely walking. Its one of the strangest feelings to look back over 10 years and realize all the changes we've gone through.

Perry has taken after TJ and started a baseball card collection. He is also pretty good with a pencil.

He keeps us on our toes at all times.

JUSTINN

Daddy's little girl is doing alright with 3 brothers. She will be 9 this year and continues to amaze us. Like Perry she spends a lot of time drawing and creating. Someday she's going to come up with the perfect way to make us rich so that I won't have to go to work. Needless to say, I encourage her!

She has long red hair and a powerful karate chop to scare you with.

MARC

Our baby is now 5 and in kindergarden. He's got a way of turning on the charm and saying the cutest things. When we went to our first PTA meeting last year & met his teacher, Kathy got a strange look from the other parents. When his teacher saw him she stopped what she was doing and gave Marc a hug. I don't think she did that for the other kids. He keeps us smiling!!

INTRODUCING:

The first of what we hope will be a regular news letter! Our friends and families are too numerous to write each one on a regular basis, so Kathy and I have decided to send a news letter with the latest information and let everyone know how we are doing.

As time passes we hope the contents of this letter improve. Until then, remember its the thought that counts.

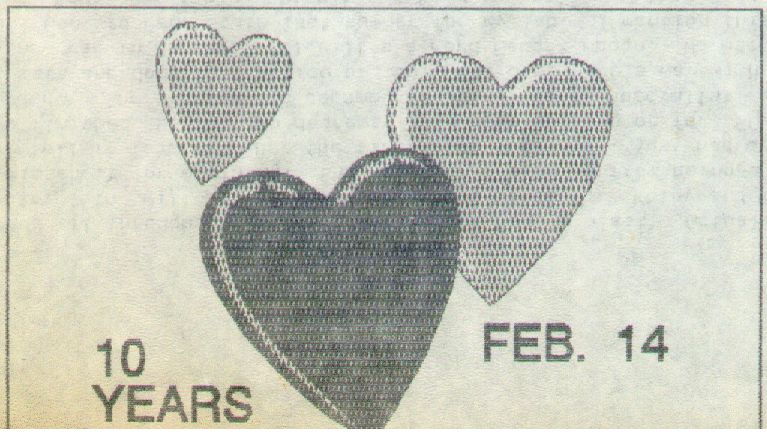
Everyone is doing well here in DeFuniak. At least from our perspective.

One of Our Favorite Thoughts:

"We play our part here upon the stage without the need to fully understand the final plot. We do not need to know the plot because we know the playwright."

Good-bye for now. TG (editor & chief)

The Gipsons
Rt. 8 Box 116
DeFuniak Springs
Fl. 32433



THE LATEST FAMILY *NEWS*

May 11, 1992 Vol. 2

We're Back!

Whether you like it or not we are back. Most of the responses to the first edition were favorable. So of course that encouraged me to continue. So if you didn't like it, then its your own fault for not telling me the truth.

You'll notice that we've already expanded and added two more pages. I did this because each of the kids ***promised*** to make a contribution.

Now if I could just get Kathy to take time out of her busy schedule!

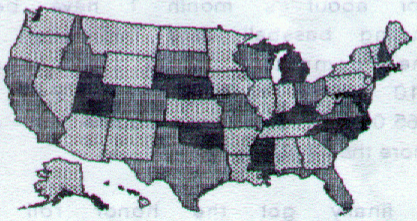
We are all alive and well here in DFS. The whole family has gotten excited about the possibility of adding on to the house. We were watching the intrest rates drop and decided to try and refinance the house. When we do we are hoping to add on so that each of the kids can have their own bedrooms.

We took cereal boxes (we have plenty after TJ eats breakfast), and made a scaled model of the existing house and also of the new addition we are hoping to add. It was a fun project and gave the kids a chance to vis–ualize what we are talking about Never hurts to dream.

Our latest family project has been to get a bicycle for each of us. We all had one except for Kathy. We managed to get hers when our neighbor was out burning trash and the fire got out of control. We went over and helped her put it out. She thanked us by giving Kathy a bicycle she never used.

So if you are driving through and notice a line of six bikes, it might be us!

Traveling?



If anyone is planning a trip this year, let us know where you're going. We would like to see if you will be near our property.

Where is our property? Pick any state and you'll have a state that we have property in!

We own one square inch of land in each of the 50 states. It was a Christmas gift from my mother.

I am compiling a database with facts about the property that I hope to sell to others. We know each county, but thats about it.

There is a company that bought one acre in each of the 50 states and split it up into square inches and sold it. They gave us a listing of each county, but we need more information.

Since there are over six million other owners, we thought we could gather all the information we could about our property and create a booklet to sell for a couple of dollars.

Our one square inch in Florida is in the county next to us, about 40 miles away. We plan to make a trip and plant a flag on a one inch pipe. You can see it from the interstate when passing through.

TJ
AGE 14
GRADE 8th

The following contribution is from TJ Putz. He is soley responsible for its contents. Editor

For about a month I have been putting baseball card information on the computer. So far I got 310 cards ranging from $.40 to $65.00. And of course, I got more than that.

I finally got the honor roll for the first time this year (3 A's and 3 B's). I was very suprised, I thought I was going to get a C or two.

On Christmas last year I got a pair of in line roller skates. At first I could hardly stand up on them, now I can ride on them a little bit better.

I'm on the baseball team, but haven't played in a game yet. I think I might be able to play before the season is over. Our record is 5 wins and 5 losses.

Every once in a while, I beat Tommie in basketball.

Editors note: Once in a while should be translated into: two times in his whole life!

Perry is supposed to be good in tether ball, but I beat him everytime I played him

PERRY
AGE 11
GRADE 5th

The following contribution is from Perry Fannin. He is soley responsible for its contents. Editor

Editors note:
Perry was reluctant to make a contribution. So at the editors suggestion he consented to the following interview:

How tall are you?
4' 9"

What is your favorite color?
Blue

What is your favorite sport?
Baseball

What do you like about school?
Lets skip that one.

What is your favorite TV show?
Fresh Prince

If you were allowed to do anything you want, what would you do?
Buy more legos

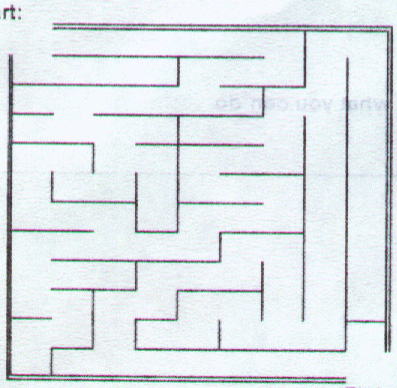
If you had 3 wishes:

1. Join a Major league team
2. Meet Ryan Sandburg
3. Three more wishes
4. A Mickey Mantle Rookie card
5. Have my own truck
6. Have a drivers license

JUSTINN
AGE 8
GRADE 2nd

The following contribution is from Justinn Desiree'. She is soley responsible for its contents. Editor

Start:



Finish!

MY FAVRIT COLER IS PURPLE.
MY FAVRIT FOOD IS CHESE.
IF I HAD THREE WISHES THAY WOOD BE.
1 1,000000 PIECES OF CHESE
2 1,000000 DOLERS .
3 GET TO SWIME IN OUR POOLAGIN.
I HAVE RED EYES .
I AM 3 10 AND A HAVE FEET TALL.
I AM MAKEING 2 BOOKS A RED 1 AND A PINK 1.

Editors note:

In case you could not tell, Justinn typed in the above information. I decided not to edit the spelling and will let you the reader decipher.

MARC THOMAS
AGE 5
GRADE Kindergarden

The following contribution is from Marc Thomas. He had a little help from his dad. Editor

My name is Marc Thomas Gipson.

My brother Perry is bad sometimes.

I like school and my teacher.

Sometimes we make donuts like today.

I am about to loose my first tooth.

My favorite toy in a Ninja Turtle sword that blows bubbles.

Perry is making a guitar.

I like to swim in our pool.

I sleep on the bottom bed of our bunk beds .

I like to go to parks and caves.

I like going to the beach.

I like every food except vegatables.

I like to look at houses with different colors.

"I can't think of something else I'll just scratch my chin, that will help me think of something else"

I like to drive my dads truck.

I like good dreams, but not bad ones.

I've decided to try and put out an edition every three months. Can't seem to find the time monthly. Besides its difficult to find something newsworthy around here each month.

Our lives are pretty routine with work and school playing a dominant role. But we do manage a picnic every now and then, or playing tennis or something.

Hope this will eliminate all of those comments we get about not writing. If you have any ideas for this I'm always open for suggestions. TG

One of Our Favorite Thoughts:

Sometimes it is better to know what you cannot do than what you can do.

The Gipsons
Rt 8 Box 116
DeFuniak Springs
Fl. 32433



FROM OUR

WORLD TO

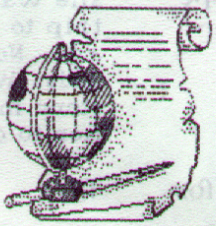
YOUR WORLD

FAMILY NEWS

FROM OUR WORLD TO YOUR WORLD

Dec 92

AND
HERE'S...
THE LATEST



So you thought we had given up on our Newsletter. Wrong. We've just gotten side-tracked.

Theres been alot going on since our last edition this past May. This will be our 3rd edition for this year, which I think is pretty good since I know how the editor likes to procrastinate. But our goal for next year will be an edition every 4 months.

With Cristmas so close I could not put this edition off any longer. Hope you enjoy it. If you know of anyone that should be on our mailing list and isn't, give us a call.

June:

School's out. TJ visits his Dad.

July:

Took the kids to Orlando to visit TJ. Well really we went for a family get together. We stayed with Terresa and Bill. I wonder if that had anything to do with them moving to Tennessee (Grin).

We also left Perry behind to spend a couple of weeks with Grandparents. He had a fantastic time, but I'm afraid Orlando will never be the same again.

Bought a new computer. Our old computer was one of the first to come out.

The kids finally got to experience color on their programs. And Dad learned how to use a modem.

We had an airshow here on the 4th. Justinn and Marc got to fly over town in a plane. Mom wouldn't go up with us. Maybe she knew Marc was going to get to fly the plane. We even flew over our house!

August:

Finally the kids are back in school! Wasn't sure if Mom was going to survive the summer. When she says they drive her crazy, she means it. For example: In one weeks time she fell in the pool while cleaning (clothes and all), she poured a cup of coffee right in an ashtray that was inches from her cup, she placed a hot pot of coffee on a cubbard shelf with the coffee cups instead of

...Continued from page 1

on the burner 3 feet away, she paid the telephone bill to the Electric Co. (good thing I work for the electric company), and she locked herself in one of the bathrooms and had to have Perry take off a door knob to get her out.

September:

Bought a '72 orange VW Beatle for me to drive back and forth to work. Should do great on gas mileage, but it's tough to squeeze the whole family in it.

October:

The kids had a long weekend so I took some time off and we visited my Uncle Dick and Aunt Darlene in North Carolina. It was a great trip. Marc had to help Mom down the first day of mountain climbing. The next day we found ourselves on the Blue Ridge Parkway. If you ever get the chance, check it out! The kids can now say they have been on the highest point East of the Mississippi (Mt. Mitchel).

November:

One Saturday morning we decided we didn't need the pantry closet in the dining room. TJ had a blast punching holes in the wall with a hammer. It gives us a wider area going to the back door and at least makes it seem like we have more room.

Kathy won two first place ribbons in the Fair this year. Its the first time she has entered, but probably won't be the last.

She was able to go with me on a trip to Atlanta a couple of weeks ago. No cooking, cleaning, or kids. We were also next to a 3 story mall. It was tough getting her to come home. (Grin)

TJ:

TJ started high school this year. I took him to orientation the day before school started. Between the two of us we managed to find all of his classes. It was a strange feeling to be back at school for the first time in ... well a long time.

Its also a strange feeling to realize TJ turns 15 in a couple of weeks. That means he can get his learners permit and DRIVE an automobile!!! I'm not sure about him, but I don't think we're ready for that (Grin).

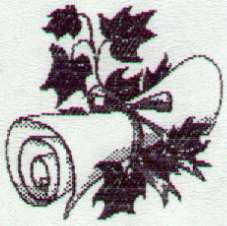
He is taking Spanish this year, but lets not ask him how he is doing.

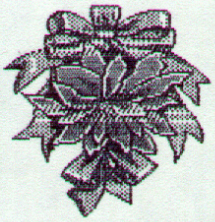
Next thing you know he'll be doing something like going out and getting a job or something.

Guess they can't stay young forever. But Kathy keeps insisting she is NOT that old.

It olny takes one look at the two of them side by side to know that he's not a little boy any more.

ITS THAT TIME OF YEAR!



Perry:

As I mentioned earlier, Perry was able to spend a couple of fun packed weeks in Orlando this past summer. He still talks about Universal Studio.

Our first day of mountain climbing, he and TJ raced ahead and were the first ones to the top. He's the only one who hasn't been on a plane YET, but at the top of the mountain he got a good idea of what its like. Oh yea, Mom has never been up in a plane, but don't expect to see her in one anytime soon.

Perry had a girl friend up until last week. He behaved so well I might become a match-maker for him.

Justinn:

FN: How old are you?

JG: Nine.

FN: What do you like to do most?

JG: Draw and make up things like a character when I draw and then use it for my book.

FN: What did you like most about the fair this year?

JG: I won third place with my drawing.

FN: What did you think of the mountains?

JG: They were fun and quiet and beuatiful. I liked the animals.

FN: Last Words?

JG: Good-Bye and Merry Christmas.

Marc Thomas:

FN: How old are you?

MG: Uh, six years old.

FN: What do you do at school?

MG: I learn how to read. And play with my friends.

FN: What did you think of the mountains?

MG: It was beautiful. Its very high.

FN: What do you like to do most?

MG: Play with the little men and the truck. When I get my Christmas toys I'll play with them. And I like to build with Legos.

FN: Last Words?

MG: Merry Xmas, I'll see you soon.



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One of Our Favorite Thoughts:

Nothing in life is to be feared. It is only to be understood.

Hope you have enjoyed this edition. And I also hope every one has a safe holiday and a:

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

One last thought:

I hope that everyone realizes that this is our Cristmas Card to you. Yes I know thats the easy way out, but with it being so close to Christmas, and since we have 20 people on our mailing list and all, well I just didn't want to be a burden for the postal service. (Grin).

FAMILY NEWS

July 18,1993

Here's The Latest...

Hope we didn't give anyone a heart attack when you got the mail and found our News letter. I figured most people had given up on seeing an edition this year. Its just that this happened, and then that happened, and then this happened again.... There were many reasons for the time gap between this news letter and the one last Christmas. What is it they say: Better late than never?

I'm sure after you read this you'll see just how much is going on in our lives. And until things slow down (like after the kids have all grown and left), we will probably send out the news letter only twice a year. Was that cheering I heard?

March Madness

I'll begin by turning the clock back to this past March. I still work with the electric company and on Friday March 11 we were warned to be prepared for a freak storm early Saturday morning. When I came home from work at 5:00 that Friday I told Kathy I would probably have to go back if the weather got bad. At 10:00 pm I got the call to go in to work. At 2:00 am Saturday it hit. Rain, sleet, and then SNOW! But it was the wind that kept us working until the following Monday to restore power. I worked 36 hours. But that didn't stop me from sneaking home after the sun came up Saturday morning to record two hours of video tape of the snow before going back in to work.

When it was all over 8,000 homes had lost power. That is one third of our system. We had 2 inches on the ground and the wind had reached 70 mph! But the most unusual thing was that it happened in the middle of March!!



Back Yard Pet

Around this past April a friend of ours was fishing in the part of the lake behind our house. He saw something swimming in the water and took his small boat closer to investigate. Suddenly he was thrown from his boat by a six and a half foot alligator! He managed to get back in the boat without getting hurt.

The next day after he told us about it, Perry and I took our row boat out to investigate. I saw two one foot babies and that was enough to convince me to head back. She is about 250' across the water from our lot, so we're not worried. But we have post-phoned using the boat for awhile.

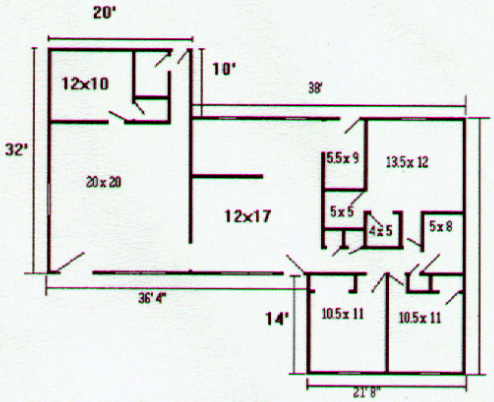
The kids have a tree house near the water. Using the binoculars the gator can be seen laying in the sun each afternoon.

More Of The Latest

This past May I attended a seminar in Orlando. I had dinner one evening with Pat, Kathy's Mom. She had just had surgery a couple of weeks before and we were talking about how we cope with pain. I have always felt a reluctance to take medication and was telling her about some of my relaxation techniques as well as some of my other strange theories. From what I hear I would have gotten along great with her Dad. We had a wonderful talk.

Within an hour after dropping me off at my hotel an unbearable toothe-ache hit me. It lasted the entire night and forced me into a commitment to do something about it when I got home. By the way, my meditations didn't work.

Any way the next day Kathy had a dental appointment so I tagged along. The dentist sent me to an oral surgeon. On the first visit he cut three teeth out, and one of them on the upper jaw left a hole in my sinuses. Once the stiches were out from that visit I had a hole in the other side after he removed a toothe. Over all it took 5 visits throughout June and early July. I wound up using 60 hours of sick leave from work. And I was on medication throughout the whole time!



I think the next time I talk to Pat, we'll talk about winning the lottery instead of dealing with pain. Maybe I'll get first hand experience with the Lottery!

I know they've had plenty of rain in the Midwest, but from April until mid June we had almost no rain here. Until...

Until we decided to pitch a couple of tents in the back yard and camp out with the kids. We had a great time until about 10:30 pm when the rain came. It dowsed our camp fire and kept us from taking a midnight swim.

So we cancelled and drug pillows and sleeping bags back into the house. We tried it again two weeks ago. Guess we've found a new way to make it rain besides washing the car.

We are still working on adding on to the house. Above is the latest plans we are giving to the bank.

This is what it will look like after we are finished. We hope to start contstruction in the next couple of months. We figured we had better go ahead and take the plunge. TJ will at least get his own bedroom for a few years. And just think of all of the room we'll have after all kids are gone!

We have been wanting to do this for so long that we've already used up all the space.

T J

He made it through his first year of high school. I'll not mention his grades except to say it wasn't a disaster. Since he is used to high school now I'm certain he will improve. (grin)

This past March was the first time he enjoyed snow in DeFuniak. If you ever come over remind me to show you the video of his giant snowball. The last time we had snow was in December of '89 and TJ was at his Dad's in Orlando.

Speaking of his Dad, Tom and Sylvia moved this past May. Instead of flying to Orlando this summer, TJ flew to South Bend, Indiana by way of Nashville. He had to change planes for the first time. But from what I hear it was no problem. Especially since Terresa, Kathy's sister was kind enough to help out.

TJ will miss those Magic games, but I guess he's within driving distance of the Bulls.

Perry

We are proud to say all four kids advanced to the next grade this year, including Perry. He'll have a challenge next year because he'll be moving to a new school.

He's only got three years at the Middle School before he too will be in High School. Of course by then TJ will graduate. Are we all getting older or what?

The kids are definitely getting bigger. Perry can almost look his Mom in the eyes.

He got a new baseball glove for his birthday. And on his birthday we had a family softball game over at my Mom's just for him.

Perry is still into Lego's and models. You can tell that by stepping into his bedroom. He always has Lego's and models all over the place.

He's turning out to be a pretty good artist as well. One of his favorite pastimes is drawing.

Justinn

This past April Justinn skipped school (with the school's permission) and went with Dad to work. It was Take Your Daughter to Work Day. She got her own photo ID and spent the day working with me. She was interviewed and had her photo in our monthly news letter at work.

This was her first year getting letter grades at school. Her first six weeks in the third grade she made ALL A's and stayed on the A-B honor roll all year.

She also knows when it will snow again. She figures since there are three years between each of the kids, and then three years after Marc it snowed in '89, and then in three more years it snowed, that means it will either snow in the winter of '95-'96 or we will have another kid.

I guess we had better plan on it snowing again. Kathy says there will definitely be no more kids!

Marc

Marc will start second grade in August. As usual he had he had his teacher wrapped around his finger. In fact Justinn's 3rd grade teacher is putting off retiring until after she has Marc in her class.

The pool is still over his head, but he can swim as well as most adults. He had his head shaved for the summer. It was his idea. And each time Kathy cut a little she would ask, "Are you sure you want to do this?" He is still a fountain of joy with his laughter. Smiling just comes natural for him. He got that from Kathy. His class went to the zoo in May for their field trip. He turned seven this past May. He decided he wanted a pool party. He walks in his sleep. He is also missing several teeth. And he made all S's in school.

The Gipsons
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One of our Favorite Thoughts:

The greatest of faults is to be conscious of none.

One Final Thought:

That about wraps it up this edition. Hope everyone is doing well. Kathy and the kids said to tell you hello. I hope you feel like this was worth reading. At least I won't have to feel guilty about not writing. ***TG Editor***



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.



The Gipson's
Rt 8 Box 116
DeFuniak Spr.,
FL 32433

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.

Family News

December 2, 1995

The Latest:

Our last issue was December 11, 1994. We have an entire year to cover in a couple of pages, so hang on.

The biggest single event of 1995 is not Opal. It happened the first of April. Kathy began working in Electronics at Walmart. She is sometimes called the "computer lady", and has been full-time since they moved to a new Supercenter last August. She is the assistant manager in the department.

I call it the biggest event of 1995 because it has meant a big adjustment for our family. Kathy usually works in the evening until 8:00 oclock. The kids and I share cooking meals and look forward to her days off. She also works every weekend so the kids are stuck with me. Justinn calls me a neat freak when I go on a cleaning rampage on the weekends.

Kathy is working because she wants to, and enjoys getting out of the house. Since her working is extra money, we were able to trade our car in for a '92 Doge Caravan in July and love it! With both TJ and Perry bigger than I am, we needed the extra room. Now the whole family can ride together without being squeezed.

In August we had a brush with Hurricane Erin. It came ashore 60 miles west of here near Pensacola. Some people lost power for 2 or 3 days, but there was little damage in our area.

Kathy has never liked going to the beach very much. Since she works on weekends the kids & I have gone to the beach more this year than the past three years combined. We went the Saturday before Opal hit and enjoyed the dunes one last time before they vanished in the storm. Below is a photo after Opal. About 30 feet of the dunes all along the beach are gone.





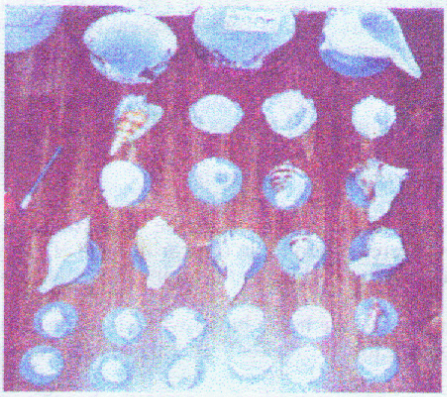
We stayed in our house during Opal and the kids saw the awesome power of 120 mph winds. The eye made landfall around 6:00 pm, about the time we lost our power at our house. TJ, Perry, and I stood at the back door and watched shingles blown from the roof into the pool, and the tin from the bike shed wrap around trees in our yard. The damage at our house was minor compared to the rest of our county.

It is the first time in my company's history where we had a 100% outage. Not one of the 26,512 meters was spinning when we assembled into survey teams the next day for damage assessment. We brought in 265 extra people and 60 more trucks. We worked 16 hour days for 10 days. We are still doing some clean up work. The average time without power was 6 days. At our house we were without power for 3 days. Overall we feel fortunate the storm moved quickly and dropped to a catagory III. Kathy worked through much of the cleanup and the kids were real champs taking care of things at home.

On the second Saturday in November we had 8 tornados touch down in our county. One of the twisters touched down near Walmart. Kathy was working that day, but was away from the store delivering a TV. I heard Walmart had been hit and was worried the whole time I was at work. There were several homes damaged by the twisters and another 6,000 people out of power again. We're beginning to think someone is just not living right around here.

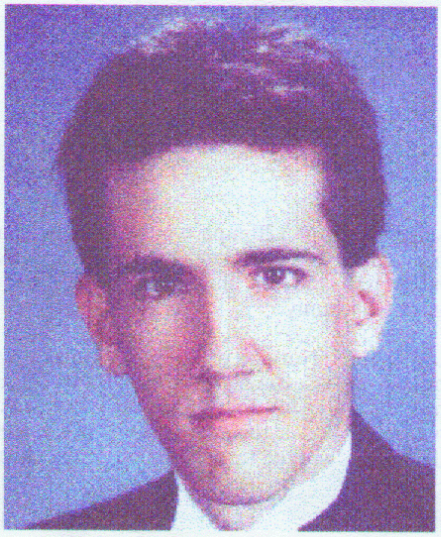
We bought a color printer in July and can now do our candles in color. The living room is full of 8x10 pictures I've printed after blowing up snap shots and video images. We've also started making candles out of seashells and coffee cups with color photos on them.





The county has changed our address for the 911 system. The new address is: 1963 Juniper Lake Road.

I'm still peddling my bike to work and enjoy it. I've almost got 2000 miles on the spedometer. I enjoy the quiet time it gives me and the money it saves on gas. The kids gave me a bike helmet for Father's Day and I wear it faithfully. I think I embarass some of them because all of the school busses go by me each morning.



TJ:

TJ will be 18 this month. He is a senior in High School, and I can't call him a kid anymore. He's turned into a handsome young man and we are very proud of him. He plans to attend a 2 year college about 40 miles from here. He is planning a degree in Computer Sciences. The photo to the left is his senior picture.



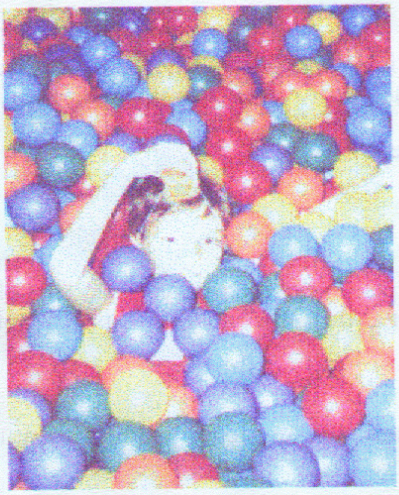
Perry:

Perry is 15 and will be going into high school next year. This past summer he had to make up a class at school. With Kathy working and no school bus, we wound up buying him a new bike. He rode it to school. We rode together in the mornings. He had to ride about half a mile further than I do. He has shot up this year and is taller than me. In the picture to the left Kathy is painting Perry's hair green for a pep rally at school. Notice that he has to get on his knees for her to reach his hair.

Justinn:

Justinn is 12 and in the sixth grade. She is going to the same school as Perry. This year she has to change classes as well as teachers at the new school. She got her first ten speed bike for her birthday this year. She wants to ride it to school, but the jury is still out. The picture to the right is a picture of her on her first and last day of elementary school..





Marc Thomas:

Marc Thomas is 9 years old and in the fourth grade. This is his first year at a school without his big sister. He is handling it just fine. For his birthday I took him to Discovery Zone in Pensacola. I allowed him to invite 5 people. His 5 guests were all girls! Guess thats one way to eliminate the competition. Can you find him in the picture of colored balls?

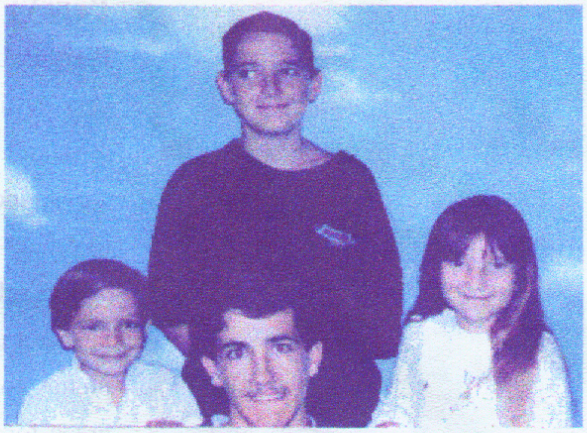


Merry Christmas

1995

From:

All of Us!



The Gipsons
1963 Juniper Lake Road
DeFuniak Spr., FL 32433

Favorite Thought:

If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away.

Henry David Thoreau

From Our World to Your World:

Don't forget we've had an address change. If you ever get on the Internet you can E-mail us. Justinn is now a regular on America Online and has her own E-mail address: Jusgip@aol.com

The rest of us are at tomgip@aol.com

Have a safe holiday and if you have any complaints about the Newsletter just take them up with the editor.

Family News

December 9, 1996

The Latest:

You know its getting close to Christmas because you now have our Newsletter. Its hard to believe, but we have been doing this for almost five years now. There is a lot to catch up on since last year's edition so sit back and get ready.

We'll start with our visitors from Orlando. Kathy's Mother and Grandmother came up for a wonderful visit. While they were here I made them pose for this photo.



Justinn and her Mother and her Mother and her Mother!

In late January I had a business trip in Orlando and was lucky enough to get tickets to a Magic game. But while I was gone Kathy woke up one morning and found we had two inches of water throughout the House! A water line under the kitchen sink had come loose and poured hot water all over the house. When I came home the carpet people had already removed the carpet and we lived with bare concrete floors for a month! We had wanted to get new carpet, but not like that!

In March we bought a 12' x 24' portable building. We wired it for electricity, telephone, and cable; made two and a half rooms out of it; insulated; sheetrocked and painted it. We placed it near the back door and built a 16' porch from it to the house. TJ and Perry have been living in it ever since. The extra room has given each of the kids their own bedroom at last. When the boys move out Kathy and I are going to use it for much needed office space.



Kathy is still working in the Electronics Department at Wal-Mart. About six weeks ago she applied for a computer repair position at a local community college. They interviewed her, but the day after her interview she decided she would not take the job. It would have meant a 40 mile commute to work and she decided Wal-Mart couldn't get along without her.

Last spring she had glamor shot done (photo on the left). I scanned in the computer and printed a 2' x 3' poster which now hangs in our living room. But if you ask me, I think any photo with her in it is a glamor shot!



Kathy still works most weekends (she gets two or three weekends off a year). Justinn, Marc, and I fill our time on weekends riding bikes, swimming, roaming the internet, and cleaning house. I still make candles along with creating new computer art.

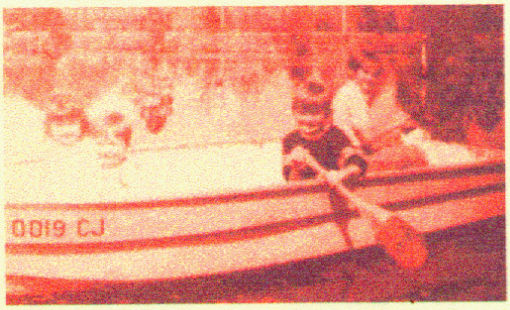
I still ride my bike to work. In March it will be three years since I started riding. I will hit 3,200 miles this month. I am proud of my $90.00 Walmart bike. I have not spent any more money on it, and it is working fine. I may have to spring for new tires before long. The tread is almost gone.

In July I had my twenty year class reunion. It was one more reminder that I'm getting older (and so are you <grin>). It was fun seeing old classmates and learning what had happened to them. Just didn't seem like it has been twenty years.



The day of my reunion my Grandfather was taken to a hospital in Pensacola. He passed away on July 15th. There is not another single man who has had more influence on my life than Grandad. It's been almost five months now and I still hear his voice giving advice and loving guidance just as he has done all my life. But the reality of not having him here hits hard at times. Like while I am writing this Newsletter, its the first one he will not be reading. Death is just another step in each of our lives. It comes to all living things. I know this and have faith in my beliefs and can be happy for Grandad with complete confidence. Thats why I mention him here. Because this one man gave me a gift worth more than any other gift in the world. Grandad you are missed!

In October I had a meeting in Orange Beach, AL (between Pensacola and Mobile). The hotel was right on the beach so Kathy took the week off and went with me. I also took some extra time off so we could enjoy some rare time alone. The weather was gorgeous and we had a wonderful time. Who could ask for anything better than watching the sun come up over the water with the most beautiful woman in the world!



Guess that will have to wrap it up for this year. Can't aford to mail more than two pages and I've about filled them up. Our whole family wishes you a Merry Christmas and we hope you are happy. Remember to drop us a line now and then. That's about it for the Latest now on to the kids:



TJ

Last Spring TJ got a part time job at Wal-Mart. In May he graduated from High School. Tom, Sylvia, and family came from the North. Jim, Pat, and Grandma Blue came from the South. And two more sets of Grandparents came from here along with us (of course) and Aunts, Uncles, and Cousins. He had quite a cheering section since he was the first grandchild to graduate. The day he graduated he also got his operators license. He and several classmates celebrated by going on a cruise in June. He spent the rest of the summer working and saving his money for a car and college. He bought a red Ford Escort in September. Two days ago he registered for his second semester at Okaloosa Walton Community College (about 40 miles from home). TJ's life has changed dramatically since our last Newsleter. It is great to have a third driver in the family and a second car. Sometimes it was hard to run errands on my bike. Especially when one of the kids needed a ride from school and Kathy was working <grin>.



Perry

Perry is almost as tall as TJ. He is in his first year of high school this year, and getting pretty anxious about getting his driver's license. He love's having his own room. He has a table set up for working on models and some of the gatgets he creates like the lego model of a working motor. He listens to country music which sometimes clashes with TJ's music. He also likes to hunt. He hunts when he goes to his Dad's on the weekends. Except for not knowing when to keep quiet both at home and school (but he is learning <grin>), he is becoming a fine young man.



Justinn

Justinn has been at the Middle School (7th grade) by herself this year. Yes there are other kids there just not any of her brothers. She is getting old enough to cook supper for me sometimes. Sure is nice after riding the bike 4 miles home from work and her having supper all ready cooked! She is still very creative. They amaze me sometimes with some of the things they come up with for fun. Last year she and Marc got a kareoke machine for Xmas. She loves to tape her own radio shows where she is the dj. She got roller blades for her birthday this year and is getting pretty good on them. She also likes to make videos with the video camera when I let her. She is getting older, but she is still "Daddy's Girl".



Marc

Marc is in the fifth grade this year. This is his last year at the Elementary School and next year he will be going to the Middle School with Justinn. Last May Marc began wearing glasses. Now half of our family wears glasses, the two oldest and the youngest. He also got roller blades for his birthday. He has gotten very good on them. He can even skate backwards! His school picture was taken before he got glasses. He continues to smile most of the time and keeps everyone else smiling. He loves having his own bedroom. I sometimes wish he would stay just the way he is, but I know he can't. But I do hope he will always stay happy and full of life.



Mother and Daughter

By Popular Demand

I have had many people ask about this photo. Many of you have seen it hanging in our house. It is a photo of a mother (left) and her (daughter (right). Yes I admit it has been doctored... just a bit. Now everyone has a copy of it.

The Gipsons
1963 Juniper Lake Road
DeFuniak Spr., FL 32433

Favorite Thought:

"If fifty million people say a stupid thing, it's still a stupid thing."

Leroy Jack Syrop

From Our World to Your World:

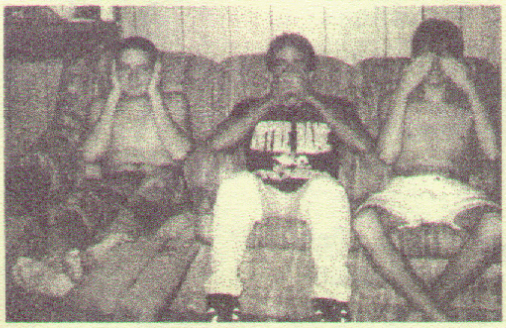
If you ever get on the Internet you can E-mail us at tommieg@wwia.dfs.~~wwia~~ net We finally dropped our America Online account so that email address is no longer valid.

Hope this Newsletter finds you in good health and we wish you a

Merry Christmas!

Family News

December 15, 1997



Believe it or not its that time of year. My annual opportunity to bore you with the latest events from our lives. There have been a few changes since this time last year, so sit back and hang on cause here we go....

As we take a little tour of the events of 1997 I will be pointing out some things along the way. Just above us you will find a modern image of the classic "Hear, speak, and see no evil". It was made possible by Perry, TJ, and cousin Michael.



In some ways it seems like little has changed in our lives. The kids get up each morning and head off to school and Kathy and I head to work. We are stringing Christmas lights this weekend like we do every year. But as I write these words and think back to last Christmas I realize that things have changed quite a bit over the past year.



As an example of how things change let me point out the serious Kathy on your left at the age of 14, and the grown up fun loving Kathy above at the age of ?? something (I think her age starts with a 4). I have to be careful here because my turn is coming.



Kathy is now a Zone Manager at Walmart. She has three departments (hardware, sporting goods, and paint). She now has ALL of her weekends off and is home before I am each night!



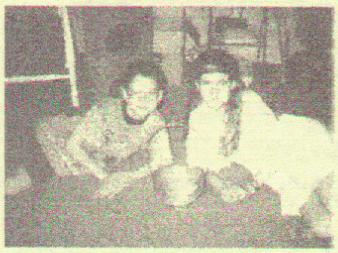
It also only takes one look at the kids to realize things are still changing. There is just no way I can include TJ when I say kids because he is far from being a kid. Above is a picture of his new truck. I am doing this newletter in black and white so I'll have to tell you his truck is a shiny red.



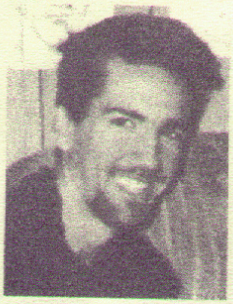
The rest of the kids are still riding bikes, although Perry has his driver's license and this time next year Justinn should have her learners permit! We loaded all the bikes and went riding on some new trails near the beach. The trails are kind of like a golf course complete with sand traps and water hazards! To our right beginning at the top is Perry, Justinn, and then Marc taking their turn riding through the water.



We have found another way to make good use of peddle power. Earlier this year we bought a 5 seat paddle boat for the lake. Its a great way to get around the lake without fussing with oars or a motor. And of course I am still peddling my way to work.



This past October I retired my old bike after three and a half years and 4,739 miles! Kathy bought me a new bike and I'm up to 300 miles on it. Our list of animals has also changed. We are down to one dog (Lucky) and to your left is Justinn and Marc with the new kitten they gave Kathy for Mother's Day.



TJ forgot to shave in this photo on the left from this past October. Perry (to your right) was asked to mow the yard or something and is a little perplexed.

TJ turns 20 in two days and Perry is now 17!



Justinn is 14 and Marc is 11. Guess you can tell Justinn has three brothers. She hasn't worn a dress in 5 years and I don't think you will find a picture of her without a hat on. Marc graduated from elementary school last May. Until this year we had a child in the elementary school 14 years in a row!







The picture to your left is Marc on Graduation Day and beside him is Marc from our trip to the mountains in 1991. Aren't computers neat? I really enjoy experimenting with photos and sketches (can you tell?).



I like to take photos and make sketches out of them. Our house is plastered with pictures especially of my beuatiful wife! Guess I have to be fair and include one of me.





Looks like its time to wrap up our brief tour of 1997. Guess its time for us to PEDDLE our way into 1998. I'm a little late getting this in the mail this year so if you receive your copy after Christmas let me wish you a Happy New Year! Hope all is well with your family and remember to smile in 1998!

The Gipsons
1963 Juniper Lake Road
DeFuniak Springs, FL 32433

Favorite Thought:

"He who knows does not speak. He who speaks does not know."

From Our World to Your World:

We had to change our internet account last month and so our email address has changed. The new address is: tomgip@dfsi.net

This is it until next year. Have a wonderful holiday!!

Family News

Merry Christmas!

December 15th, 1998

Hope 1998 has been a great year for you. This is the 9th edition of our Family Newsletter (Christmas Card). This is also the first year of posting this newsletter to our web site. Many of you now have access to the internet. With our mailing list approaching 50 names we can reduce our costs to print and mail the newsletter by emailing our web address to those with internet access. If you have internet access and haven't told us, please email us and let us know. The web address is: http://members.tripos.com/~tomgip/index.htm

Its time to get a cup of coffee (or what ever beverage you prefer) and let me catch you up on the latest from 1998.



Last January the electric company I work with started a new company. I became the first employee. We are now up to 17 employees and growing strong. I have my dream job and I am loving it! I spend my entire day writing computer software. I am leasing an office in town where I have no interruptions and I'm in heaven. The only down side is I had to give up the bike. The new company makes me drive a Ford Explorer to work. I like the truck well enough, but miss the quiet time of riding my bike to work. When I get home from work each night the first thing I do is get on my bike and ride a mile around the neighborhood. Still its just not the same. Kathy's job changed this year as well. Walmart abandoned the zone managers they created in 97 and went back to department managers. Now Kathy manages paint and hardware instead of the three departments she used to have. She is very happy with the change. We've had a couple of brushes with hurricanes this year (Earl and Georges), but both only proved to be minor disruptions in our lives.

Next Page



This past April I took up golf. I haven't played since taking it in college 20 years ago. Both TJ and Perry were playing and I figured it would be a good thing for us to do together for years to come. I am really enjoying it! Guess you could say I've gotten hooked on it. The first photo is my great swing and the second is TJ's.

TJ: TJ turns 21 this month. He transfered out of the Walmart here in DeFuniak and is now working in Crestview 30 miles west of here. He works all night and when we play golf he is able to use that as an excuse if I beat him <g>. He still has his truck and is going the the local community college. He likes Maria Carrey, wrestling, playing video games, and the Internet.

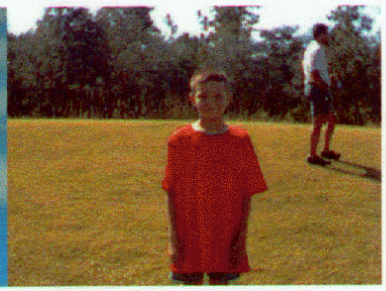


Perry: Perry turned 18 this year and began working at Walmart changing tires and oil in the automotive department this past May. He saved his money all summer and this past August bought his first truck. He bought a 76 Ford Ranger XLS. This is his last year of high school (whew!). He enjoys hunting, country music, and NASCAR. He has a wonderful sense of humor and we are very proud of him.



Next Page

Justinn: Justinn is 15 and began her first year in high school. She still refuses to wear a dress. She still sports a baseball cap turned backwards, and has added earphones to her permanent wardrobe. She is bigger than Mom and looking forward to taking drivers ed next semester and getting her license. She drives my golf cart for me now and then. You will find her outside playing basketball at least once each day. And she averages about two hours a day on the Internet!

Marc Thomas: Marc is now 12. Its hard to think of him as the baby of the family. He always has a smile for everyone except when Justinn has been picking on him. He likes driving the golf carts too, and has hit a few golf balls himself. He's in the seventh grade this year and loves Nick at Nite.




With half the family working at Walmart (guess where Justinn wants to work <g>) we are seldom together at the same time. Its even tough for Kathy and I to arrange time off together. While our family has changed a great deal over the year and we may not always be together at the same time, we are still a family. I am very thankful for our family. About a week ago I managed to get all of us together and took this family photo. As you can see we are definetly feeding the kids well.



Blast from the past: Can you guess who's birthday it is?

Next Page



The Gipsons

1963 Juniper Lake Road

DeFuniak Springs, FL 32433

Favorite Thought: "Patience, patience, patience is what the sea teaches. Patience and faith. One should lie empty, open, choiceless as a beach -- waiting for a gift from the sea." Anne Morrow Lindbergh

From Our World to Your World: I still have the old email address (tomgip@dfsi.net) from last year, but do not check that email everyday. Instead I am using (tomgip@yahoo.com) and check it daily. I use the yahoo email because I can check it from any computer, anywhere.

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!**

If you are on line you can go to additional pages that were omitted from the printed newsletter.

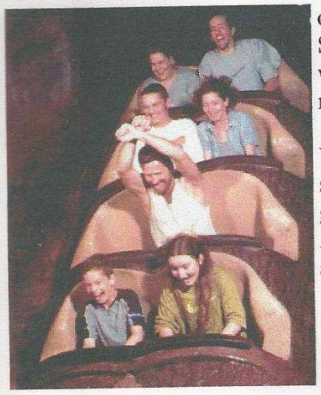
Next Page

Family News

Merry Christmas!

December 15, 1999

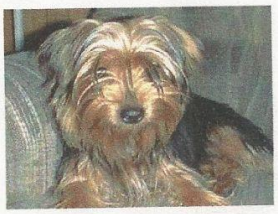
Well here it is our last newsletter of the century! We hope you are healthy and happy as we take a quick look at some of the things from our lives in 1999.



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!

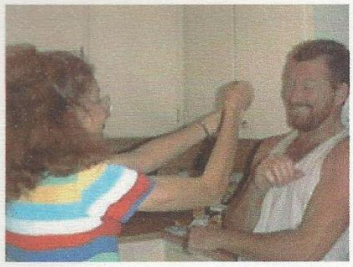


This past April we had an addition to our family named Sparky (right). Kathy has wanted a Yorkshire Terrier as long as I've known her. Sparky was her birthday present this year and recently Kathy has been thinking about raising Yorkys. Sparky has become an expensive dog because we had to put up a new 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.



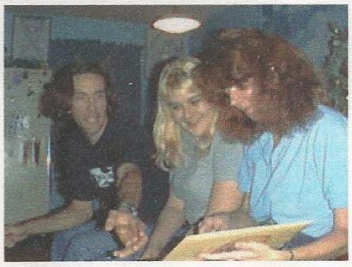
She is still working at Walmart and I am still writing computer programs. We both enjoy our jobs most of the time, but we have days when we wish we could open our internet laundry mat. Its an idea we had where people could get on the internet while they wash clothes. We figure we've got enough kids to 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.

Next Page



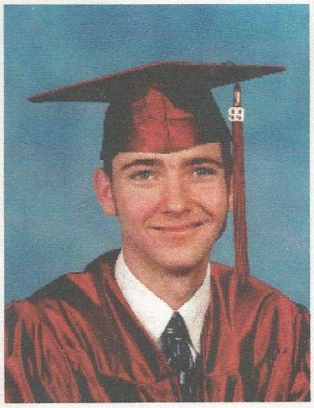
TJ turns 22 this month, but he is still Kathy's baby. Even though he is now a handsome, quiet, young man I still have to be careful when I talk about him or Mom gets a little aggressive. Although I out weigh Kathy I freely admit I am no match for her in a fist fight (g).

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.



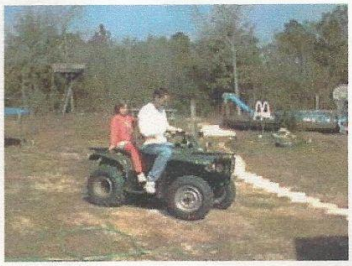
His girlfriends name is Tiffany. They have been dating for over a year. TJ brought Tiffany home to meet the family last New Year's Day. Before the night was out Kathy had pulled out the baby pictures and was proudly showing them to Tiffany.

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.

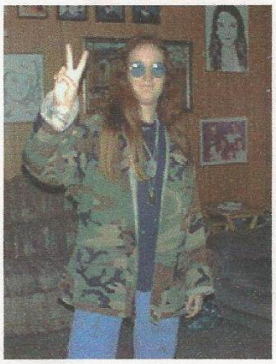


He saved his money last year and paid cash for his truck. By February of last year he could not stand being the only one in the family over 18 without payments. He went out a bought a 4 wheeler just so he could be like the rest of us and have monthly payments. Thats him to the right giving cousin Juliann 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.

Next Page



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

1963 Juniper Lake Road

DeFuniak Springs, FL 32433

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

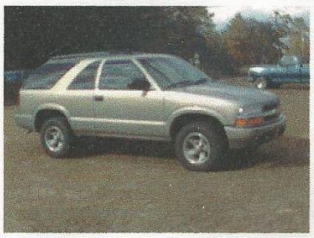
Guess that wraps it up for this year. Thanks for allowing us into your home and we'd like to wish you a

Merry Christmas!

Family News

December 15, 2000

Merry Christmas! We are celebrating Christmas in the year 2000. Our family has gone through many changes this year. Get a cup of coffee or tea, or what ever you want to drink and find a nice quiet spot and I'll try to get you caught up (or bore you depending on your point of few) (g).



We've had very little rain this year. The lake (640 acres) is 3 feet below normal. Its not been this low since we moved here in 1985. We've taken the oppurtunity to dig out a bigger area for the paddle boat. When the lake comes back up we will be able to tun the boat around in the water near our little dock.

In July we began looking for a new vehicle. Our van was getting old and we decided it was time for a change. We considered the GT Cruisers before we finally decided on a two door Blazer. We drove it off the lot at the end of July with only 14 miles on it. Its the first new vehicle Kathy or I have ever owned! Looks like Walmart will be stuck with Kathy a little longer.

Last August Kathy's father died. It was unexpected and has been very difficult on her entire family. We were fortunate to be able to visit with him in June and will always have good memories. This will be the first news letter that will not be mailed to Jim and we just wanted to say we miss him.



I've been riding my bicycle all year. I'm just a normal part of the landscape on Hwy 83 on weekday mornings and evenings. Adding up all of the years on the bike and I'm getting close to 7,000 miles.

Sure feels good riding by all those folks spending extra money at the gas pumps. Except for mowing the yard I don't care how much gas costs (g).



Remember the black and white photo of mother and daughter from a couple of years ago? Well, here it is again with another photo of Justinn and Kathy. The color photo was taken when they were each in the 10th grade in high school.

Next Page



TJ is 23 this year and has had big changes this year. Last January the motor in in red truck quit working. He had to ride his bike to work for several months. He was working the night shift and some mornings we would pass each other when he was riding home from work and I was riding to work. In June he transferred to the Walmart in Crestview. He moved to Crestview and lives close enough to still ride his bike to work.

On October (10/10/00) he and Tiffany (his girl friend for two years) were married at the courthouse in Okaloosa County. It was a lovely, quiet ceromony with just a handful of people. To the left is a photo taken just before the ceromony.

TJ & Tiffany pulled up in our yard one Saturday in September with a new truck. He finally got tired of riding his bike every where and decided it was time to go into debt. Its a nice truck and he is very proud of it.



Tiffany is in boot camp for the Army right now at Ft. Jackson in South Carolina. The newlyweds were just getting used to married life and now they've been separated by the Army. Tiffany is a wonderful girl and we are proud to have her as our first daughter-in-law.



Perry is 20 and has gone through many changes this year too. Last March he left Walmart. He spent a few weeks in Texas and Alabama early this summer doing electrical work. He made enough money to make a down payment on a new truck. He is still driving the truck in the photo to the left. It was his fourth truck of the year. He's become quite a horse trader.

He is now working at the Goodyear tire store in Freeport. He has been working there for almost six months. Freeport is sixteen miles away and the drive to work was putting a lot of miles on his truck. In September Perry moved to Freeport. He and his cousin, Jeffery are sharing a nice trailer just a mile or so away from where he works.

Sure seems strange having both boys gone. We thought Perry would come home often and visit around supper time. He must like the independant life because he has only come by for a visit a few times and never stays to eat. Guess that means he has plenty of food and he'll invite us over for supper soon (hint - hint).



Not sure what Perry is trying to say to Laura in the photo to the right. Whatever it was she seemed more interested in her fingernails. (g)

Next Page



Justinn is now 17 years old. She is a junior in high school. Since TJ and Perry are gone she has two rooms in the shed all to herself. She is still working at Camp Victory. She has also started attending a church in Niceville. They have a big youth program. Justinn went on their youth choir tour last spring and visited New Orlean, Biloxi, Jackson,... She had a big part in the play they performed in front of hundreds of people.

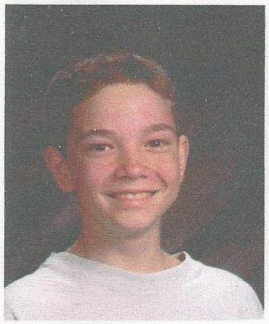
Last spring she got a button making machine and has stayed very busy making over 1,000 campaign buttons. She has made several hundred for the Bush/Cheney campaign as well as other local politicians.



We suprised Justinn when she turned 17 this year. Kathy and I had the joy of seeing her face when she got an 85 Ford Escort for her birthday. She was very suprised! All she could say was "Is this for real?"



For the first time in 15 years the school bus does not have to stop at our house because Justinn drives her car to school and Marc rides with her.

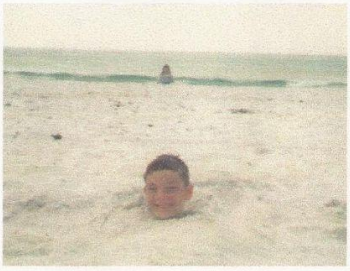


Marc Thomas is in his first year of high school! He was only six years old when we started this news letter and has certainly changed a lot since then as you can see by this year's school picture.

Marc earned extra money this past summer by mowing yards and making buttons when Justinn was away at camp. Several times over the summer he had more money than Mom and Dad!

He and I sang our first special at church this past summer. He has a good voice and is not bashful. He is also learning to play songs on a recorder (flute). Add his drawing skills to his musical abilities and you can tell he has his Dad's talent (g).

He still has a smile on his face most of the time. He enjoys bike riding, golf, reading, and video games. This past summer I took two days off work and Marc and I played golf. It was just the two of us, two days in a row. After the second day I drove my truck (the green Ford Perry gave me) to a dirt road and swaped places with Marc. He drove for nearly a mile and did a great job!



Here we are at our most recent trip to the beach last Labor Day. Marc lost his head for a little while, but found it before we left.

Next Page



The Gipsons

1963 Juniper Lake Road

DeFuniak Springs, FL 32433

Favorite Thought: ""Happiness is a butterfly which, when pursued, is always beyond our grasp, but which, if you will sit down quietly, may alight upon you."
Nathaniel Hawthorne

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

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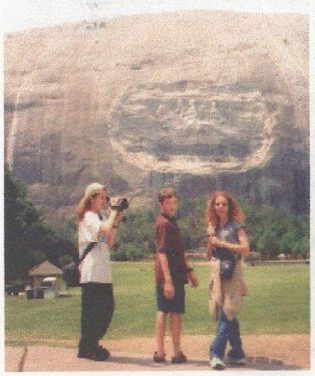
Guess that wraps it up for this year. Thanks for allowing us into your home and we'd like to wish you a **Merry Christmas!**

Family News

December 15, 2001

We published our very first Family News ten years ago this February. Now and then I look back at those first additions and am amazed at how much life can change in ten years. This year our nation has had a strong reminder of how quickly things can change in just one day. September 11th will forever be remembered as a day of tragedy, but also as a day of unity. Each of our lives have been changed (and united with others) in some way.

We have had several deaths this year including my Uncle Harry, friend and cousin Jeannie, Larry (Perry's father), and most recently my Grandma Fern. Change is a part of life both good and bad. With that thought let me share some of the changes and experiences we had in 2001.



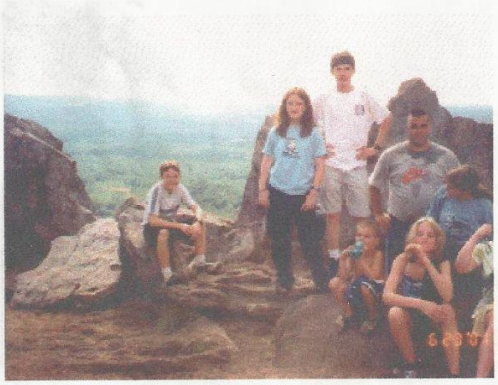
Stone Mt.

In April Kathy began a new fish pond project. We hand dug a new fish pond ten times the size of the existing prefabricated pond she had. She connected the new pond to the old one and built a small stream running between them. We've also added a wooden bridge going over the stream. The new pond is surrounded by rocks and has a beautiful waterfall and a small fountain in the middle. There are over a dozen gold fish in the pond and they let Kathy pet them when she feeds them.

In June Kathy, Justinn, Marc and I went to the Bailey Family Reunion (my Mother's side of our family) in Kings Mt, North Carolina. On our way up we made a quick stop at Stone Mountain just outside of Atlanta. A thunderstorm prevented us from going to the top, but the kids saw the huge carving for the first time.

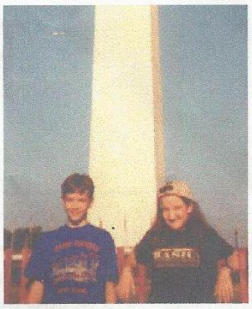
We had a wonderful turn out for the reunion. Our clan had half the rooms in the hotel! There was great food, entertainment, and fellowship and everyone had fun!

While we were there a dozen of us climbed Kings Moutnain. It took about an hour, but was well worth it. What a view! Kathy and I took all four of our kids up ten years ago. Marc and Justinn went up again this time, but we did not have to worry about them falling off like we did in 1991.



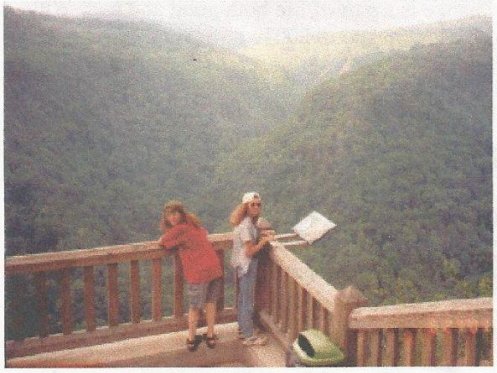
Kings Mt.

Next Page



While much of the family left the reunion and headed back to Florida, we went north. We left North Carolina and spent the night in Washington DC. Kathy and I took the week off and Justinn and Marc scheduled their summer activities to be off for the week. We got up early the next morning and visited many of our nation's memorials. We saw the Wahsington, Jefferson, and Lincoln Memorials as well as the White House and US Capitol.

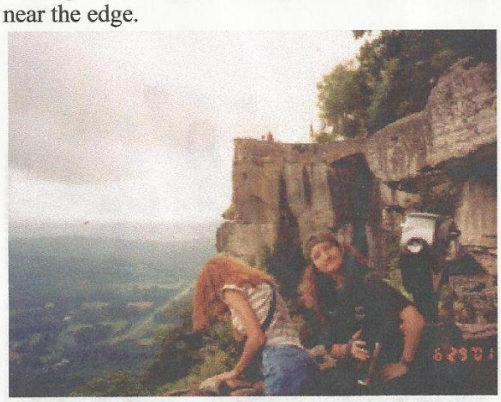
We left just after lunch and headed for Gettysburg. We toured the battle fields and museums and Justinn got an address off of one of the houses in town so that she could give her friends a Gettysburg address . We spent that night in Hershy, PA. The next morning we saw the worlds largest chocolate factory before heading up to northern PA to visit with a good friend of mine.

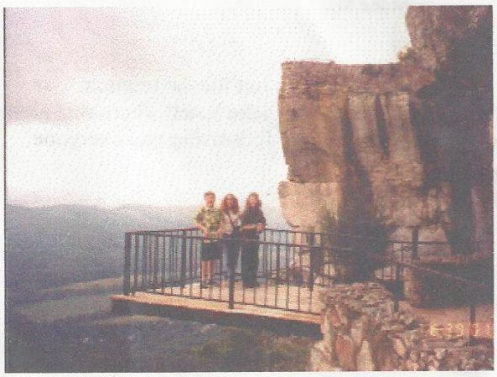


Grand Canyon, PA

Wayne and his family were wonderful hosts! They rearranged their own vacation plans to accomodate us. They have a wonderful house on 150 acres. We climbed the big hill in his back yard (we flat landers call it a mountain!) and were overwhelmed by the natural beuaty of the area. Justinn and Marc drove a tractor for the first time in their lives. We were given a a grand tour of the area and drove a few miles into New York State through some of the Omish communities. We also stopped off at Grand Canyon State Park and saw some spectacular views. We had a wonderful time with Wayne, Dawn, Ashley, Courtney, and Naomi.

We left Wayne's and headed south. We ended the trip crossing the Great Smoky Mountains and then visiting Rock City and Reuby Falls in Chatanooga, Tennessee. I think Kathy and Justinn enjoyed being near the edge.





Next Page

We visited many mountains and on the way home I offered to stop at the highest lowest point in the United States right here in Walton County (20 miles north of our house). Its a state park with the highest elevation in Florida (345') making it the lowest high point of all 50 states. Our vacation took us through 11 states in 8 days and we were all thankful to see so much of our wonderful country.

Tropical Storm Barry paid us a visit on the first day of school in August. Needless to say school was cancelled as we experienced sustained hurricane force winds from a direct hit. Chelco (the power company I work for) had over 12,000 meters out of power. After experiencing Opal back in '95 Barry was nothing more than a minor inconvenience.

In October Kathy, Marc, and I went to Orlando for Patsy (Kathy's sister) and Kevin's wedding. It was a beautiful wedding at a bed and breakfast in Mt Dora. We enjoyed seeing everyone! Bill and Lori were kind enough to share their lovely home with us. For those of you visiting at Bill and Lori's house that Saturday night I want you to know I've not told your Mom a thing .



TJ turns 24 in two days. He and Tiffany celebrated their first wedding anniversary on 10/10/01. Tiffany completed boot camp earlier this year and in June they moved Junction City, Kansas. Kathy keeps a close eye on the weather in Kansas (part of tornado alley) and is quick to call her first born if the weather gets rough. Its hard to get used to not getting to see them. It seems like they've been gone much loner than 6 months.

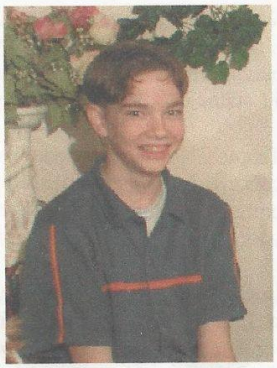


Perry turned 21 last May. He still lives in Freeport about 30 minutes south of our house. We see him and Michelle now and then. It still hard to imagine both the older boys are gone. Just two years ago they were still living at home and we saw them everyday. It looks like Kathy and I are going to be grandparents. Perry and Michelle are expecting a baby in May or June. Kathy is excited about being a grandmother for the first time! I'm a little more reserved because I think I am too young) and am not used to the idea of being called grandpa (grin).



Justinn is a senior in high school this year. Last spring she went to Orlando on the youth group from her church. They did a preformance in Orlando and found time to spend a day at Universal Studio. She turned 18 last September and is now a registered voter! We bought her a new guitar for her birthday. She is getting very good at playing it. After she turned 18 she worked as temporary help at Walmart for ten weeks. I knew life had changed when I saw my little girl wearing a blue Walmart vest and working as a cashier! She did a couple of radio commercials for one of the local radio stations last spring. Justinn also worked four weeks at camp last summer. She played on the soft ball team last spring, and she also drove through the mountains on our vacation including driving through a tunnel in the Smokey Mts. She has had a very busy year.

Next Page



Marc turned 15 this year and is now taller than Mom and Justinn. He still thinks he is too short. On his application to be a CIT at camp last summer they asked him to list any physical problems or handicaps. He wrote "None, but I am a very short person".

He earns money making buttons and checker button sets. He enjoys riding his skooter and bicycle and is anxious to get his drivers license. He and I started playing tennis a couple of months ago. Each time we play he gets closer to winning as many games as me. He has also taken an interest in singing. He sang at Patsy and Kevin's wedding recpetion and also sings at church and in the high school chorus. He is already better at singing than me and has a wonderful voice!

The Gipsons

1963 Juniper Lake Road

DeFuniak Springs, FL 32433

Favorite Thoughts:
An expert is one who knows more and more about less and less until he knows absolutely everything about nothing.

Better to light a candle than to curse the darkness.
Chinese Proverb

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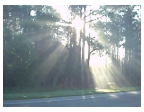
And if you missed last year, it is still available at http:\\atfar.com\fn

Thanks for allowing us into your home and we'd like to wish you a **Merry Christmas!**

Family News

December 15, 2002



Taken during my morning bike ride

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." I pray that your faith is in Jesus and you are enjoying the abundant life! We hope this year has been a wonderful year filled with joy and plenty of sunshine! We've been sending out this news letter instead of Christmas cards for over ten years. It is my one chance to bore you without hearing you complain too much .

Our family has had a busy year this year. Kathy and I have had a wonderful time spending our Saturdays working on a Habitat for Humanity house. The new homeowner works at Walmart with Kathy and graduated from high school with me. It is a great project and I can honestly say I've gotten much more out of it than what I put into it!



Kathy at the Habitat House

Last February I began a fascinating journey into the world of genealogy. Learning about my family's past has litterally changed my life by being able to appreciate what our ancestors sacrificed and their hard work. My grattitude towards the freedoms and luxuries we enjoy in the United States has deepened as I find more and more information on my grandparents from two hundred years ago. I have found old photographs, letters, and books about people that I am descended from, and am amazed by them.



Grandma Kathy and Taylor

On June 18, 2002 Taylor Nicole Fannin was born in Ft Walton Beach, FL! There is a big difference between thinking I'm going to be a grandpa some day and actually being a grandpa! I am still trying to adjust to the idea, but Kathy is right at home being a grandma! She is a natural at it. She is very comfortable with being called grandma even though she has a hard time convincing other people she is old enough to have grand children.

Taylor is about to get her first toothe just in time for Christmas. She is also trying very hard to sing with Grandpa when nobody else is watching.



Taylor Nicole Fannin



Sparky

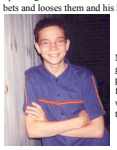
I am still writing computer programs and love it. I continue to ride my bike 8 miles every day even though I'm in my 40's and almost as old as Kathy (I'll pay for that comment). Kathy is still at Walmart and driving her Blazer. I cannot talk her into riding a bike with me.

We lost Sparky this past July. He managed to jump the fence in our back yard and was hit by a car. Marc did a great job drawing Sparky. The drawing hangs in our bedroom with his dog tags.



Marc's hand drawing of Sparky

Speaking of Marc... He is our last child is in high school. He is 16 and a junior at Walton High Schooll. He is at that age where he makes foolish bets and looses them and his hair .



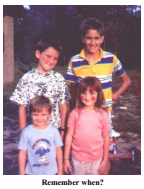
Our Baby

Marc landed a role as one of Joseph's brothers in a musical put on by a local theater group called "Joseph and the Amazing Technocolor Dreamcoat". They preformed the play on 4 straight days this past August and did an outstanding job! Someone from our family was there for each preformance to make sure he had support in the audience. He was fantastic! Several people from church and work told me he sang well enough to get the lead role.



Guess who lost a bet?

Marc has had an active year. He made the high school tennis team last spring. He had only been playing tennis for a few months and Dad could usually win when we played. He plans to try out for the tennis team again in 2003 and should not have any trouble making the team. He has improved and now he beats Dad when we play every other week.



Remember when?

Remember when our kids looked like this? Without photos and videos its sometimes hard to imagine the "good ole days". They continue to grow and change before our very eyes. Our baby now has his driver's permit and drives every chance he gets! He has also gone horseback riding, learned to play the guitar, won second place for a drawing in the fair, and has grown six inches! He also sings at church and is the best singer in the family.



Marc is driving!

And of course one of the highlights of this past year was watching our little girl graduate from high school. She continues to be very active working a Camp Victory (a wonderful Christian camp 40 miles north of our house). She has just registered for her second semester at Okaloosa Walton Community College.



Justinn is a Graduate!



The gang's all here!

Justinn's Christmas present last year was a ticket to Boston for spring break. She flew to Boston and visited her friend Jessy last April. Jessy is going to a Christian college and Justinn spent a week with her on campus. I thought the tickets were a good idea when we got them, but by the time April came I was wondering if I had lost my mind. I did a lot of praying that week .

TJ and Tiffany came all the way from Kansas for Justinn's graduation. She also had friends come from Misourri, Louisianna, south Florida, and Boston. In the photo of her gang only two of the girls attend Walton High School.

The rest came from out of town just to be at Justinn's graduation.We made the down payment on a 98 Toyota for her graduation present. She has driven it to Louisianna by herself this past summer.



High Mileage!

Justinn is 19, working at Walmart, and going to college. She now has car payments to make and all those miles she puts on her car requires gasoline. She stays so busy that I get tired just thinking about her schedule.

Justinn still finds time for church and Camp Victory. She sings solo and is a great guitar player. She is always learning new gospel songs and can sing harmony with Marc. She is also the best artist in the family. She was named art student of the year at Walton last year!



Justinn & her guitar

After looking at the photo of the kids on the previous page its hard to imagine both TJ and Perry married. We are not as big a part of their lives as we once were, but they will always be a big part of our lives. Kathy and I feel blessed to have such wonderful children and two great daughter-in-laws.



Perry, Michelle, & Taylor

Perry is 22. He and Michelle (our new daughter-in-law) plan to close on a house in January. The house is brand new and about three miles from our house. Starting a family can be exhausting and expensive, but well worth it!

When TJ (25 years old!) and Tiffany came home for Justinn's graduation it was the first time we had seen them in a year. They recently celebrated their second wedding anniversary. Tiffany is still in the Army and they are living in Junction City, Kansas.

Since a picture speaks a thousand words I guess I've bored you enough for this year.



TJ & Tiffany

Merry Christmas!

May God Bless You!

from:
Tommie, Kathy,
Justinn, Marc,
TJ, Tiffany,
Perry, Michelle, &
Taylor Nicole



The Gipsons

1963 Juniper Lake Road

DeFuniak Springs, FL 32433

Remember: ATFAR - All Things For A Reason
Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: - Romans 5:1

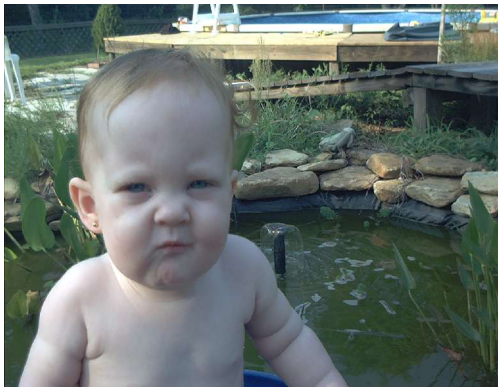
For inspiration from one of God's typist check out The Yes and Amen Archives. You will enjoy reading them and will feel humbled, thankful, and strengthened all at the same time. I HIGHLY recommend them! The website is at: http://www.jilnet.com/YesAmen

You can still reach us at tomgip@yahoo.com - we would love to get email from you and hear the latest in your lives. This year's newletter was done as a web page. If you have access to the internet you can view this online at: atfar.com/fn

Thanks for allowing us into your home and we hope you have a **wonderful Christmas and a year of peace and joy in 2003!**

Family News

December 15, 2003



Hello to all from Sunny Florida! Its December and that means I take a few moments of your time to bring you up to date on our family. Let me begin by saying our family is very scattered. Justinn is going to college at Southeastern Louisanna. Perry, Michelle, and Taylor have moved into their brand new home. TJ is in Kansas while his wife, Tiffany is serving our country near Baghdad, Iraq. Marc is our only child living at home, and at 17 he is not a child any more!



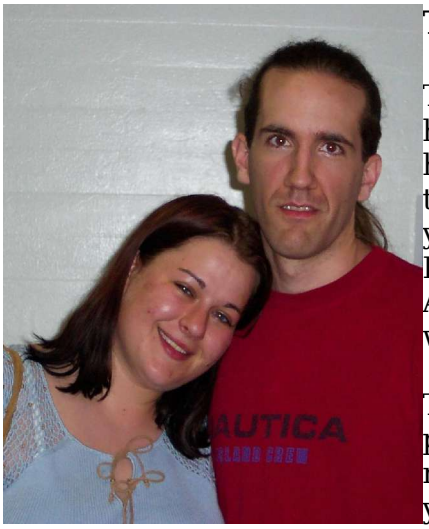
Taylor is now one year and a half. She is getting too big for the bucket I used to put her in when she and I would feed the fish in the pond in our back yard. Here is a photo from the beginning of last summer with Taylor in her bucket. Notice the new deck around the pool that Perry bought for his Mom and built last May!

Kathy, Marc, and I celebrated July 4th by leaving the country. We drove into Canada while visiting Niagra Falls on our vacation. Here is some free advice: if you leave the United States make sure you have a photo id so that you can get back in. One of us forgot to bring a driver's license and had a hard time crossing the border. It was touch and go, but we all finally managed to get back safely. I will not give the name of who forgot their license, but his initials are MG.

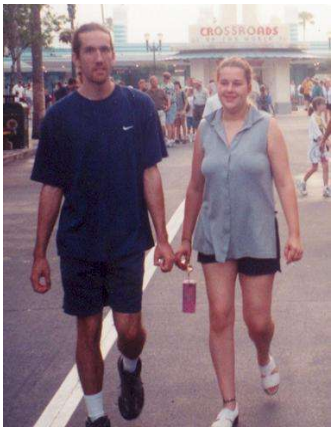
We were able to spend the night (on the American side) and see spectacular fireworks and a fantastic color light show. We had a great time including the balloon ride Marc and I took way above the falls.



On the way home we were able to spend three days with the Adams family. I highly recommend staying with Wayne and Dawn. The food is great and the price is very cheap (as in free). But a word of warning, if they stop pouring coffee for you that means its time to go. Their pastor is good at giving sublte hints. You had to be there to understand.



TJ – 26 yrs old:



TJ and Tiffany were able to come home for the Bailey Family Reunion here this past June. It was the first time we had seen them in over a year. They have been living in Kansas up until this past August. In August Tiffany, who is in the Army, was sent to Baghdad and TJ is in KS.

The photo on the left was taken this past June and the picture on the right was taken when we all went to Disney World four years ago. This past October TJ and Tiffany celebrated their third wedding anniversary (unfortunately they were in different countries).



Kathy hung a yellow ribbon in a tree in our front yard. She will leave it there until Tiffany returns home to us. I took this photo of the tree and thought it was special with the light shining on the ribbon.

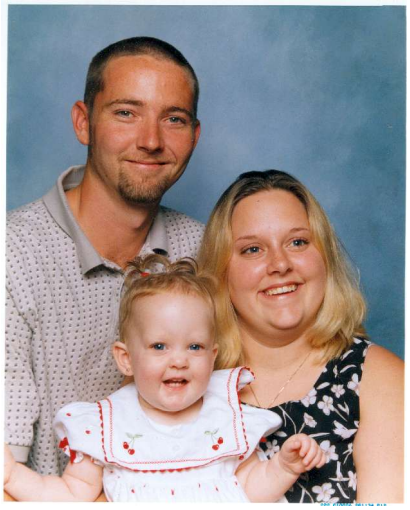
Perry – 23 yrs old:

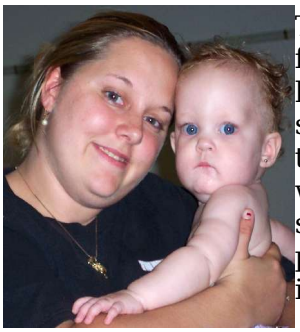


Perry, Michelle, and Taylor are enjoying their new house. They are just a few hundred feet from a big lake complete with a nice park that has swimming, a playground, tables, and grills.

They are both wonderful parents and they are giving Taylor a great start in life. Perry works in Freeport and is a big Nascar fan. He is pretty good with a guitar and his quick wit and great sense of humor makes him fun to be around. I have to admit I used to have my worries about him, but no more.

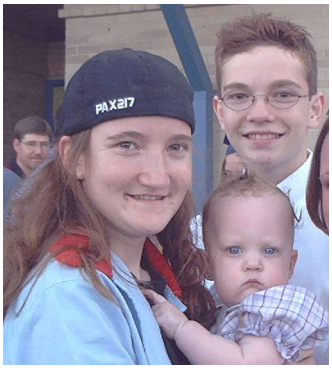
One thing about Perry that I am very proud of is his choice for a wife! As we have gotten to know Michelle I have seen her show patience and love for her family and know Perry made a great choice. She is a wonderful person and we are truly blessed to have her as part of our family. I cannot imagine a better mother for our granddaughter!





Kathy and I (I mostly <g>) love to spoil Taylor. Perry and Michelle give us a lot of freedom (most of the time). But no matter how much I bribe Taylor I cannot get her to stop watching Nascar races. One of the first things they did after moving into the house was to get a pool table for the garage. Perry said he was going fix it up and sell if for a profit. It sure is taking him a long time to fix it up!

Justinn – 20 yrs old:



Justinn began the year with a good accident. She totaled her car on the way to church last February in an accident that was not her fault. She hit a bridge and spundown the hill near the creek below the bridge. We call it a good accident because God watched over her and with seatbelts and airbags kept her safe.

She finished her first year at our local community college and decided to move to Roseland, Louisianna where she is living and working on a Christian Youth Ranch. She is the first one in our family to attend a four year university and we are very proud of her.



She has been playing a guitar for several years and this year she has learned to play the bass guitar. She plays each week with a band at her church. Recently she cut her hair for the first time in her life. She has had her hair trimmed in the past, but never cut, until now. She gave her hair to locks of love which is a program that makes wigs for kids with cancer. I think she looks great with short hair especially knowing that there is some young girl out there somewhere with pretty long red hair. The photo to the right was taken after her haircut with her new friend Gabbie.





Marc – 17 yrs old:

Marc began working last year at a local super market. He worked through the summer up until it was time to begin school. He saved his money and bought his first car (photo above). He is driving to school and is enjoying his last year of high school. He will be our fourth child to graduate. It does not matter how many times our kids are seniors it is still hard to get used to the idea. It was just a couple of years ago Marc was always the shortest one in the family. In fact on an application for camp a couple of years ago when they asked for any handicaps he wrote "I'm too short". Thats not true any more!

He and I play tennis as often as we can and he has learned the secret to beating me by making me run until I give out. Too bad the same strategy does not work for him in chess. He plans to try out for the tennis team this year and I can vouch for his ability! He continues to sing and spends a lot of time on the phone and computer with his friends. He plans to attend our local community college after high school. I was going through old photos of Marc for his school year book and found these where he is both cowboy and indian!









What a difference 15 years makes!!!

Merry Christmas and may God Bless You!

The Gipsons
1963 Juniper Lake Road
DeFuniak Springs, FL 32433







In case you have not noticed our Granddaughter, Taylor made every page of this year's newletter. We are very proud of her and plan to continue to spoil her. She celebrated her first birthday this past June.

Email: **tomgip@yahoo.com**

Online version: www.atfar.com/fn

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.



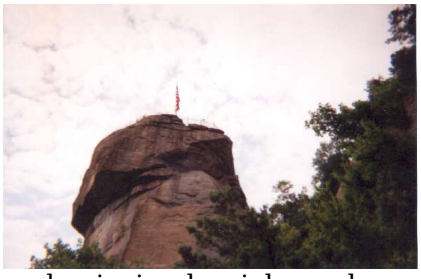
We went to a family reunion at my Aunt Lorreta's in June and had a wonderful time. Our clan took over most of a fishing camp on the St John's River near Astor. The people in the camp went out of their way to make us feel at home and to help cook and feed our big clan. Like the song says 'people on the 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.

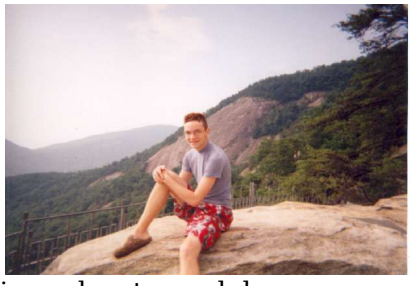


In July Kathy and I drove up to northern PA to pick up Marc (see below) and enjoy some wonderful southern hospitality with the Adams family (yes I know it was PA, but they sure made us feel at home). We camped out on their mountain one night and experienced temps in the 40's in July. Our last day we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

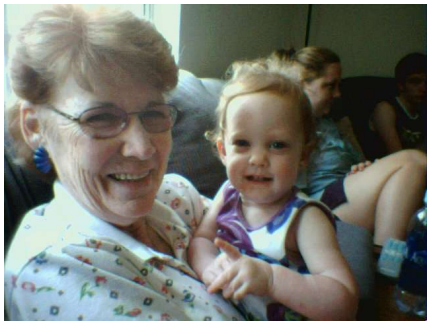
In 1998 I went to work for a subsidiary of the electric coop I have worked for since 1987. I had my dream job writing computer software and loved every minute of it. This past fall I returned to my old job at the coop where I am their Planning Analyst. This year I celebrated 10 years of riding my

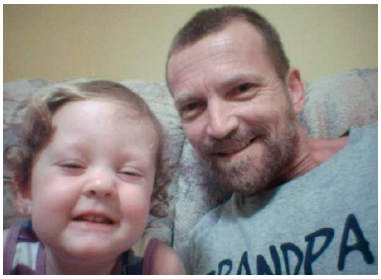
bike to work. If you add the 8 miles I ride each day it comes out to about 160 miles a month. Do the math for ten years and I should be pushing the 20,000 mile mark soon.

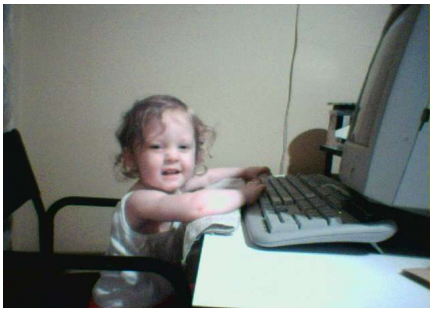
We have had a dog named Lucky since 1991 and she passed away this year. We have a new dog named Charley. She is about the same size as Bailey (our Yorky) and makes a nice addition to our family. Since getting Charley Kathy and I put both dogs on a leash and take them for a walk in the front yard most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





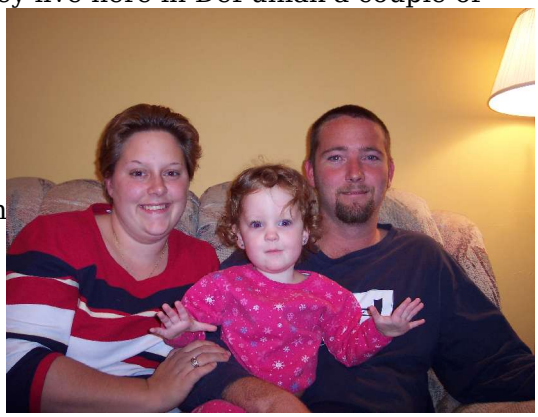



TJ turns 27 this month and is still living in Kansas. Tiffany is still in the Army. She returned from Iraq a couple of months ago after being there for over a year. She was able to come home for a couple of weeks this past June and she came by for a visit. She was able to tell us what life is like in 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).

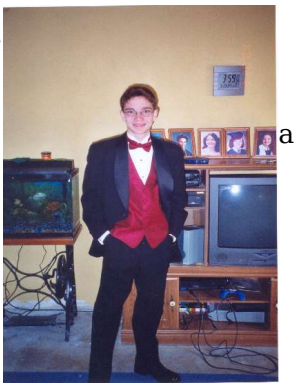




This past October Kathy, Marc, and I were able to visit her and see where she lived, worked, and went to school. We got to meet all of her roommates and they are all wonderful Christian girls. We also went to a football game while we were there and had a GREAT time. When she first got her job and I asked 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>.



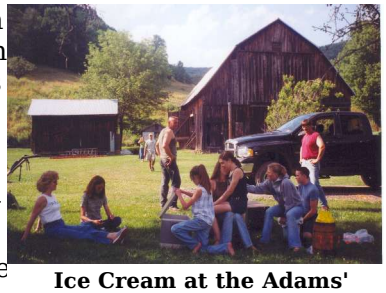
He graduated from high school in May and part of his graduation gift was a plane ticket from Atlanta to Buffalo. It was his first time flying commercially (he was the only one in our family that has never done that). He was met at the airport by the Adams family and stayed with them at their house in 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.

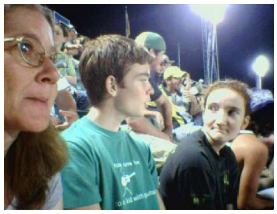


Ice Cream at the Adams'



Guess how this ride ended





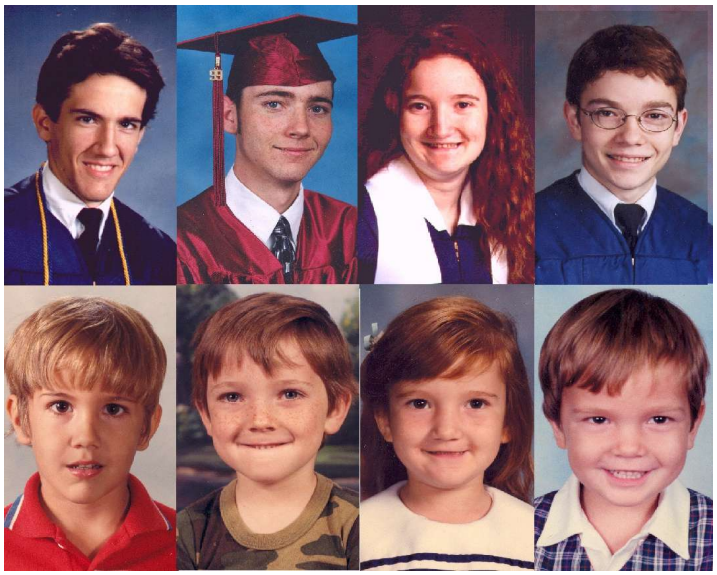
Kathy explaining how to hit a home run at the football game.

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!!! :)

Family News

December 15, 2005



Merry Christmas from Northwest Florida! I'll begin this years newsletter with a couple of WONDERFUL announcements. First our granddaughter Taylor will soon have a new baby sister to take care of! Perry and Michelle are expecting their second daughter, Caitlynn Marie to be born in January. Taylor will turn four next June so she is old enough to begin showing little sister the tricks to getting her way with Mom and Dad (Taylor is an expert). ☺



Our second announcement is that Justinn and Cory are expecting their first baby in April of 2006. Their baby is a girl and her name is Angel. So this time next year Kathy and I will be buying Christmas gifts for THREE Granddaughters!!

We had another active year watching hurricanes in the Gulf of Mexico. We were impacted by Hurricane Dennis in July. Locally we were spared the devastating damage from Katrina to our west. Many people from LA and MS stayed in our area for weeks and months following Katrina. Some have decided to stay permanently. Many churches, civic groups, and businesses continue to send local folks west to help in the on going recovery efforts.





Our house turned 20 years old this past September. The live oak tree Perry and I planted on the east side in 1985 is now almost 3 times taller than the house. This house is the only house Marc has ever lived in! For 12 of those 20 years I have ridden a bicycle to work. I will hit the 20,000 mile mark sometime in 2006. In February I simplified my commute by switching to a single speed bicycle. It looks like something from the 50's complete with chrome fenders. Our current habitat house is only two miles away and so I have been able to ride my bike to habitat every Saturday this year.

Kathy spends much of her time quilting. She has made several beautiful quilts. She has finally joined the cell phone culture. Now she and all of the kids have cell phones. I am still a hold out. I think I get too many calls without one. :) Kathy still enjoys her job at Walmart. She finished paying for her Blazer this past July so now neither of us have a car (bike) payment.





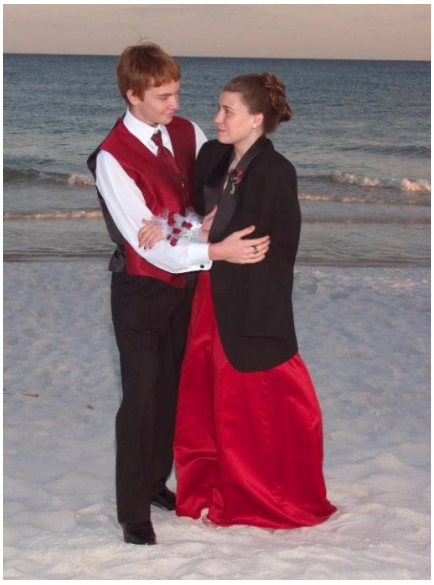
TJ moved back to FL this past summer. He is working at Walmart in Crestview. He has gone over to MS a couple of times to help. He has brought back some photos of some of the damage. It will take years to recover. A couple of months ago TJ traded in his truck for a new Blazer.



Perry is changing jobs this month. His old job for the past four years did not have good benefits. With another child on the way he decided to make a move to take a job with good benefits and more pay. He and Michelle continue to live in the house they built almost two years ago. Michelle has a full time job taking care of Taylor and Perry. She will really have her hands full after Caitlynn is born!



Justinn moved back to FL last January and has been taking classes all year. I talked her into riding bikes with me to work on the habitat house last spring. She and Cory are going to Okaloosa Walton College. They are both planning to become teachers. This semester Justinn was able to intern with Mr. Grice, her art teacher from high school. In October they flew to Maine to visit with Cory's dad. Cory is a wonderful young man. He has a gentle, quiet personality and always has a smile on his face. We are glad to welcome him into our family.



Marc is in his second year of college. Last March I got him to help on the roof of the habitat house. I told him the following week we would be nailing shingles on the roof. He got a job at Walmart that week. He is currently working full time and going to college full time which means he does not get a day off. I think he is planning to cut back a little beginning in January. Having a full time job allowed him to buy another car when his Topaz had trouble. He was able to pay cash for it and for a new laptop he bought a couple of months ago. The photo to the left is of him and Jessica on prom night this year.



We've had a house guest much of this year. Last March Justinn and Marc's friend Melanie moved in with us. She is finishing her degree at OW this semester and will be moving to GA to be near her parents. She has been a wonderful house guest and we will miss her.

Quotes:

"One of the lessons of history is that nothing is often a good thing to do and always a clever thing to say." –Will Durant

"I have often regretted my speech, never my silence." **Publilius Syrus (~100 BC)**, *Maxims*



We wish you a Merry Christmas and pray that 2006 will be a year of good health and blessings!



Family News

December 15, 2006



The year 2006 is nearly over. What a wonderful year it has been for our family. It began with the birth of Perry and Michelle's second daughter Caitlynn Marie Fannin born on 1/14/6. Taylor welcomed her new baby sister with a loving kiss.

Two months later Justinn and Cory celebrated the birth of their first child, Angel Lee Desiree' Kurtz. Angel was born on 3/28/6 in the same hospital as her mother. Kathy and I now have three precious grandaughters!



When TJ and Angela moved back home from Kansas, all four of our children were within 3 miles of our house. We began having a weekly family night. Each Tuesday someone would prepare a meal and choose a game to play.

We played all kinds of games like cranium, catch phrase, pictionary ... as well as traditional games like dominoes, monopoly, and life. Since we had 9 or 10 people playing it was hard to play card games (although we did a time or two). Family night became the highlight of the week. It was always fun to discover what meal was being cooked as well as what game we would be playing.



This fall college schedules and work schedules contributed to not having our family night, but I'm sure each of us will long remember the dozens of nights we were all back in the same house for an evening.

Last May we experienced another milestone. When Marc turned 20 it was the first time we did not have a teenager living in our house since 1990 when TJ turned 13. Kathy and I survived the teenage years (and so did our kids <g>).



Kathy retired from Walmart last July after more than eleven years of dedicated service. She had enough of the rat race and by simplifying our lives we were able to reduce expenses which allowed her to quit. She is enjoying retirement and highly recommends it. In the morning she often works in her small wood working shop (she has a table saw, router table, band saw, drill press, and several small hand tools) building picnic tables, benches, small tables, lamps, ... Its not unusual to find

her doing a wood project in the morning and then spending the afternoon or evening working on the beautiful quilts she creates.



Its amazing how time changes things like going from holding your son to letting him adjust your bow tie. :)



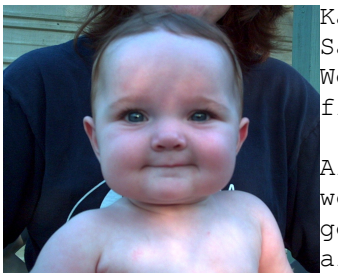
Over a year ago I took up a new pastime - weaving baskets (and so far one hat) from pine straw. Since I stopped watching tv in 2003 I have found I have more time for things like reading, writing letters, and now weaving pine straw. It takes a little time to weave a basket, but I've learned some of the most valuable things in life take a little time.

Kathy made Justinn's wedding dress when Justinn and Cory exchanged wedding vows at the historic Chautauqua building on the lake in the middle of town. Here are some photos:









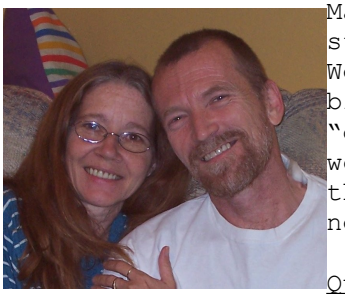
Kathy and I both spend most of our Saturday's working at habitat for humanity. We just started the fifth house since we first began volunteering in 2002.



All our kids are doing well. Michelle began working last summer so that means Perry gets to be mom and dad some nights. With all of the adults in the family now working, it may be some time before we can do family night again.



Caitlynn is on the left in the above photo and Angel is on the right. Taylor turned four this year. She loves being the center of attention and with her beautiful long red hair and wonderful imagination she can easily capture people's hearts.



Marc, Justinn, and Cory are still in school and working. We give thanks for the many blessings of 2006, for Marc's "good accident", for a wonderful time with Kathy's family at Thanksgiving, and for our three precious granddaughters! That wraps up this years newsletter. We all wish you a: ***Merry Christmas!***

Quotes:

"Life is really simple, but we insist on making it complicated." Confucius
"You have succeeded in life when all you really want is only what you really need." Vernon Howard

Family News

December 15, 2007

Greetings from the Panhandle of Florida! We published our first newsletter in 1992 ... 15 years ago! A couple of years ago we went from 4 pages to 2 pages. Since this is something like an anniversary edition we are doing 4 pages this year. Marc was 6 years old when we started this and is this past year he turned 21. TJ was 15 and he has now reached the ripe old age of 30!!





A photo of Kathy I had never seen

In some ways the past year has been full, yet as I reflect back I am struck with how quiet and settled life has been. Last May Marc moved out and Kathy and I have been doing the "empty nest" thing for the first time in our lives.



Justinn made the cake



In April Kathy turned 50 and we surprised her with a birthday party at the civic center. Dozens and dozens of friends and family gathered for an evening of celebration. One of her gifts was a special notebook filled with memories and letters and photos about a life filled with love, joy, and rich blessings (thanks to MANY of you who contributed to it!).

Last Valentine's Day Kathy and I celebrated a milestone: 25 WONDERFUL years of marriage. In March I experienced another milestone, I became a member of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). Kathy went with me to a Quaker meeting in NC in late April. After the meeting we celebrated our 25th wedding anniversary by spending a week on the Outer Banks of NC and then another week in a hotel by the Atlantic Ocean at Myrtle Beach, SC.



We took our time exploring the Outer Banks and were able to visit all four



At the top of Cape Hatteras Lighthouse



light houses. We climbed to the top of the Cape Hatteras Light House and camped out in a tent on the beach a couple of miles away. The weather was great and we were treated to several sunrises over the Atlantic Ocean.

This past year I simplified my eating habits. Since I became a vegetarian in 2006 I found myself eating a lot of simple whole foods, so I began buying organic oats, brown rice, beans, wheat, ... in 6 gallon buckets. It reduces trips to the store. I have a hand mill that I use to grind my own flour and have also begun cooking some meals using a solar cooker.



Perry's Girls

I bought a new bicycle last May. This is my sixth bike since I began riding in 1994. I have gone from the single speed I have used the past couple of years to a three speed and love it. I have been asked how long I plan to keep riding my bike to work and my answer is simple - as long as I have the health to do it, which I hope will be for many, many more years.



Grandpa keeps an eye on the girls

In October we remodeled our bathroom, including replacing the old fiberglass tub/shower with a metal one.

Kathy and I continue to spend most of our Saturday's working on Habitat for Humanity houses. We are currently working on the 7th house we have helped build. I'll gladly put in a plug here for habitat - if you ever have the opportunity (even if its just once) to help at habitat, you'll be glad you did.



Crib Kathy Made

Kathy is in her second year of retirement. She has a "shop" in our shed where she has a table saw, dill press, router table, band saw, ... and LOTS of hand tools. This past year one of her projects was a new crib for my niece Michelle's new baby (Collin). She still finds time for quilts and other projects too.



Exploring a cave at the reunion

TJ and Angela have been living in Crestview for almost a year now. It is closer to both of their jobs. With gas so expensive, that saves them on gas expenses. TJ is now a department manager. He is in charge of the photo lab at Walmart and is enjoying it. And he has some stories he can tell about some of the photos people bring in. Its hard to believe he is 30 years old.

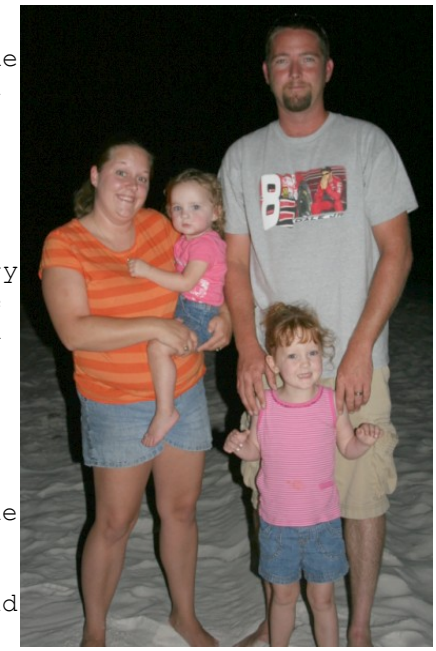


Taylor, Angela, & TJ

Angela has also had a promotion in her job, so congratulations to both of them. Angela has a second full time job taking care of Amethyst (a cross between a Yorkie & a Shelty).

Perry and Michelle have been doing some work on their house. They replaced the carpet with a beautiful wood floor this past year. Kathy showed Perry how to install it. She must have taught him well because he helped us when we did my mom's floor with a hallway that had lots of angles and he knew what he was doing.

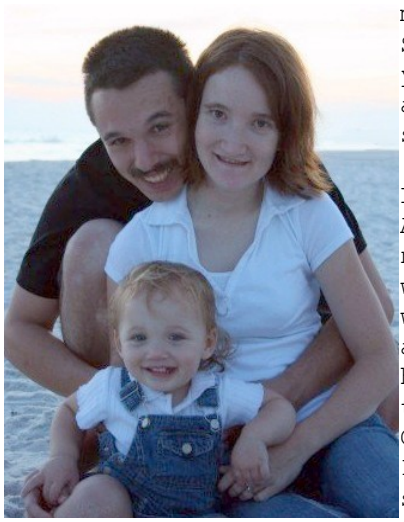
Michelle has her hands full now that she is working and Taylor is going to school. Trying to manage that along with getting Caitlynn to the baby sitter and her regular chores, leaves her little time for herself.



Michelle, Caitlynn, Perry, & Taylor

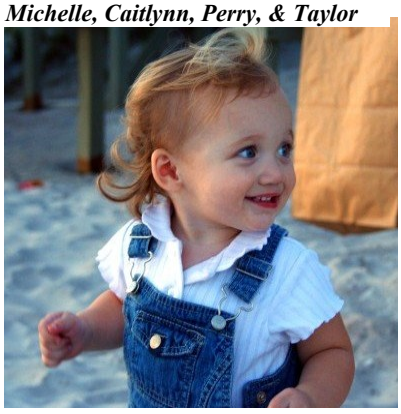
Taylor turned five this year and is now in school. She called us to tell us her grades when she got her first report card. She made 3 A's and 2 B's. I told her that was much better than her Dad's first report card because he did not even make one A (they used S's and N's when Perry was that age).

Caitlynn reminds me of Perry in many ways. She is very adventurous! She has little fear and will go down the slide head first if you don't watch her. She has been walking for almost a year. She is saying dozens of words and is now trying to make her own sentences. Sometimes she is in the back yard when I ride my bike home and I stop and push her in the swing. She calls me Paw Paw.



Cory, Justinn, & Angel

Last Spring Justinn, Cory, and Angel moved into an apartment near the beach. They both work in that area which means we do not see as much of them as we used to. Cory completed his two year college degree this past year. CONGRATULATIONS Cory!!! I told them they are doing something I have always wanted to do ... live near the beach. They are within easy biking distance of the world's most beautiful beaches. Justinn is working at Starbuck's and going to school at Gulf Coast in Panama City.



Last September We had a family night at their place. After a fantastic meal prepared by my nephew Korey King (he not only cooked everything from scratch, he also paid for it!) we all went to the beach and Korey took the family photo at the

end of this newsletter.



Heath & Marc

Angel will turn two years old in March. She took her first steps on Mother's Day. She is a happy child and loves to sit at the piano with grandpa. Together we play and sing and have a good time. She is very curious about many things and reminds me of Marc because she smiles so much.





Tommie, Kathy, TJ, Perry, Justinn, & Marc (1988)

Last May Marc moved in with Heath. Panama City is closer to his job at Starbuck's, but an hour and a half from our house. Since he moved out we have not seen very much of him. I miss not playing tennis with him. Last month they moved into a bigger place. It is closer to Marc's job and has twice the space as the old place. Although we have not seen it yet, I hear it even has tennis courts. Marc is a supervisor at Starbuck's and from what I hear, he has impressed several customers with his skills and big smile.

Heath has fit right in with our family. He sings, plays piano and guitar and also writes his own songs (which are VERY good). Earlier this year we took the tv out of the living room and replaced it with Kathy's piano. When Marc and Heath come over I love to sit and listen to him play ... anything.



When Marc was six, it was hard for me to imagine him "grown up". I remember thinking how strange it seemed thinking of him driving or some day growing a beard. Now that he is driving and has grown a beard (sometimes he has one and sometimes he doesn't), its almost just as hard to think of him as a six year old. Thats when lots of photos and videos come in handy. :)



Just imagine ... in 15 more years all three of our granddaughters could be driving!



<u>Favorite Quote:</u>

"A man should look for what is, and not for what he thinks should be." Albert Eistein

Merry Christmas Everyone!