

21 December 2008

Dear Friends and Family,

Obviously, our Christmas letter is somewhat late this year, and the chances are good you won't receive this letter until after the holiday. Please accept our apologies; we're sure you understand the hustle and bustle of the season!

This year was an exciting one for our family. Candace graduated Summa Cum Laude from Tennessee State University in May with a Bachelor of Arts in Theatre. Over the summer, she continued her Society of American Fight Directors stage combat training. She is now certified in Rapier/Dagger, Smallsword, Knife, Unarmed, Broadsword, and Sword/Shield. Over the summer, Candace made the tough decision to end her engagement to Korey and conquer the world on her own. Candace is now a graduate student at Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton, FL. She is working towards her Master of Fine Arts, a terminal degree equivalent to a doctorate, in Acting. She received a graduate assistantship, so the school waives her tuition and pays her a small stipend. Her first apartment is less than 3 miles from the school and less than a mile from the beach. Candace has several friends who work at Disney World, so she spends what little free time she has in Orlando. But most importantly, she is highly enjoying her budding career as a "starving artist." Check out her website at: www.cmhackett.net

On a sad note, we had to euthanize Candace's dog, Lachlan, 6 days before Christmas. Earlier this year, she ruptured her Anterior Cruciate Ligament (ACL) in her right rear leg. That leg was surgically repaired, but before she could recover fully, the ACL in her left rear leg ruptured. Lachlan was put on painkillers until Candace got home from Florida to say goodbye. Lachlan will be cremated and buried under her favorite bush in our back yard.

Ron and Debi are slowly adapting to their empty nest. Throughout her undergraduate work, Candace was only an hour and a half from home, so she came home often. Now they have to cope with their littler girl being several states away. Debi is still working on her sewing business (www.isleofrose.com), and Ron is still developing and selling software for ManTech International. Now that Candace is on her own, Ron and Debi hope to do more traveling together. They took a trip to Connecticut in Jun and celebrated their October birthdays with a trip to Chattanooga. In Chattanooga, they toured the aquarium, took a river cruise, attended a civil war dinner theatre, and enjoyed each other's company. They are already thinking about plans for next year's travels.

Ron and Debi also visit Florida quite frequently. Besides Candace living there now, Ron's parents still live active lives in central Florida, staying busy tending the farm, playing tennis and golf, fishing, and enjoying each other. They are often busier than before they retired. Ron's sister, Donna, still works for the Marion County Sheriff's Department, helping numerous people.

Our son Aaron and his wife, Christina, are expecting their second child in March 2009. Their first child, Hunter, turned four years old this past August. Aaron and his family are doing well, and we hope to visit them next year after the baby is born.

We hope that 2008 has been a good year for you, and that 2009 will bring you immense joy and happiness. If you ever come around Fayetteville, Tennessee, please stop by and say hello!

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

The Hackett Family
Ron, Debi, and Candi