

Dear Friends and Family,

No, this is not a come on from a long distance company, though for some of you this may be a long distance letter. I decided since everyone does Christmas or New Year's letters, I would strike out on a new path and send a Tax Day letter. It's a small attempt to make this day a little easier to bear (and a big attempt to cover up being really late). Having never done this (write a Tax Day letter), I'm not exactly sure where to begin, but it seems I've already begun with an explanation and so to continue in that vein, here's an explanation of what's up these days:

One of the reasons I waited so long to write this (so I keep telling myself) was my prescient knowledge of the coming blizzard of '96. Had I written this letter on time (around the holidays) I could not report how well the Trooper did in its time of need. I managed to keep it in 4 wheel drive for a whole week — there was a lot of snow.



This also gives me a chance to show off my current house; normally the grass is brown, not white. (And yes I get to show off my new printer, someday soon I hope to have a new computer to go with it.)

I'm still at AARP doing video work and last summer they sent me to a week long advanced lighting workshop in Maine which really revitalized my creativity. It was a good chance to see and try out some new ideas and equipment (and I got to see a 35mm movie camera in all its splendor).

More recently, I've been to Colombia, SC and Detroit for AARP projects. The Colombia highlights were watching it snow in the sunny south and a drive by 213 King Street, where my dad grew up. Detroit's highlight was the bucket of Shrimp Cocktail that came as an appetizer with my dinner in the Westin's Summit Restaurant.

Also at AARP, I'm working on the AARP Web site — there's a fight going on between the Research department, those who have done most of

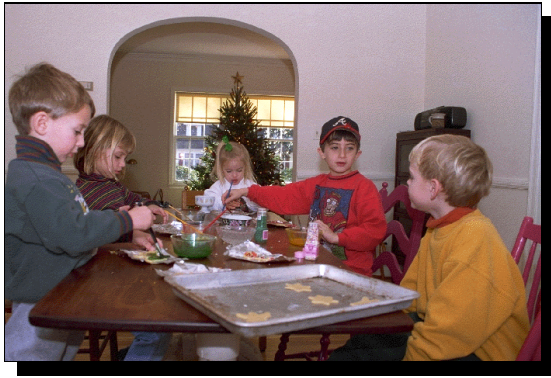
the design of the Web site, and the Membership department, those who control access and messages to the members of the Association. I'm just puttering away at ways to incorporate Broadcast's products, audio and video programs, into the Web site.

Continuing on the computer side of the equation, Ken Murphy and I have finished (right, Ken?) a major database project for The Marriott Foundation. We proved that while Lotus's Approach database is not really programmable, it can simulate it (given **way** to much work on our part). I also completed 3 courses at the USDA Graduate School in LAN administration; it was interesting but I'm not sure if or how I will use what I've learned. After flying through all the classes, I took a CNA (Certified Netware Administrator) practice test and discovered that the courses, which were not billed as prep courses for that test, indeed were **not** prep courses for that test despite the fact that they concentrated heavily on Netware as the network operating system.



So I spent the Thanksgiving holidays camping in Grayson Highlands state park (with the ponies and deer hunters — the ponies I expected, the deer hunters were an unexpected concern) thinking about what next. I reached and discarded many decisions, finally settling on not making any until my lease expires this November. I'm leaning toward returning to school and studying computer science, but I've come to admire much more people who can go back to school after getting used to the working (read "income generating") life. The idea of giving up my paycheck and going so far into debt is not a fun one for me to contemplate. But then neither is the thought of the many years of night school I would need to complete a CS degree. All said, the status quo looks pretty good in comparison.





After all that deep thinking, it was good to enjoy Christmas without thinking about anything other than making cookies and watching Loren and Sally ride around in the neighborhood on a cold day. Sally, however, was interested mostly in eating the cookies and sparkles and sprinkles.



And that brings us full circle back to the blizzard of '96, where this letter started. That snow has all melted as has the snow from the lesser blizzard of April (actually none of that snow stuck) which met me after returning from the "cousins reunion" in Charleston where I got to see first hand the sliding styles of Carol Ann, Steve and Kate . The first two went down the covered corkscrew



slide on their backs, head first with eyes closed; Kate preferred the bent double technique; I, of course, took pictures.

It was great seeing about 30 members of the clan, many for the first time in more than ten years, and a bit sobering to realize I'm the last single of my generation. This was brought home by the most startling sight of the weekend which was how much Kelly's daughter Haley looks like Kelly did at that age (she and I fight about who is the youngest of our generation). I wish they could have stayed for the croquet match Sunday afternoon (even if the bugs were biting, it was fun).



With that, we're caught up. I hope your tax bills are small and your refunds are large; take care and have a great year (at least what's left of it).

PS: I couldn't resist this last shot of Steve showing off the latest in beard dressing:

