

January 2, 2004

FRIDAY FOLLIES

Happy New Year!

Can you believe it? Another year gone by. It seems like just yesterday I was writing the Follies for the 2003 New Year! I was saying what an unusual Christmas it had been . . . and unusual, it was.

This Christmas was delightful, even memorable! JP and I were a bit anxious about it because it was the first time ever that the children have not been with us at

Christmas. Our son, Jeremy, is in Bend, Oregon and Christmas is his busiest season, so he could not get away. And our daughter, Jessica, went to visit both of her grandmother's this Christmas in Mississippi. She returned Christmas night, but still, it was strange.

The truth is, it was an incredibly sweet Christmas Eve and Christmas. It was very relaxing and peaceful . . . unexpectedly so. Christmas Eve we spent shopping, having lunch with dear friends, shopping some more, wrapping gifts, going to our friends' house for our traditional Christmas Eve gathering, and then going to church to hear the incredible mid-night music.

Christmas Day, we went to a special Christmas Buffet at one of the finer restaurants in the area. The funny thing was . . . JP had gotten reservations days in advance

and we were very excited about going out for Christmas - something we have never done before. We got all dressed up and headed to the restaurant at 12:30. The doors to the main restaurant were locked - no one or any lights inside.

(FIRST BIG, RED FLAG!)

Then, we stopped in the hotel lobby to ask someone what was going on and the lady said, "Just go around this corner and give your name to the lady behind the computer. (SECOND BIG, RED FLAG!)

UNREAL. The buffet was gorgeous, alright, but the seating was in the ballroom with room dividers, bright lights, no centerpieces or music, and cafeteria style table settings. We sat down



Here is my Gandalf The White wishing you a Happy New Year back in 2000. And below are JP and me with friends on our first New Year's Eve together -- dating in 1992.

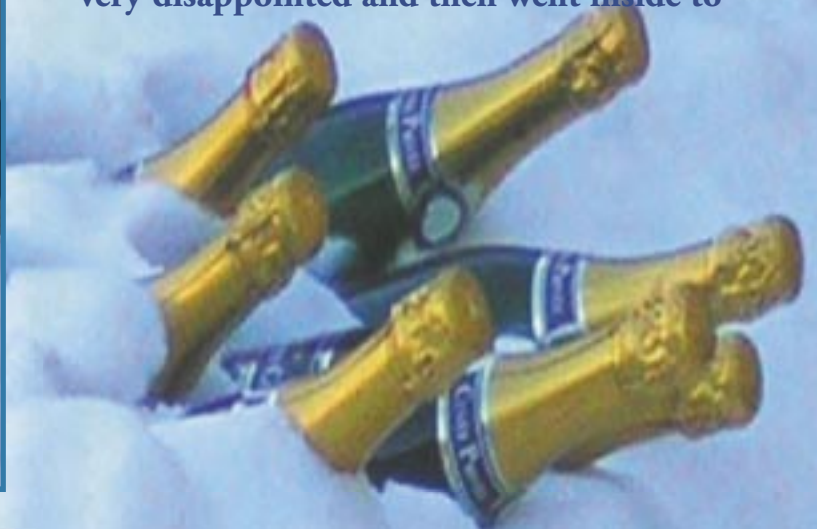




and the first thing that came to mind for me was - “FRA-RA-RA-RA-RA-RARARA-RA!” Do you remember that scene in “The Christmas Story” when the family’s turkey is eaten by the neighbor’s dogs and they go to the Chinese restaurant for Christmas dinner? Remember the waiters all trying so hard to sing “Deck the Halls” to them? Well, this Christmas buffet was NOTHING like we had envisioned, either. We just sat in stunned silence initially, and after my “FRA-Ra-Ra,” we both just burst out laughing. It turned out to be great. The food was excellent and we enjoyed ourselves and had a wonderful time in spite of the setting. We also both said that the experience would live “in infamy” in our Christmas memories.



One of my favorite things this year was that I got JP a telescope for Christmas. He made a comment a while back about never having had one as a kid. I found a really nice one, and Christmas night we took it on the back deck to try it out. We did not have the viewfinder lined up properly, so it was a bit hard to find the moon at first. JP was very disappointed and then went inside to





read the instructions. When I finally got it sighted and crystal clear, I called him outside. Do you remember the first time you ever looked through a telescope and actually saw the shadows in the craters on the moon? Well, you should have seen his face when he gazed for a few minutes and then raised back up. It was pure *“Christmas Joy”* if I have ever seen it. Very, very cool!

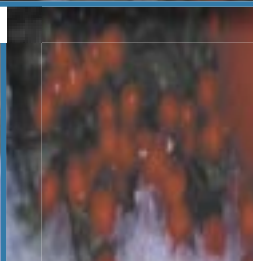
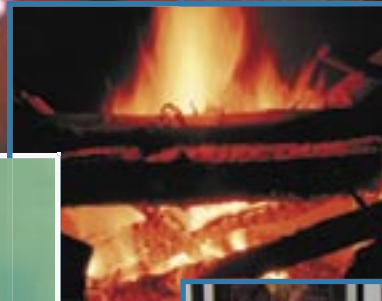
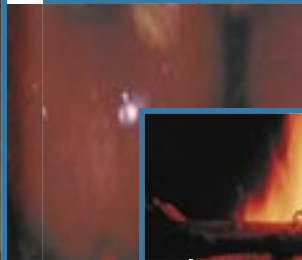
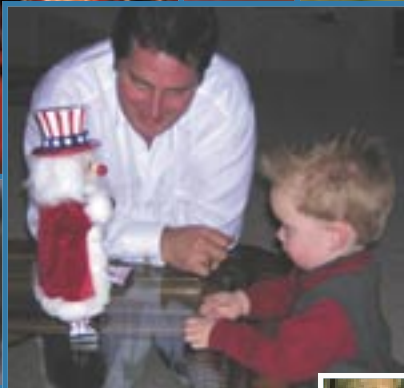
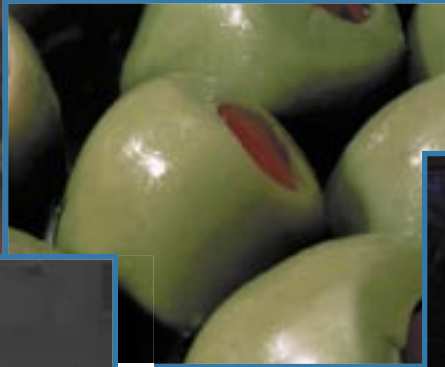
Above you see him earlier in the day trying to put his new toy together.

And to the right you see a close up of our lovely “Second Place Ribbon” and Statue from the annual neighborhoods lights competition!

Also above, I tried to get a shot of my Christmas quilt that I made years ago when the kids were little. I do not know how to use a sewing machine, so every stitch is by hand. . . literally. It is one of my treasures.



Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve -- Two Magical Evenings . . .





A Long, Long List For Judi

Getting ready for 1969 has been a tremendous task for seventeen-year-old Judi Goddard of Columbus, with her list of resolutions for the New Year growing larger with every passing moment. The daughter of Mr. and Mrs. W. E. Goddard is 5'6, a Junior at P.D. Lee High School and a voracious reader for the Gazette.

As to keeping that lengthy list of do's and don'ts for the New Year, to be released Wednesday, the post-Columbian is a body and bullet have been known to change their minds.

(GAZETTE PHOTO BY ROBERT DEWEY)

To all of you on my Friday Follies List, whether you are in Manila, Singapore, Kuwait, Bermuda, Virginia Beach, Mississippi, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Minnesota, Indiana, Colorado, Philadelphia, Key West, New Jersey, North Carolina, Indonesia, Washington D.C., Iraq, Maryland, West (By-God) Virginia, Nashville, Chattanooga, New York, Oregon, Maine, Europe, or Yuma, have a wonderful, wonderful week.

God bless.
*Remember, life is short...we need to make it a good one.
Grow in peace and wisdom.*

Your Friday Friend,

Judi Goddard

P.S. NOTE OF CAUTION... 20 employees were fired from The New York Times here in Norfolk for sending lewd and indecent emails. (To my knowledge, none of the 20 were on our joke list - even though some of the attorneys who represent the company were!) I have asked each and every one of you on this list to tell me if the jokes that accompany these "Follies" place you in jeopardy, or even if they offend you. Please understand that they are intended to be light-hearted and are not mean-spirited in any way. If you are ever offended, do not hesitate to ask to be taken off the Friday Follies Joke List. PSS. If you send a joke and I don't use it, it is because it has been used before, and I try not to repeat. Remember, I have been sending these since August of 1997. One tends to go through huge numbers of jokes that way. Disclaimer: When anyone asks if I type all of these jokes, the answer is, "No!" I cut and paste one evening during the week (30 minutes, TOPS). Obviously I don't have time to sit, read, and retype jokes all day!