



Happy Holidays from the Worcester Home

(Miamisburg branch, that is)

Hi,

Since it appears that mention of my name and activities from Mom and Dad's Christmas greeting has been getting smaller each year, I thought I would go ahead and send you some Holiday cheer of my own this year, and give you an update on me. It's been an interesting year!

In January, I began working for TDH Marketing & Communications in Centerville as an Internet Developer/Programmer. I stayed with my brother for the first couple months when I moved back to the Dayton area, and enjoyed spending a lot of time with him and the boys after not seeing a whole lot of them in recent years. I really enjoyed working at TDH, and my Web Development skills grew astronomically within just the first few months! I began teaching myself Web Development skills at home last year, and I continue to teach myself more skills with some books, time, and a little bit of ingenuity.

In March, I bought my first home! I added up all the money I paid in rent at my last apartment during the three years I lived there, and even though it's a little more money each month, I wanted to get out of the renting game and know that the money I paid was going toward something. I bought a condo in Miamisburg, not even ten minutes away from TDH, and right down the road from the Dayton Mall and *all kinds* of commerce. I finally have a garage and my own washer/dryer, and my place has two floors, a fireplace, skylight, two full baths, and more. I love this place!

In addition to my job at TDH, I began doing some freelance assignments for a Web Design company in Northern Ohio (Stow, to be exact), and also built my own Web Design site so that I could seek out work on my own as well. It was a little slow for the first several months that the site was up, but now I'm starting to get some business. I have one large project I'm working on right now, a few more on the horizon, and a couple more small ones that I'm juggling as well.

At the end of August, I got laid off from TDH. About 70% of the companies income is from a family of Industrial companies, and all those companies cut their advertising budgets in HALF, so I was one of three employees that got laid off (*we were* about 16 in number there). So just 9 months into my new career, I found myself out of work. I got a job the next week with a Web Design company in Cincinnati where I would do all the work from home. However, they were slow sending the projects, bounced a check, and then never paid me for the others. I went to small claims court against them last week, but I won't be able to get a collection agency or something on them until 12/26 to get my cash. Have to love the court system. The defendant didn't even bother to show up, but they're still not going to "make" him pay me.

I'm still seeking out my next full-time opportunity, but been keeping busy with freelance work, and have gotten a job at the Olive Garden serving again to help pay the bills. I didn't think I'd ever work there again after I got out of school, and DEFINITELY after the last time I quit a couple years ago. Here I am though – back at the OG again. The job market is terrible. The economy was already dipping down, but then after the tragedy of September 11th, it's got even worse. I'm sure brighter things are on the horizon, in more ways than one.

Still looking for "the one", and I'm convinced that I'll stumble across her one of these days. For now, just trying to build up my business, get some money in the bank, and build a home for myself.

The other members of our family are all good, and Jay has been quite surprising this year as well! Not only is he really good at the karaoke jockey thing (I had my doubts that he'd have the...charisma to pull it off up there), but he's also doing a great job of inside sales, selling computers and accessories for a company manufacturer up near Piqua. The boys are both doing really well. Hard to believe they're a year apart, they act so much alike! Chris is a little more outgoing, but Nick has a great sense of humor, and they both make me laugh. Jay and I taught them how to roller skate this year, and they *almost* know how to ride their bikes thanks to a couple sessions here at Uncle Shaun's.

Well, that's about it from here. Hope this finds you and yours well and happy. I have been in the thick of the Holiday Season, and it's wicked attachments (grumpy customers...), but am looking forward to a warm, cheerful Holiday that I will spend with family and friends. I hope you have a wonderful Christmas as well, and an even better 2002 than the last year!

Happy Holidays,

Shaun