

Well, it's Christmas time again and I haven't gotten started on the year real well yet. I guess we have covered a lot of ground but it just seems that the year should still be young. Our hope and prayers are that you have had a good year.

Here in Lubbock we are still buzzing around like we are busy and have more on our plate than we can handle. Erin is still working with J.C. Penny's in the pricing department. She is one that sets the prices out for the products in her area. Regular prices, sale prices, super sale prices, and super duper sale prices, or whatever they call them at the time. She stays very busy with it since they seem to have a sale of some sort every week. She thinks the best part of the job is that she doesn't have to deal with the customers that much. She seems to like the retail sales but not necessarily the customers.

Erin actually likes retail sales enough that she has decided to get a degree in it. She is still working on her basics at South Plains College, but after that, it's off to Tech, or some other four year school, to finish her degree. She has done very well and is working hard in school. This semester started out looking pretty bleak but after many hours of study, she has been very successful with it. However, I think she is ready for the semester to be over and get a break.

Over the last couple of years, Erin has also adopted a friend from work who is married and has a 1 year old baby girl. Erin has also been working hard to raise Reagan and has even managed to bring her into Sharon and my life as well. I think this little girl rates her family as Mom, Dad, and Erin. It is amazing to me how Erin and Reagan get along and how Erin can take care of her in most situations. Erin is really growing up and maturing. We are so proud of her.

Scott graduated from Concordia University in Austin in May. He had been working on his teaching degree since being a sophomore in High School. For some reason, he decided on teaching as a career back then and has worked toward it every since. He loves working with children and being around them so I guess that's a major part of it. We were able to work out a deal with Uncle David and Aunt Bobbie to have a graduation party at their home in Temple and man, what a time we had. We haven't seen that many family members in one place in a long time. It was great.

After graduation was over, Scott had a couple of weeks to spend with his girlfriend, Jessica. She is from the Memphis, Tennessee area and they took a trip home during this time. Scott was able to meet her family and get to know her brothers very well. They are young and so he had a great time playing and sightseeing with them. During their stay, Jessica got very ill and ended up spending a good bite of time in bed recuperating. When she was able to get up and around, they had to get back to Austin.

A couple of days after they returned, Scott and his childhood friend, Jose, got on a plane and flew to Spain. Jose's family is from there and Sharon told Scott that she would send him there on vacation after graduation. Man, this was an interesting deal. When Scott and Jose get together, you never know what is going to happen, so all the parents were a little anxious about the trip. Also, it had not been all that long since some of the troubles in Barcelona and we were a little concerned about Americans in Europe. Jose's parents assured us that they would be on the opposite side of the country from the trouble so off they went.

After two weeks and around 450 pictures, they made it back to the U.S... They were a little heavier than when they left since one of the traditions seems to be to eat big meals every chance you get. They were staying at one of Jose's parents' home and the housekeeper was a very good cook. Jose's mother said that the housekeeper took a strong liking to Scott because he would eat almost anything she put in front of him.

Before leaving, Scott had accepted a teaching position with Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Houston. So, when he returned, it was time to find an apartment, set up utilities and get moved in. Man that was a trip. He got everything set up down there and came home for a few days to rest and gather up. As it turned out,

he had furniture and household stuffs all over the state. We rented a moving van and started loading here. When we took off, we stopped in Abilene at Meme and Grandpa's to pick up a chair, then on to Temple. After loading up in Temple the next day, we went into Austin to unload his storage shed, then on to unload in Houston.

Anyway, he got settled in and has enjoyed the teaching since. The school ran into some financial problems right off and Scott was quite upset over that, but they were worked out and he has not had time to look up since.

Part of his contract is to coach, so he started teaching 5th grade during the school day and coaching soccer in the afternoons. He enjoyed it and received good support from the parent. They ended the season in a tournament and won a trophy, the first in school history. After that, he ended up coaching the JV basketball team. It was not planned, but because of some of the earlier financial issues, he took on the job. He seems to really enjoy it and they are doing okay.

Sharon continues to be the foundation stone of the family. She is still running Out Patient Surgery at University Medical Center. She says she was there when they opened and it looks like she will be there when she dies. She has continued some of her education by getting certifications in several issues and her continuing education. She still, however, has to operate a department full of women. She says she would take a bunch of men any day. It has been difficult lately because of nurses not showing up for work for various reasons, but she has been able to keep everything running.

Along with taking care of me and Erin, she has been sewing different Christmas items and making Puppy Pillows. A few years back, she decided to make some little puppy shaped pillows to hand out to the children that come through the unit. Boy, this has turned into a major undertaking. We have been able to get people together three or four time per year to make three to four hundred pillows at a time and they still run out from time to time. We have tried to get other organizations to help out but without much success, so Sharon continues to make them. Recently, our local Lutheran Fraternal group was able to get a donation for the project and bought her a sewing machine to make the pillows with. She really keeps busy.

I am still attending South Plains College and building a few web sites. After this semester, I will lack two maths and capstone program and I will earn my Associates Degree in Computer Information Systems. Hopefully this will help me find a job in the computer technology area. My business has been very bad this year and I have decided that I am going to have to get a real job to help pay bills. Sharon has been able, and willing, to take care of us while I get an education, but we both agree it would be helpful to have two incomes again. We really enjoy me not having a scheduled job though. It really makes it easy for me to take care of family matters or take off when Sharon wants.

In November, Mom passed away. She had spent almost ten years in a nursing home with Alzheimer's and we are happy that she is now in a much better place. She did sneak up on us though. She has been quit strong over the past years and always fought back after illnesses but she finally gave up. I think she would be happy that we had very good time with family and friends at her funeral. Many family members and friends made it and had fellowship with us all. Dad has done well with her loss and continues to go to the nursing home and help other friends.

Well, this is about two pages and I am sure you are about as tired of reading this as I am of thinking about what to say.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to You!

And

May the Lord continue to bless each of your Households as he has ours!