



CHRISTMAS TIMES

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Paul, Becky and Angel Van House

Hello and Merry Christmas again! It's been a year of travel and change for us. First of all, speaking of change, as you might notice from the picture on the right, our family is about to grow again! We found out in August that Becky is pregnant, and due on April 23rd. She's showing pretty well now and hasn't worn a pair of jeans since late October. We're all excited and Angela is extatic. She's already to get a baby for her birthday.

Now to the travel. Being yankees, we miss having snow in the winter, so we packed up and took a 4 day trip to the hills of New Mexico over the New Year weekend. We stayed at Santa Fe, but we also traveled to Taos, the highest spot in New Mexico. On the way to Santa Fe, we got snowed in at Pecos, Texas. There was only about 4" of snow on the highway, but Texas doesn't have any snow remove equipment so at midnight, we decided to stop for the night. The mountains were beautiful, and the pretty snow (are you cussing yet?) made us homesick. On the way home, we got iced in at Lubbock, Texas so we paid a visit to Paul's Cousins Dick and Becky. His Uncle Bernard and Aunt Genevive were there too, with more than a foot of snow on top of their camper!

Another major event in January occurred when Paul shaved his mustache off!

In February, Paul's aunt and uncle apparently got sick of the snow in Lubbock and stopped in for a short visit on their way to their official winter headquarters in Harlingen, Texas. Angel loved having company and getting a break from nursery school. She talked about them for weeks after they left.

Later in February, Paul's parents came down for a visit. Angela was a little cranky because she had come down with the chicken pox the day before "grandma and grandpa" arrived. The visit turned out very nice anyway, and once again Angel talked about the visit for weeks.

Angela got one too many ear infections in March, so

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her doctor decided to put pressure equalization tubes in her ears. The operation was easy, took less than 4 hours (but boy did it cost the insurance company) and Angel seemed to actually enjoy the extra attention! She still gets an occasional ear infection, but they go away without a trip to the doctor most of the time.

The highlight of April, of course, was Angela's 2nd birthday party. Her boyfriend from her school, Jeffrey, was invited, along with her neighborhood friends. Everybody had a real good time...especially Angela. To her delight, Jeffrey gave her a rythm set complete with drum, cymbals, castinettes and a harmonica.

We took numerous weekend trips, but the highlight of summer was our trip to west Texas. We left at the end of May and our first stop was the Big Bend National Park. Becky got mad at Paul after he took 2 hours to climb a small "hill." She and Angela killed time in the hot desert sun...but Paul had fun. When we made our first stop in the Park, we discovered that our radiator had a few holes in it. We kept water on hand after that and kept our fingers crossed. Fortunately everthing went O.K. Paul had a visit from an old allergy when he and Becky took a horseback ride. After 10 minutes, he could barely breathe. To make matters worse, he caught a cold which eventually cut the vacation short. With daytime temperatures of almost 100, we decided to break camp and return to civilization. We drove through the Davis Mountains and on to El Paso where we walked across the border into Juarez, Mexico. This trip to Mexico was very pleasant, and we did some shopping. Prices were unbelievably low! Paul got a pair of hand-made cowboy boots for only \$25. Of course, Paul had to climb another mountain. At the top of the mountain is a large crucifix facing El Paso. From there we drove by the Highest point in Texas, then visited Carlsbad Caverns.

In fall, our friend Lisa Sturgeon from Marion visited us, and that was immediately followed by a visit from Becky's parents and her sister Debbie. Once again, Angela was spoiled rotten, but we didn't mind. We had a real nice visit. Angela loved being chauffeured in "Gramma's ban" (van). Aunt Debbie introduced Angela to the video game Q-bert and she still loves to play. Out of room! Here's wishing everyone a happy New Year, and invite you to visit us. BYE!

