

# *Happy Holidays from the 'burg!*



Hi,

I hope and pray that this Christmas finds you and yours enjoying the season. I have to admit that I'm a little bit behind the 8-ball myself here, but now that I've wrapped up my last class @ UD (decreasing the ol' stress level a little), I'm beginning to get into the spirit and all. I thought this may be a little shorter this year, but once again it's a 2-pager "year-in-review". Here it goes!

The biggest piece of news for me in 2005 is the Mission trip I went on back in July. Along w/ my Dad and several others from First Christian Church, we traveled to the Dominican Republic for a week in July. We were originally planning to go to Haiti, but w/ all the violence there in the past year we changed our plans to go to the DR instead just a couple weeks before our planned departure date. Anyway, the trip was an *amazing*, inspirational experience. We spent most of the week helping out w/ a VBS program on the orphanage compound for all the kids in the community, trying to control over 600 children the one day! We also worked on several other projects at the orphanage and in the community. I have more stories, details and insights from the trip and a whole bunch of photos on my site: <http://shaunw.com/missions/2005/dr/>

I also fulfilled my quest to run another marathon in 2005, running the Flying Pig marathon in Cincinnati back in May. That was a great event; so much better than the marathon I ran in Xenia last year. After that, I slacked off a bit on my running (my summer was very busy), but I've begun to pick it up again recently and plan to run the Flying Pig again in 2006 as well as another later in the year. I'm seriously considering registering for the New York City marathon in 2006. One of these days I'd still like to take a shot @ a triathlon too, but I have participated in a couple shorter-distance biathlons (running and biking) this past year to push myself a little and try something different. **UPDATE:** I broke my ankle on 12/15, and won't be able to run until February. ☹

Another big piece of news this year has been yet another job change; hopefully my last! You may recall that I took a chance w/ a new job last year, which was based on one large contract that the company signed. Sadly, in the following year there weren't enough projects coming in to continue paying my salary, so I began to look for another job before my boss had to come in and deliver the bad news. I actually received a VERY NICE offer from my former employer whom I had left the year before, thanks to my friend Ron who went to bat for me. However, I also told this guy Jeremy whom I'd been working w/ on a freelance basis about my employment situation over the summer. Jeremy and I had a meeting to discuss "the possibilities", and I decided to take another chance and go to work w/ him. Jeremy has been self-employed since 2000 and has built a great business and reputation in the area. I was willing to take a pay cut (first time that's happened for me in a long time) in exchange for a compensation plan that includes quarterly bonuses and a plan to become a partner in the business in the near future. Jeremy and I have been SWAMPED w/ projects since we began working together full-time in October, but we're wrapping up a couple big projects and beginning to see a little daylight. I'm excited about the opportunity ahead! Our office is just 5 minutes from my house instead of 30 like the last job was, and we're very causal there (jeans and a jersey most days), I can work from home whenever I want, and it's pretty cool "working for myself". Jeremy and I already have a couple web applications that we're going to continue developing and marketing, and looking forward to creating some more! Here's a link to our web site: <http://designchemistry.com/>

I've also continued my journey towards an MBA, even though I'm hoping I will never have to go on another job interview again! But I just finished my 5<sup>th</sup> of the 10 classes in the program and I'm already going to have a nice-sized bill to pay off at the end, so I might as well finish. It's going well, even though it's a little stressful at times trying to juggle everything. I was considering taking the first semester of 2006 off, but I think I should continue to plug away and get it done as soon as I can. I should have my MBA in 2007.

That little puppy I got last year has grown into an 80-pound "moose", but he's still a cute little guy and makes me laugh regularly. He's just as clumsy as he was as a pup and seems to have no concept of how big he is. I haven't gotten him up to running w/ me yet, but I plan to start working on that after it warms up a little bit here. He is very easily distracted, so the biggest challenge is going to be getting him to just keep pace w/ me. I had to put one of my cats to sleep this year (he developed FIP, similar to feline leukemia), so I now just have one dog and cat in the house. They still don't snuggle or anything like the two cats used to, but they get along well enough. NO MORE ANIMALS for me though.

I've continued to be active in the church, helping out w/ the Vacation Bible School programs @ each church this past summer, singing on the Praise Team a few months of the year, participating in the Christmas musical, and helping out w/ Kid Zone half of the year @ MCC. All the kids @ MCC enjoyed calling me "Mr. Baldy" during VBS (I shaved my head before the Mission trip and for the rest of the summer) and I have a number of the same kids in my class on Sunday mornings and they still call me that, even though I have a little bit o' hair back up there nowadays. My faith continues to be a big part of my life, and I continue to strive to get closer to Him.

The Mission trip was my only weeklong excursion, but I enjoyed several weekend outings this year. I went to visit my friend Lisa and her son Joey over Memorial Day, saw my friends Greg and Karen in Texas on Labor Day weekend, went to my cousin Jim's wedding in PA in August, rode in the Hilly Hundred bike ride again w/ Dad in Bloomington, IN, drove up to Wakeman to see Dad's side of the family a couple times and went to the Rock N' Roll Hall of Fame w/ Jay just a couple weeks ago. That is a GREAT museum! I got a new truck this year and as you can see, I'm already putting some miles on it. Of course I'm saving a WHOLE lot of mileage every day, working closer to home nowadays and all.

The other Worcesters here in the Dayton area are doing well. Mom and Dad are both still very active in the church as well, and Mom has been playing the organ for another church this past year; something she hasn't been able to do in our church in eons. Dad is active w/ that Urban-Suburban Partnership group, and he's doing their web site as well. They have a GREAT hosting company for the site too, thanks to his son. ☺ Jay took the leap of faith this year and bought a house, and that's been a welcome change for him. Nick and Chris each have their own room now and they're growing up and doing well. Nick was baptized back in July! Jay continues to lead Kids' Worship on Saturday nights @ FCC, he's doing well in his job, I meet him at the gym for some manly workouts occasionally and we continue to be good friends as well as brothers.

Well, that's about it for here... I'm running out of room! I almost didn't send this out this year since I've been so busy and a little frazzled lately. But this is the time of year when we are supposed to take time to enjoy friends and family, and CELEBRATE the birth of our Savior. I hope and pray that this finds you doing all of those things. Merry Christmas!

All the best,

*Shawn*