

# *Happy Holidays from the Worcester Home*

(a.k.a. Happy Puppyville – more on that soon)



Hi,

I hope this little bit o' Holiday cheer finds you and yours well and looking forward to the year ahead. For me, 2004 proved to be even MORE interesting than the year before, so there's *lots* to tell here. I will try to be brief, but ya know... ☺

Perhaps the biggest piece of "news" from this year is that I completed my mission to compete in a marathon, and ran it back in April. I trained during the winter months (running outside in the cold is **very** invigorating) and finished in just over 4 and a half hours. I was hoping to do another one later in the year and finish a little faster, but didn't train enough in time to run another local one. I also ran a half-marathon back in September and I ran several other short races as well this year. My goal for 2005 is to compete in a triathlon (running, biking and swimming) and run another full marathon, hopefully for a charity.

I also took part in a couple long bike rides this year. Back in July, I did a one-day 100-mile ride for charity with my friend Ron. We raised about \$300 between the two of us for the group of local charities and it was a great experience. I also rode the Hilly Hundred again this year, back in October. Sadly, Dad broke his arm a few weeks before the event so he wasn't able to ride, but still went with me for the weekend. I only sat on my bike once between those two events, but still managed to make it up all the hills on the Hilly. Good thing I did all the running!

I also changed jobs again this year. Back in August, I got an offer from a company that I did a couple freelance projects with in recent years. It was a substantial jump in salary, and when I told my previous employer about the offer, the owner came back with...NOTHING. My two immediate supervisors both wanted to offer me something to try and keep me there, but Tom (the owner) decided that my services weren't worthy of a counter-offer. Of course that message was delivered to me by Greg, the GM, instead of Tom himself. I wasn't worthy of his personal "delivery" either I guess. Not that I'm bitter or anything – not in the least. The new job is going well and one of the fringe benefits is that I'm allowed to work from home! Right now it's on Tuesdays and Thursdays, but soon it will be 3 days a week. I have spent the majority of my time on one very large eCom web project, and worked on a host of others, too. I also got a new laptop (which is mine to keep by the way) as part of the job. I've learned a lot and look forward to the future there.

Another "event" from this year: I began my quest to get my Masters degree. I started taking classes in July from the University of Dayton and I just completed my second class here in the program. It takes just 10 classes and a small pile of money to get that piece of paper. When it's all said and done, I will have my Masters in business, with a concentration on Management Information Systems. So I'm basically focusing on a career in IT where I will be one of the few 'geeks' with a personality. That will help me stand out from the crowd though.

(over, please)

It seems like my love life has been the most frequent topic of discussion this year. I met a wonderful woman named Tina back in February and we enjoyed a few months of a very rewarding relationship and remain very close today. Sadly, there was an "incident" back in May and she's just not ready to get married and have a family at the moment and is convinced that's what I want – and want it NOW. It has been trying to remain close with her at times (some would say I'm too sensitive or something), but I just can't seem to, or *want* to cut off ties completely and we both continue to make the other smile and laugh. I have been dating since we broke up, and am looking for that "connection" once again. Sure I want to get married and have kids, but more important to me is finding a woman that is strong, makes me happy (at least most of the time), can carry a conversation, challenge me, and is very loving. One of these days...

I have also gotten much more involved in the church this year. I actually joined another church back in July. The Miamisburg Church of Christ (the new one) is where I met Tina and I have really enjoyed getting involved with and developing friendships with Christians here in the area instead of 30 minutes away. I sing with the Praise Team there at MCC and even sang a solo earlier in the year. I continue to go to First Christian Church where the rest of the family goes as well and am involved with a small group and a weekly prayer breakfast with some brothers from that body of believers. I still need to be reminded of how much He is in control, but I have to remind myself a little less these days and continually look for new and *better* ways to show His love to those in my life.

I took on another challenge this year as well, taking in a puppy to 'raise as my own'. Some friends of mine found him as a stray and I have made a home for him here with me in the 'burg. I've named him Bryson and we're going through the trials of housebreaking him right now. He's getting it – slowly but surely. The cats are still a little bothered, but they're lightening up as well. Like any proud parent, I've been taking a lot of pictures and put together a web site with some of the photos: <http://shaunw.com/photos/bryson/>.

Let's see...the family's all doing well. Mom and Dad have each had a few health problems arise here in the last year, but they are both doing well today. Dad is continually searching for Him more and more and continues to be one of my spiritual heroes. Jay and the boys are doing well also. Jay now leads the worship service for the kids at our church on Saturday nights. What a great dad / guy! Nick and Chris are each doing well in school. Nick is playing the trumpet in the band at school now and we played football with both of them a lot over the summer. I think I may still be their favorite uncle, but DEFINITELY the coolest. ☺

Well, that's about all I have for now. Hopefully you read all the way through here. I know these are way too long. Maybe soon I'll have a really slow year and won't have so much to say. I hope all is well with you and yours and if there is anything I can ever do to help or pray about for you, please don't hesitate to ask.

All the best,

*Shaun*