



*For unto you is born this day in the city of David
a Savior, which is Christ the Lord (Luke*

Merry Christmas!

We hope that you are healthy and happy. We definitely are.

It's been an interesting year, starting from just before Christmas 2007. Two days before Christmas a bad windstorm knocked over the 80-foot Norway spruce in front of our house. Unfortunately, it fell *on* our house. Since our home is over 125 years old and made of native timber, it held up well. The tree did crunch things a bit, but we got by with covering the damaged areas with tarps until we could replace the roof.

Chris has been working all over. Between helping friends with home remodeling projects, helping our church put in new bathrooms and get a home remodeled to house the new Rescue Resort ministry, getting a new roof on our own home, and, oh yeah, working a full-time job at Ford Meter Box, he's kept mostly out of trouble. The picture is from when he was helping to stain the outside of the Rescue Resort. He used a harness to suspend himself from the roof to reach the high points. He is still Rae's helper in the age 3 through K classroom at church. He makes a great class gorilla. He recently bought a marimba at a garage sale. He cleaned it up, added legs, and made mallets using broken pool cues and small cat toys shaped like mini tennis balls. There's a reason he's referred to as our local MacGyver.

Rae is still very busy. Her Pampered Chef business is going well. The picture is from a dinner at the National Conference. She's still occasionally doing secretarial temp work. She's also been involved in some big projects. She helped our pastor write a book about his cancer experience. She's now involved with helping a friend/client (another local pastor) transfer her messages to print for a book about how the lessons of Exodus apply today. Add the other publications she's created for local ministries, and you can tell she has a pretty full plate.

In May Shawn tried to match his dad's bicycling prowess by bicycling home from Dallas. The terrible storms that were hitting the Midwest during that time turned him back, but he had a great adventure while it lasted. On December 12, Shawn will graduate from Christ for the Nations International (CFNI). He'll be home for the holidays, then head back to Dallas. His plan is to stay in Dallas for the next few years. He's working at Papa Deaux, which is a high-end seafood restaurant. He's also been doing a bit of performing in and around Dallas. In case you don't know, he writes, sings, and plays guitar. His style is hard to describe. It's a little folksy, a little hard-core, a little beat poetry, and a lot Christian.

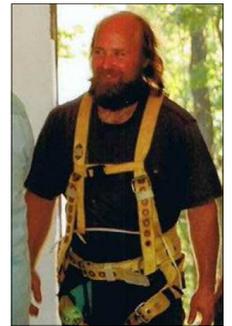
We're looking forward to spending some time together over the holidays. We pray that your coming year will be filled with love and joy!



Where the tree came to rest



The new steel roof



Chris in his harness



Rae at the Pampered Chef Conference



Shawn's all grown up

Chris & Rae
Bates