

Hi Everyone!

Well, another year has come and gone. We want to wish you happy holidays and Merry Christmas. Christmas has always been my favorite time of the year and I'm really looking forward to this one. This past year has been one of great happiness and great sadness for Lee and I and we wanted to share it with you.

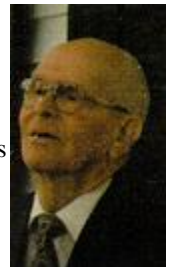


We have been married for a little over a year now, and married life is wonderful. We began our year by "Hosting a Murder." You know those games -- you have a dinner party and invite 6 guests. Everyone has a role to play and one of the guests is the killer. The idea is to figure out *which one!* The game is played in rounds, with time in-between rounds for a dinner party. No one knows who the killer is until the last round; not even the killer himself/herself. The rules are that you can't lie to protect your character, but you can lead others to believe things or accuse someone else to throw suspicion off you. These parties also have themes, and this one was a train leaving



Paris just before the Nazis arrive in the city. Everyone came dressed as their role and we had a really good time. We intend to have more of these parties, but the year got so busy that we just couldn't work another one in this year -- we'll shoot for next year!

Throughout the first part of the year (January - April), my Grandfather Welsh (Dee) was very ill; though January went well, he was back in the hospital in February. Dee went to join God in April after a long battle with heart disease. He was ready to be with my grandmother (Ginggonna) again and was one of the most wonderful Christians I have ever known. He influenced my life in more ways that I can tell, and I miss him dearly. I can remember good times when I was little that he picked up many, many rocks because I liked to throw them into a nearby stream; he caught some of his chickens for me to "pet;" he gave me wise advice and counsel as I grew older; he read to me; he instilled a love and respect for animals in me; he was a very special person. Dee, you are sorely missed.



In his passing, Dee left behind 5 little birds -- 3 cockatiels and 2 finches. After finding a good home for the finches, my cousin and I adopted the cockatiels -- so Lee and I now have two additional family members -- Buttercup, a white cockatiel, and Samuel, a gray cockatiel. These birds were outdoor aviary birds, so the adjustment from large outside pen to inside cage was hard on them. They didn't understand lights and hissed at Morgan when he came into the room, but after a few weeks, they settled down and seem to

be happy. (Neither Lee nor I had ever heard a bird hiss before - it was a new experience!) Now, they'll let me pet them and they like to get out and fly around the office. Having them is like having a little piece of Dee still with me, and I'm glad Lee and I made the sacrifice and adopted them. In case you're counting, that means that Lee and I now have a family of six -- ourselves, Morgan, PC, Buttercup, and Samuel. Since we live in a two bedroom apartment, this has been an adjustment, especially for Lee, who was unprepared for how loud the cockatiels can scream when they want to! (Poor Lee.) However, a more loving and supportive husband I couldn't ask for.

As many of you know, I do a craft called Quilling. Quilling is the art of shaping small strips of paper into various shapes and then gluing them together to form patterns. I had my first "on my own" show with the quilling at Camden's annual "Dog-O-Rama." Though it was a fun experience, I didn't sell anything. Everyone was more interested in their dogs there, so it wasn't the best place for crafts. I'll have to join a local guild and try again! While there, Lee and I took Morgan to an agility course, and he did pretty well for a beginner. I was proud of him!



Each year, my family tries to take a vacation to the Myrtle Beach area. This year, it was hard, because the beach was a favorite place of Dee and Ginggonna's. I could close my eyes and picture us walking down the beach together or being on the balcony and just talking. However, we did have a good time shopping, enjoying the beach, and just generally being together. We played solitaire sometimes (with unwelcome help from all!) and visited several local shopping areas. At a relatively new outlet, Lee and I got some good prices on some of the larger pieces of our china, so we were happy!





Each year, Lee's family tries to take a trip to Pennsylvania and see relatives and friends. We had a really nice time visiting everyone and I got to meet some more of Lee's family that I had not met before, including his Aunt Charlene and Uncle Ronald. We really had a nice time at their place on the lake, and little Caleb (our ringbearer) serenaded us with some beautiful violin music. He has taken up the instrument and has a lot of talent. We stayed at Lee's aunt's log cabin and had a really fun time with his Aunt Rachel.



Just before our anniversary, Lee was involved in a car accident. Thankfully, he was not hurt, but the car was damaged enough to make us uncomfortable, so we traded it on a new 1998 Chevy Malibu. It's almost exactly like Lee's old car except for the year and the color.



Lee and I celebrated our first anniversary September 27, 1998. We decided to get away from it all and take a trip to Virginia. We stayed at a bed and breakfast there called the Jordan Hollow Farm Inn. I absolutely loved it and recommend it highly! The room was beautiful and the inn itself is a working horse farm. We could enjoy picturesque views of the mountains and see horses grazing along the hillsides. This place had about 22 horses (11 of which were "rentable" for hour long trail rides through the woods), 2 dalmations, 2 "all American" dogs, and



several cats. They also had 3 lama's which they were training to be pack animals so that later guests hike into the mountains and the lama's will carry a picnic! Lee (romantic that he is) had ordered a the room, and they were just gorgeous! While in the area, we went to the Lurray Caverns (only about away) and they were beautiful. We also went to some little antique shops in the area. The bed and its own restaurant, so Saturday night we ate there -- it was delicious! The breakfasts were wonderful as well. I really hated to leave, but we had to get back to Columbia. Again, I recommend this place highly!

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Well, believe it or not, it was a reunion year for me at Furman. It's hard to believe that I've been out of school for 5 years. Wow, do I feel old! Lee and I enjoyed the football game and got to see some old professors and friends. It was fun!



In October, Lee and I had our annual Pumpkin Carving Party. This is a party where guests bring their own pumpkins and we have patterns and carving tools. Then, you just trace the pattern onto the pumpkin and carve it out! We use the Pumpkin Masters Carving tools and they work really well. We had some really spectacular results this year!



In November, Lee and I got some more bad news. Lee's Aunt Charlene lost her battle with cancer and passed away. She was a wonderful person and I regret I didn't have the chance to know her better.

Also in November, Lee successfully defended his Masters! That's right, he has finished school and I'm so happy and proud of him! He did an excellent job and was one of the very few people who did not have to adjust their work before a final copy was turned in for printing. Lee will graduate with his MS this December. His work was on Cellular Automata and a summary can be found on his web page for those who are interested! (Here, you can see an example of the running program.) I, too, have been working hard to complete school. I am very close, so expect next year's letter to be from "Mr. and Dr. Meeker!" In fact, next semester I will begin teaching two upper level classes at the University of South Carolina - Computer Graphics (CSCI 575) and Algorithms and Data Structures (CSCI 220). I'm very excited about this new challenge and am happily creating syllabi and lesson plans over the holidays!



Another new part of my life is a newsgroup on the web -- now I know lot's of people join these things, but this group is a group of Quillers. Since finding people who do quilling is very difficult, I have really enjoyed getting to know them. There are quillers from Australia, England, and Mexico in addition to the United States. Their work is beautiful and I'm really learning a lot from this list!

In other news, other family members are doing well. My mother, Martha Huggins, had knee surgery in November and is doing well. My parents and Lee's parents are doing fine. Lee's Grandma is much better and now staying with his Aunt Jeanette in Fayetteville, NC. Lee's Granddad is doing fine and still making delicious homemade applesauce. It's enough to make us want to drive to Pennsylvania! My Aunt Rie and Uncle Warren are doing much better after an accident where Uncle Warren was hit by a car and Aunt Rie had a mild heart attack, followed by double bi-pass surgery. Both are recovering nicely. My Grandmama and Granddaddy Huggins are doing well and continue to live in their home in Lugoff, SC.

I guess that about sums up our year. Lee and I have enjoyed our first year together and look forward to many more. Take care everyone and we hope you have a wonderful Christmas and a joyous New Year!

Love,



Lee, Paige,



Morgan,



PC,



Buttercup, and



Samuel

(aka: Lee, Paige, and the Zoo!)

Our web page addresses:

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Happy Holidays!