

I WILL HONOUR CHRISTMAS IN MY HEART, AND TRY TO KEEP IT ALL THE YEAR.

Charles Dickens, *A Christmas Carol*, 1843

As I honour Christmas 2002 in my heart, I think fondly of friends like you and the personality traits you possess that qualify you to receive the alternative Inglis newsletter. *Note: Snowy and Catticus Finch graciously yield their space this year due to an influx of photos. They'll be back next year.*

Ian

Ian continues to practice criminal defense law, the highlight of his day being lunch with the guys and long walks after work several days a week.

Still not a slave to fashion, three times this year while on his walks someone from "Fishes and Loaves", a religious group that not only ignores rules of grammar, but also feeds the homeless in area parks, asked Ian if he wouldn't care for a sandwich.

And Ian's still the incurable romantic. One special night while dining out, he excused himself from the table. When he returned he presented me affectionately with a long-stemmed white, stunningly exotic flower with spikey petals. Deeply moved, yet mystified how he could have produced this exquisite flower at the restaurant, I asked him where he got it. Never one to embellish the truth, he answered, "I found it on the floor of the men's room."



Toni

Still doing neonatal intensive care nursing and a nursing publication for the hospital network where I work. I've also gotten free-lance gigs this year from the *American Journal of Nursing*, where I make approximately \$1 an hour.

The coolest thing this year was attending the Nieman Narrative Journalism conference in Cambridge. For three glorious days I listened to fabulous Pulitzer Prize-winning writers/journalists talk inspiringly about their craft, while Ian traversed and explored Boston.

The only hitch was coming home. Still basking in the glow of literary genius, I cluelessly strolled through a Logan Airport checkpoint with a small, red apple in hand. I was met on the other side by several alarmed airport security personnel looking at the apple saying, "Oh, god!" They hustled me aside and wanded me and my apple with such vigor you'd think I was Osama bin Laden himself with what, an A-bomb disguised as an apple? Unamused, but thankful our boys in uniform were on their toes fighting the War on Terror, I made my way to the boarding area, hoping beyond hope that Ian would get wanded there, thus serving him right for laughing.

When it came time to board, I walked behind Ian as if I didn't know him, attempting to transmit rays of suspicion to airport security indicating that Ian was their man. Imagine my delight when officers' eyebrows raised in alarm as Ian walked through. But they pushed him through and AGAIN pulled me aside, even though I had already eaten the damn apple. When they finally finished with me I was so rattled that I failed to negotiate a seat away from Ian, who more than once on the way home leaned over and whispered, "I may look homeless, but at least I don't look like an international terrorist."



Burton nurses his eye after being kicked in the face by Melissa's obstetrician.

Burton & Melissa & ... Talula!

Burton is still working his arboriculture business, and Melissa is still a neurosurgery scrub nurse. They're expanding and remodeling their house in Dallas because ... this year they've expanded and remodeled their lives, with the addition of [drumroll] ... *Talula!*

On the night of June 27th, after the three-day Labor From Hell ending in a cesarean section, Burton and Melissa were beat, and Burton bedded down in a recliner in Melissa's hospital room. At some point in the night, Burton crawled out of the recliner and onto the floor to sleep. Early the next morning, Melissa's obstetrician crept into the room to check on Melissa. In the dark, he tripped over the extended leg rest of the recliner. Just before crashing, he swung his leg around to catch his fall, landing it squarely and with great force into Burton's sleeping eye.



Proud Parents with World's Cutest Baby



In the Hall of Mirrors at one of John's favorite places – the Palace of Versailles in France.

Erin

The big news this year is that Erin was accepted into Texas's oldest medical school, "UTMB" (Univ. of Texas Medical Branch) in Galveston. She just finished her first semester.

Going from a school of 50,000+ to 200 has been a little tough, but she's



Erin at her favorite place in Europe, the northern tip of Santorini, a Greek island made from a (still active) volcano.



John, Rita, Erin and George Inglis-Storie in the Inglis motherland — Hawick, Scotland.

adjusting. She opted to live solo, off-campus, sans car, in a 3rd-floor downtown artists' loft, using the Galveston bus to get around. My favorite "Erin quote" so far was when I asked her if she was eating a good breakfast. She answered, "Yes. I make one waffle, fry one egg, and I'm set all the way through cadaver." Argh....

Knowing last year about this time that she was facing hyperstudy overdrive for the next four years, Erin planned a trip to Europe for the spring. With a Eurail pass and backpack, in early March she headed out solo. For four glorious months she traveled in Spain, Greece (her favorite country), Italy (her favorite culture), Turkey, France and Scotland. In France she stayed with the parents of the owners of the French restaurant where she worked her way through college to save

for this trip. She met and traveled with people from Vancouver, England, New Zealand, Australia, Istanbul, San Francisco, Napa Valley, Florence, ... *to be continued under 'John' ...*



John and Erin in a forest in Grasmere in the Lake District of England where Wordsworth lived.

John

John graduated from high school in May, then flew over to meet and travel with Erin until the end of June. He loved the art, the people, and the culture of Paris. He equally loved the beautiful, GREEN hills of Scotland and its down-home nature. The best part of the trip was meeting their relatives in Hawick, Scotland — Rita and George Inglis-Storie, who Ian met in Hawick in 1972, when he was about the same age as John and Erin.

Day One in Scotland, George took John down to the pub for his first pint — a McEwans on tap. Lord, that's like having a Lamborghini for your first car. George and Rita showed Erin and John around the motherland — explaining their heritage in every conceivable way. They left Hawick with a better notion of who they are.

On graduating from high school, John said "Good-bye" to baseball and computer games and entered Texas A&M Univ. in the fall saying "Hello" to serious study of Engineering, running, and learning to play the guitar.



Frustrated in a British phone booth, John was unable to understand the Scot with whom he tried to make room reservations.



At the Last Drop Café in Edinburgh, Erin had insisted John try the national dish of Scotland, haggis, without telling him what it was — the minced heart, lungs, and liver of a sheep or calf mixed with suet, onions, oatmeal, seasoned and boiled in the stomach of the slaughtered animal. He loved it!

www.austincitylofts.com

The big news this year is that we've put down a deposit on a downtown high-rise "loft" that's just broken ground. Our unit is 1500+ square feet on the eighth floor with two bedrooms, two baths. It will have 12-foot ceilings and floor-to-ceiling, wall-to-wall glass on the south side facing the Colorado River, so we'll catch sunsets and the fireworks on the 4th of July (a big deal in Austin). With retail on the first floor, it's in a quiet part of downtown, next to the future national Whole Foods headquarters, the Town Lake Trail, and lots of entertainment and restaurants. So, we'll be driving less — and no yard! It should be finished spring or summer of 2004. Go to the Web site (above) for a sneak preview.

Snowy and Catticus have been assured they're welcome, but they both remain cautiously optimistic about the move. I'm thinking maybe my next writing project will be a TV sitcom about a couple who look like a homeless dude and an international terrorist. They sell their greatly-appreciated house and move uptown, kind of along the lines of the Jeffersons, or the Clampetts.



Standing in front of the Broken Ground with Promise.

Take care to bask in the glow of the holiday season!

*Love,
The Inglises*