

First and Only Bowling-Milz Christmas Letter

As we look back at 2005 we are amazed how much things have changed in the past year. It was Thanksgiving weekend 2004 when we met in Pensacola while Peggy was visiting her parents for the holiday in Gulf Shores, Alabama. Between Steve's hot tub installation and business trip to Washington D.C. and Peggy's trip to Phoenix and Mexico with her Purdue friend Kris as well as her end-of-year business activities, we somehow managed hours and hours of phone calls and e-mails during December. We finally got to see each other again on New Year's Eve when Steve returned to Fort Walton Beach (where Peggy picked him up in *his own* SUV) from a visit home to Ashley, Pennsylvania for the holidays.

We are so fortunate that those 21 days were the longest stretch of time that we have had to spend apart. As you can imagine our courtship was full of long-distance phone calls, e-mails, webcam sessions, delayed flights, long layovers, and tear-filled airport good-byes. There were numerous trips between Fort Walton Beach and Chicago, and fortunately Peggy was able to arrange her client work to have some longer visits to Florida. Steve tagged along with Peggy to Orlando in February while she spoke at an American Society for Quality conference. The trip included a couple nights in Tampa to visit Peggy's friend Liz and her daughter Kate, and visits to the zoo, aquarium, and of course an amusement park. We made two trips to visit Steve's family in PA to attend his niece Rachel's 5th birthday party and the wedding of Steve's Penn State friend Ron. Steve also took Peggy to her first NASCAR race at the Brickyard 400 in Indianapolis. Oh, we almost forgot – we had a scenic tour of lovely Perry, Georgia in July when we evacuated for hurricane Dennis.

In addition to our many trips we also had many visitors to FWB including Steve's friend Kevin from the Air Force, his wife Laurie, and their daughter Marissa, Steve's friend Barry from Penn State and his girlfriend Karen, Steve's friend Pat from the Air Force, his wife Darcy and their kids PJ and Riley, Steve's friend Ivan from the Air Force, and Steve's parents, sister Janet and niece. Peggy's parents also stayed with Steve during their evacuation for hurricane Katrina.

Steve flew to Chicago on September 16th got down on two knees (he figured one wasn't enough) and proposed. Peggy, of course, said yes and four days later she was offered a job in Crestview, Florida, which is about 30 miles from FWB. As you can imagine things just got crazier from there. Peggy "shut down" her consulting business in Chicago, hired some movers, and started a new job in just over 3 weeks. We have all of the boxes unpacked, but not everything has a permanent home yet. Peggy definitely misses some of the comforts of Chicago, but it is 5 degrees with 3" of snow on the ground in Chicago right now and here we are still able to run outside. Riley of course is now an official Gulf Coast dog and loves having a fenced-in backyard.

Steve is still working as a software engineering consultant for the Air Force, and absolutely loves his job! Peggy is really enjoying her new position as Director of Process Management at Crestview Aerospace Corporation. There is so much to do that every day is a challenge, and she is adjusting to supervising people again after being a consultant for so long. Most of our free time is spent planning the wedding because March will be here before we know it. We have been truly blessed and wish the same for all of you.