

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

Charles Dickens, A Christmas Carol

As I honour Christmas 1999 in my heart, I think fondly of friends like you and the personality traits which you possess that qualify you to receive this alternative Inglis newsletter.



a wet Mr. Finch

CATTICUS FINCH

A friend of mine, Mérida, told me that in El Salvador they bathe their housecats. She thought it odd that we didn't since we seem to otherwise have fairly reasonable personal hygiene habits. John and I took this as an affront to family dignity and set about to bathe the cat, who it turns out has the strength of 10 cats.



clean Caticus enjoying a sports event with John & Ian



Snowy & Cousin Keisha looking at camera, hoping it's peanut butter

SNOWY

Snowy had another big year. She played a lot with her cousins when they were in town. And she continues her camping trips, lickfests, and consistent good mood.



romp with Cousin Buster

IAN

Ian is fine. Still practicing law with the Merry Band of Criminal Defense Lawyers downtown. He's still very involved with John's baseball and takes the occasional trip away from it all. Ian and I went to San Francisco and New Orleans this year, and he took Snowy, Erin, and John to Big Bend and New Mexico.



You may recall from newsletters past Ian's retirement from the days of compulsive home and car maintenance. The big news this year is that he's added to his home and car repair kit. It now contains rubber bands as well as duct tape.

Yes. The part that holds the hand-held shower head sprang a small leak. When I tried to replace the part I was told that the model was discontinued and that I'd have to buy a new head. Ian didn't like that idea. So, when the leak got bigger, he tied a strong rubber band around the part. Now, instead of the leak shooting into the wall, most of it sprays straight down except for one errant stream which shoots with some velocity directly into my face. I'm suggesting he write a home repair book for developing nations.

Ian studying the map in San Francisco, an activity which occupied most of his travel time

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Ian & I & Erin in front of (Uncle) Rick Frederick's painting

TONI

I'm still practicing neonatal intensive care nursing and editing a publication for the Seton Healthcare Network. Still on the MHMR (Mental Health Mental Retardation) Board of Trustees. And I'm still doing triathlons. Recall that in 1997 I was ranked LAST in the Nation for my age group. In 1998 I moved up to 68th of 81 in my age group. A humor article I wrote, "From Last To Almost Last in Just One Season", was published nationally, and I heard from a lot of people who, like me, are the slobs of the triathlon crowd, and proud of it!

The most remarkable thing to report from 1999 is that all within one hapless week in October the following broke: clothes dryer, shower head, Snowy's tether, and the ceiling fan in John's room. Naturally, my initial thought was, "All of this is clearly Ian's fault." I had Ian take a look at the dryer, the disrepair of which caused the most misery. "It's [very bad word]-ed. Better call someone out." So, I called out Mr. Maytag Repairman.

After waiting a week without a dryer, Precious knocks on the door. I let him in, and as I was closing the door behind him:

Toni: "God, am I glad to see you. Going to the laundromat has been a real dr..."

Mr. Maytag (interrupting and opening his arms like the Pope beginning a speech to the masses.) "Where to? I don't live here, Lady."

Toni (Inner thought: "Okay, this chump wants to play hard ball. I'll show him. I'll, I'll...patiently wait for him to finish, then write him a check for whatever exorbitant amount he demands." I show him the dryer which is to the left of the washer, as you can see, with the door on the right, and is thus pretty hard to get to.) "Here it is."

Mr. Pope John Paul Maytag: "Hmm. This is gonna be tough."

Toni (cheerfully): "Oh, don't worry. My husband Ian, a real handyman, says the whole dryer front comes off, so you should be able to get to everything."

Pope John Paul Maytag (staring at me with utter contempt in his eyes): "Oh, thank you so much. I never would've guessed that."

It went downhill from there. I'm poorer now, but by God my dryer works.



BURTON & MELISSA

Melissa's still a neurosurgery scrub nurse in Dallas, and Burton is still doing his arboriculture work. Big news: The Garden Conservancy awarded its first-ever Preservation Fellowship this year. After a tedious national search, they interviewed the four finalists in New York and selected...[drumroll]...Burton! His activities include a plant collecting trip to Mexico and work to convert the fabulous Peckerwood Garden in Hempstead, Texas to a public garden. He splits his

time between
Dallas and
Hempstead.



Forever the naturalist, at Peckerwood Garden Burton shows Steve, Erin, & John the wonders of the foliage-eating, black swallow-tail butterfly larva which are purposely placed among the Portuguese Dutchman's Pipe Vine to control the plant's invasive growth.



Married in May of '98 and still on honeymoon. What is wrong with them?

ERIN

Erin continues at UT majoring in Biology. And she still works as a clinical assistant in the hospital and as a waitress at Threadgill's Restaurant. Until August she lived in a quaint little house

near UT, which had a slight problem with plumbing. Specifically, tree roots had grown into the underground pipes,

which apparently were made of papier-maché. Her shrewd landlord told her to use large amounts of Drano, which certainly made a difference. Next flush, raw sewage flowed the wrong way from the toilet and the shower. Soon thereafter, Erin found another place — a third-floor apartment

with a spiral staircase and a large semi-circle window in the bedroom loft that overlooks downtown. Best part of all, the plumbing works!



Erin & friend Steve Leitch camping with us at Enchanted Rock



JOHN

John is a sophomore in high school and plays baseball for the Junior Varsity team — shortstop. This year he's enjoyed the Texas A&M (Aggie) baseball camps, where he plays ball 9 hours a day, lives in the jock dorm, and best of all, is served jock food in jock proportions. He still sacks groceries at the neighborhood grocery store.

After two years, John got his braces off. A week ago we went to pick up the retainers, and he walked out of the orthodontist's office smiling for the office folks. When we got into the car, however, his face turned from happy to furious.

John (red-faced with raised voice): "X@##kfj;!#dsjf__ing@klkj!"

Toni (wide-eyed, drop-jawed): "What?!"

John: "X@##kfj;!#dsjf__ing@klkj!" (Interrupted by choking gag, then) "X@##kfj;!#dsjf__ing@klkj!"

Toni (beginning to figure this out): "What?! Oh, dear, John. You can't talk with your new retainers, and they're gagging you. You are so lucky that I am both your mother and a nurse and can thus offer you the maximum symp...."

At that moment I was seized by involuntary, uproarious laughter which I could not control, thereby further infuriating him. Despite several fits of uncontrolled laughter requiring us to pull over, we finally got to school. There he was, standing tall and handsome with straight teeth, but with a brand new hideous speech impediment and constantly feeling like he was about to hurl. Seems every rainbow has a pot of gold at one end and a pot of manure at the other.



After making Ian's birthday cake, Erin & John share a laugh about the fire hazard they avoided by using a reduced number of candles.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS AND A BRIGHT NEW MILLENNIUM!

Thank goodness there's one special time during the year that we set aside life's difficulties great and small, and raise our glasses to one another with goodwill, laughter, and joy in our hearts. It's that time. Here's to you. Have a merry holiday and a Year 2000 to remember.

Love,
The Anglies

