

December, 1996

SEASON' S GREETINGS  
& BEST WISHES FOR THE NEW YEAR

Hello again from Texas to all our friends and family. Once again we look back and wonder where all the time went. Certainly we have been busy--but there seems such a paucity of thrilling adventures and earthshattering news to report. Both of us are in the same careers and positions as last year though Linda's organization has "re-invented" so often it is hard to tell what title she has on any given day. There is a lot to be said when you work for a shoo-in candidate for the Dilbert Disorganization of the Year Award--but best not said here.

As forecasted last year, Linda has started her own business, albeit a few years ahead of schedule. Originally the intent was to wait until she left her present position but the need to branch out was too strong. *ReTakes* is the name and collectibles (yes, it is spelled with an "i") is the game--everything from antiques to furniture to Japanese porcelains (*no* knick-knacks, please!). Linda has outlets in both Austin and 30 miles north in Georgetown where she displays and sells her wares. Although it is too early to declare *ReTakes* an unqualified success, it has been more than successful in the enjoyment & challenges it has offered.

Chad's role in *ReTakes* is as hired help--*sans* pay. But as Vice President and Sr. Assistant to the CEO, he is assured of future rewards & stock options. (Those words seem vaguely familiar from when he hired on as chief ranch hand a few years back.) New looks for "the ranch" include a new roof, new drive (crushed granite as opposed to dirt) and a spiffy new hay barn. Combined with normal maintenance, broken water pipes, & blocked septic, you can guess it has been a truly exciting year. The good news is that the water well valiantly survived the central Texas drought; we have our fingers crossed for next year as the forecast is for drought again next summer. Successes for Chad include his first compost pile (*lots* of fixin's from the droppings of both trees and horses!), and a small stand of buffalo grass as yet not destroyed by the dogs. He remains active as president of the neighborhood assn (another grandiose title without pay) and continues certification training as a registered tax assessor (the tax man cometh), a computer network administrator, and an IBM AS/400 minicomputer system operator (a novice nerd in the making).

With all the above, there were no special trips this year save for a gathering of Chad's siblings and cousins at an Aunt's (Betty Dellenback) home in Vero Beach, Florida over the "balmy" Fourth of July weekend. It was a bittersweet reunion of loved ones sharing fond memories, and a tribute to Chad's Uncle (Bud) who had passed away several months prior.

We sadly report the loss of J.J., the stray tabby who adopted us several years back. Otherwise we are all well, keeping busy, and enjoying our bounties (including a shiny new black Ford Ranger pick 'em up for Linda). We wish the same for all of you--health, happiness, and prosperity--for this Holiday Season and the coming New Year.

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