

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR

Season's Greetings from the Moore's in sunny eastern Idaho. Whoops, cancel the part about sunny – it's been very snowy lately. We haven't made it to the slopes yet this year, but we have been able to try out a snow board on the local sledding hills. It's a blast!

It's been quite a year for us. The first part was fairly uneventful, but about June things took off as Kevin became the Interim Associate Dean of Engineering following the unexpected death of the previous Dean. It has been nonstop for him as he works to wear about five different hats, from director of the College's research center to chief hearer of complaints. He is second in charge of all the problems associated with 450 students and 15 Ph.D. faculty members (believe us, the 15 are far more trouble than the 450!). The position only lasts for this year, at which time he will run as fast as possible back to the job of being a regular faculty member. On a more exciting note, Kevin received his tenure last year and capped that by winning a major research grant from the Department of Energy.

This year also capped four years of work for Tammy, as she walked the stage in August to receive her B.A. in History degree. We are all very proud of her. It was no small task to support a husband, to be the primary provider of a nurturing environment for two kids, and to be a full-time student, but she pulled it off. Both of our parents were able to attend her graduation. Since school started this year Tammy has been working about ten hours a week as a reading aide at the kid's school, which is a very enlightening experience (hopefully for her class, but definitely for her). Although she has found it a relief to be out of school, Tammy is not sure what she will do next. She has been kept very busy this year ferrying kids and helping Kevin keep his sanity with the craziness of his new job responsibilities. She has also devoted a lot of time this year to the elderly couple next door (Chad and Dorothy), helping with the shopping and being there for Chad since Dorothy passed away in October. She has also been doing a study with a friend on a book called *Zen and the Art of Making a Living*. The book emphasizes being a positive influence in the world through what you choose to do with your life.

No Christmas letter would be complete without bragging on one's children. Ours, of course, are like everyone else's: alternately sweet and sour. As they grow we notice more and more of ourselves in them. Joshua has Tammy's sense of atmosphere and style, but with Kevin's dry humor. Julia is imprecise like her dad and outgoing like her mom. They are both avid readers who seem to devour books. Joshua is reading Tolkien (he's on the first book in the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy); Julia has been reading Jack London (*Call of the Wild* - not bad for a second-grader). Joshua has been accepted into Pocatello's gifted and talented program. He is a very good writer and has several poems and a story in his portfolio. Julia is also going to participate in the program, even though it only goes down to the third grade. She

was a finalist with her literary submission to *Reflections*, a science-fair type of program that includes the arts. Our kids are also becoming quite the athletes, much to the surprise of their very non-athletic parents. They are both on the Pocatello swim team. Julia just started in the fall, but Joshua has a year under his belt, along with a first place and a couple of third place finishes in some local meets. Well, these are a few of the sweet things, but of course there are also the sour. Fourth grade boys seem to be at a particularly trying age; and just try to get Julia to wash her hair or change her underwear. At any rate, life is interesting!

This letter could ramble forever, but it's time to close. For one thing, we need to get off the computer and start packing for our trip home for Christmas. We plan to drive to Orlando for Kevin's annual conference, conveniently sited near Disney and Universal Studios. We will then spend the week before Christmas in Louisiana with Tammy's family and the week after in Arkansas with Kevin's folks. Hopefully the relatives will be nice to us about the most recent political campaigns. All of our candidates lost and an anti-gay initiative in Idaho was defeated by only four thousand votes. We had joked, somewhat seriously, that if it had passed we would be looking for somewhere else to live. It's no secret that we are unabashedly determined 60's style, bleeding-heart liberals, mostly due to our four years living in Phil Gramm country. This makes for interesting visits home, particularly in an election year like we just had! But, in spite of the potential ribbings, we are still looking forward to visiting parents, siblings, nieces, nephews, and cousins. Then it's back home to Idaho to look forward to another exciting year in the life.

We hope that this Christmas marks a wonderful season that lets you spend time with the ones you love. Best wishes for a happy new year. Love and take care.