

Happy Holidays

December 2002



Season's Greetings, Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, Feliz Navidad and Happy Kwanzaa!

Elise and I have decided that it is to become tradition to assemble a Christmas newsletter each year. So, here I am, writing numero uno.

Since we didn't write a Janicek newsletter last year, I guess I should fill you in on what happened in our lives in the year 2001. Let's see... we were married in September, we worked a little, paid some bills, paid our taxes and had a lot of month left at the end of the money.

I lost my job at Vidbook.com in November of 2001. I became a member of the less-than-prestigious "dot-com bomb" squad. I attended many pink slip parties and began drawing pity paychecks from the State of Texas.

Elise maintained her job in Distribution and Cash Acquisitions at Circle C Golf Course - selling beer and Snickers from a golf cart. Between her cash tips and my welfare checks, we managed to keep a humble supply of Ramen Noodles and complimentary ketchup packets in the pantry. There were countless times when you could find me in the kitchen, skewer in one hand, Worcestershire sauce in the other and telling Elise to call the kitty.

In January of this year, I landed a job at Scott & White Memorial Hospital in Temple Texas. I was hired on as a Communications Coordinator, tasked to handle marketing and design for Scott & White's new consumer website. Just this past November I was promoted to Web Development Analyst for the Web Services Department of the Information Systems Division. All that really meant was that I had to move my desk.



After three months of existential contemplation and saturating herself with re-runs of *A Wedding Story* on TLC, Elise took on a temporary job with Sallie Mae in Killeen. After proving herself as a competent worker, she was hired on as a full-time Private Credit Analyst.

Since then, the both of us have been going through the motions at our respective places of employment. This time we actually had money at the end of the month. We paid off my motorcycle and bought Elise her dream machine, a Jeep Wrangler.

Elise picked up some extra paychecks this past year by photographing a handful of weddings. The extra money was nice and the experience helped Elise build her

confidence and her portfolio.

We were both doing well in our jobs. We were staying busy. We no longer needed to donate plasma for laundry money. There was one thing that had been lacking in our lives: happiness in location. Elise and I never really wanted to move from Austin, but given our nation's economic state, I took the first job that I could find. It just so happened that the job I found was in the less-than-bustling town of Temple. Elise, being the good wife that she is, packed up and followed me here without hesitation. Since then, we have both been dying to move back to Austin - where we met, where we married and where we call home.

Since living in Temple, our social life has been limited to whatever friendly conversation we can muster from telemarketers. I have no idea what we're going to do with a pallet of 300-watt light bulbs and a two-year subscription to *The Quilter's Journal*.



Temple is a very conservative town, sixty miles north of Austin. To spare you the details, I'll just say that this town is not for us. I have been looking for a job back in Austin since May. After sending out over a hundred resumes, I finally found a great job with a small company called Wellness Works in Austin. We're both extremely excited about this new opportunity and getting to move back home!

In late November, Elise answered an ad in the local paper for a staff photographer position at the Temple Daily Telegram. After a two-week trial, the Managing Editor offered her the job.

Now doesn't that just put a kink in the hose?

As I write this, it is our tentative agreement to move to north Austin so Elise's commute to Temple won't be as painstaking. My new job is in south Austin so my commute will be equal in time due to traffic. Elise seriously considered passing up the job, following me again and finding another random job. We both agreed that this is too good of an opportunity to pass up in the extremely competitive field of photojournalism.

In other news, a silver tabby cat by the name of Annie decided to adopt us. She is feral in nature but has slowly been warming up to us. We decided on the name Annie because she is our little orphan Annie and because we found her on the weekend of our Annie-versary. Get it? Get it? Okay, that's bad, but we liked the name so we're sticking to it.

Annie and Riley seem to be long-lost siblings. They

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keep us up at night with their incessant bowling competitions. I'm sure they're really just running around and bumping into things, but the thought of them actually bowling keeps me from getting out of bed and hunting them with a baseball bat.

I still enjoy cooking and am confident that my skills will continue to grow with experience. Because we can only afford an apartment right now, I don't have much kitchen space to really let myself go wild. We look forward to having a house in the near future so I can have larger surfaces to catch on fire and more floor space on which to spill.



Hopefully by this time next year, I will be writing about a house. Our short-term financial goal is to save up enough money for a significant down payment. I know this makes for bad Juju, but I kind of hope the economy doesn't make a complete turn for the better so Elise and I can get in on the current buyer's market.

I haven't really talked to Elise yet about our goals for 2003. I know we both want a house. I would really like to do that in the upcoming year. Just this past week I was verbally fantasizing about having an herb and vegetable garden, a garage in which I can grunt, scratch myself and bust my knuckles on "Honey-do" projects and a home office large enough where I no longer have to worry about turning around too quickly in my chair and falling into a laundry basket or the litter box.

As are most newlyweds, we have been inundated with the question: "When are you two planning on having children?" To the best of my knowledge, that won't happen in 2003. The market for small Caucasian humans on eBay isn't projected to be that good in the first and second quarter of the next fiscal year. Given today's child labor laws, we'd have to keep it around the house and give it things like food, toys and eventually, cash donations, a phone and free advice.

But really, we want children. I need an excuse for my distinguishing hair loss and frankly, Riley's never going to catch on to the whole "just follow the ball with your eyes until it gets over the plate and swing."



It goes without saying that one of our long-term goals is to stay active, both physically and socially. While we lived in Austin, we rarely took advantage of all of the great things that the capital of Texas had to offer. That was due mainly to us settling in to our comfort zone

and becoming somewhat stagnant.

We would both enjoy donating our time and energy to a worthy cause. I can easily imagine Elise volunteering at a local museum and teaching children about photography. I can see myself working with Habitat for Humanity or a food pantry.

We established a lot of close friendships in Austin as well. We would both really enjoy rekindling those relationships and spending more time with friends and family. Three of our closest friends move to Austin while we were living in Temple. We especially look forward to spending more time with them.

Elise and I are learning more and more about life. We were pitched our share of curve balls in the 2001-2002 season. I like to think that we're doing the right things as young adults. One of our greatest accomplishments since being married was establishing "No matter whats". We have our individual "No matter whats", but the first concurring one was that *no matter what* the job and how much it pays, we will not let it interfere with the investment that we have in one another.



We know that life will always throw its curve balls our way. We will continue to do our best and strive to be the best people we can be. In the end, all that Elise and I have are one another and the friends and family who have helped us to be the people that we are.

So here's to you, our friends and family who are forever in our hearts. May you have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Love Always,

Josh & Elise