

December 2001

Another year....same old boring stuff.....NOT...

Every year when I write these letters I think, “this year has seen more changes than any other. Next year can’t possibly compare...” You’d think by now I’d learn. I get tired just sitting here writing about it. Fortunately, we have this promise:

“Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. (Isaiah 40:30-31)”

Our hope truly is in our Lord. This year has been full of reminders that everything else is subject to failure: the demise of our high-flying economy and stock market, the tragedy of September 11, and so on. We find our peace in trusting the one who has every detail of human history in his control.

Jessica, our eldest, is 16 years old, a Junior at Westview High School, and is driving on her own. She’s managed to only put one small dent (still worth \$1000) in the car by backing into a friend’s car in our driveway. Oh well. At least nobody was hurt, and it’s probably a relatively inexpensive lesson compared to other alternatives. Jessie is also singing in the band that plays for the Junior High group at Harvest, as well as working with a small group of Jr. High girls.

Katie is 14, but will be 15 in January, so I’m now faced with a second round of driving lessons. You could be praying for me... Katie is a freshman at Westview, so once again Jessie and Katie are in the same school (and while they often won’t admit it, they love it!)

In May of this year, I left Datalex, which you may recall, is the company that acquired our company just about a year earlier. Unfortunately, some aspects of the acquisition didn’t work out very well. Datalex really couldn’t bring itself to use our technology and our management team and theirs never integrated very well. So, in October of this year, Jeff and I (the original founders of Sight & Sound Software), as well as three others of our former management team, cut a deal with Datalex to essentially buy the company back. We formed a new company called “Conductive Technologies” which includes most of our employees from Sight & Sound, as well as much of our intellectual property and assets. I’m on the board for the new company, and working in a consulting role as the chief technology officer for the company. It’s great for me because I don’t have to work full time, but I still get to have a hand in steering the new company. We’re working on some pretty exciting new stuff. I could tell you about it, but then I’d have to kill you.... (I don’t think you want to know that bad).

May of this year also was our first ocean race with “Kolohe” the sailboat we acquired last year. It was also Jessie’s first ocean race and kind of a test to see how she’d like it. She’s planning to do the race to Hawaii with us this summer, so I wanted to give her a little taste of what it’s like—especially during the first few days out of San Francisco while it’s still cold at night. Jessie did very well, and we won our class in the 2001 Oregon Offshore race. Now we’re busy preparing boat and crew for the Pacific Cup race in July of 2002.

In June Katie went on her first mission trip. They went to a shelter/rehab center in the middle of downtown Vancouver B.C. and helped with a variety of tasks and built relationships with some of the people at the center. It was a great experience for Katie and she came back full of stories of what God did through the group while she was there.

Meanwhile, Roseanne started taking an Aikido (a form of self-defense) class. I am now much more careful about grabbing her from behind lest her instincts kick in and she breaks my wrists. Katie is also taking tennis lessons.

In July, Jessie and I went to Voronezh Russia. You may recall that Jessie and Roseanne went last year in April. We were there to help the church we've adopted in a variety of ways. Jessie worked with kids and constantly had dozens of kids hanging on her. I visited with Russians in their homes and shared with people who were entering the drug rehab program operated by the pastor of the church we're supporting. Like last year, there are many stories and memories to relate. Most vivid in my memory is probably the elderly Russian woman I struck up a conversation with while she waited for a bus. When she found out through my interpreter that I was American, she looked amazed and said "Oh...I've never seen a foreigner up close" (of course, she spoke in Russian, and my interpreter laughed so hard she had a hard time translating for me). After we spoke for a few brief moments and I showed her pictures of my daughters, the woman gave me a huge bear hug, just like she'd known me since birth. I found the Russian people to be delightfully warm and hospitable and very open to discussing spiritual things.

July 8th was Roseanne and my 23rd wedding anniversary. Unfortunately, I was in Voronezh. My interpreter generously volunteered to allow me to call her from her home, so we spoke very briefly as it's very expensive to call from Russia to the US.

Shortly after we returned from Russia we were really blessed to find a wonderful place right on the water in Gig Harbor, Washington that we've purchased as a vacation home, investment, and retreat center. We've already had a couple of groups from church up there, including our Bible Study group. Later this month, the college group that Roseanne and I work with will have their winter retreat there. We've been doing a lot of work on it to fix the place up, but also just enjoying the stunning view of the water from almost every room.

Katie attended her last year in the Junior High water ski camp in September. Since she's now in High School, she can't go anymore—so she's trying to talk me into going next year and driving a boat for the group so she can go.

In October, my interpreter from Russia came to spend a few weeks with us. Katia had also served as interpreter last year for our director of Women's ministries at Harvest, so both of our families were delighted to have Katia spend some time with us. I was fortunate to be able to fly her over to the US on miles I accumulated from all my previous travel. We had a great time showing her around and visiting with her.

Roseanne and I continue to be heavily involved with the college group at Harvest. In January, I'll be taking on the challenging role of chairman of the board for Harvest. For this I really DO need your prayer! The church continues to grow and has almost completed our building expansion project. Now we have a variety of other needs and challenges to address. Next year's letter will, I'm sure, have more news on this front as I take on this new role.

As you can see, this has been a pretty full and exciting year for us as a family. God continues to bless us, and we are thankful for the adventure he's placed before us. We see his hand in so many areas of our lives. That's what makes Christmas such a special holiday for us as we recount his blessings and celebrate the God's greatest gift to mankind: Jesus.

We hope you're enjoying the season as much as we are!

P.S.: We haven't included many pictures in this letter this year as we're emailing it to most of you, and we want to avoid it being as large as it was last year. If you want to see more pictures of the family and our adventures, please stop by our family web site at <http://www.tildens.org>.