

Dear Friends and loved ones,


December 2003

This is just a note to let you know that we are still around, (I know, I know it's been 2 years...), and also... to let you know we are still here in Fredericksburg, VA...yeah... can you believe it? We have actually stayed in one state, one town and even the same house for almost 2 $\frac{1}{2}$  years. Ladies and gentlemen... the last time this family stayed in the same house for more than 2 years was in our lively college days at KU, in Lawrence, KS. I had long planned to celebrate this momentous occasion with friends, food and fireworks, but... well we had fireworks at our 4<sup>th</sup> of July picnic... then we heard faint rumors about my sister coming to visit from California ...so instead, we celebrated with a 'Blair' family reunion (DJ's family). Another historic moment... the five 'Bill' Blairs were together for the first time since Jenny-Rose was 4, and Bridget was not yet 3. Today they are 24 and 22... saints alive... where does the time go? We had a house full of cousins, Aunts and assorted spouses.

It seems, as I think about the past 2 years, that it has been an incredible roller coaster ride for the White House, ever since we moved back to Va. We have posted the [2001 Christmas letter](#) that was written, but never sent on our [website](#), along with all the other letters we have sent over the years... life sorta got away from us that year, well stuff happened (or in this case, doesn't happen!).

2002-2003... well let's see, maybe one adventurous trip (tell ya later), no tall tales about moving to share... goodness, how boring... well...hardly! Life in the White House is never boring...

Den is working harder than ever continuing to develop Human Systems Engineering he began working on 7 years ago. He currently focused on a new Navy ship design - DD21, which is looking ahead to the Navy's future technology. This job aspect requires him to travel and also to commute to DC several times a week, and is a stress-filled position. We don't see much of him these days, as he puts in long hours, but we hope that will change eventually! We are very proud of the work he does. Den helps with the technical side of computers, internet, and the Video Café at church, and is still producing our church's radio broadcast on our [local CSN station](#). It's a very time consuming job, but with help from Jenny-Rose (and some others), they get the job done.

Jenny-Rose is a busy young lady these days! She has developed and maintains the [Calvary Chapel Fredericksburg](#) website, the [CCFred Senior High](#) website, the [CSN Virginia](#) radio station website, and [her own websites](#), which is a window into her soul... (or at least her hobbies ) and occasionally updates the [www.chateauwhite.com](#) website. But, that's not all...she is a Section Editor for [In Timely Fashion](#), a woman's site that focuses on wearing historically inspired clothing, everyday. She is the pattern editor and it's been quite an undertaking. She is reviewing historic patterns as well as writing articles on how-to make film-inspired outfits. All this plus her personal, "fun" projects! Jenny includes online journals of her success, frustrations and eventual problem solving with each piece she makes. She has created a wonderful [Italian Renaissance dress](#), complete with about 900 pearls and gold trim. Folks, pictures do not do it justice!

At the moment she is working on a [gown of the 1820's](#), the design inspired from a ball gown on "*Wives & Daughters*". Usually she uses herself the model, but this time she is making it for a petite friend. So now she must make [a gown](#) (based on a 1806 model) for herself and something for her sis as well, in time for the girls annual Twelfth Night party. All the guests are invited to dress for the event. Even the entertainment is of the period they choose (It changes from year to year). Instead of a full French dinner as they did last year, they are having a proper English tea with traditional Twelfth night foods this year. They dress-up as Cinderella twice a year, once in January and once for Bastille Day in July (this year in protest of the French attitude, they held it a week later!). My girls are nothing if not ambitious! Well why not... for the moment the opportunity is there, Mom has all the pretty 'stuff' and Dad will help supplement their meager budget if needed. It is a time when our girls put their heads together and create amazing memories with their friends.

Bridget is buried in 19 credit hours of work at the local Community College. She was recently inducted into the Junior College Honor Society (Phi Theta Kappa). She is carrying a perfect 4.0 average! She is an amazing young woman and I admire her courage and her consistency. Hey I'm the Mom... I can brag a bit? 😊 Bridget is driven by a desire to become the best doctor she can be, or if not a doctor, the best wherever the Lord leads her. Even with this schedule, she working as a leader in our church's youth group, though she has dropped worship team and all other activities because of school. She is actively pursuing college applications and financial aid. To get the classes she needed, she has night classes 3 nights a week so her time is cut up. I enjoy my brief mornings, having breakfast together, talking, some time in prayer, before we start our day. I see so little of her otherwise.

As for me, my memory isn't what it used to be... certain events, they are a little hazy... There was so much going on in 2002-2003, for me however, it was one painful medical-dental, and emotional experience after another. After all... three root canals in as many months should be enough for anyone! The situation with my feet (I described in the 2001 letter) became acute and I began months of physical therapy on both feet and learning to walk correctly with corrective orthotics in my shoes. Naughty Den tells friends, I was in therapy and was getting implants! 😊 Around the same time, I became very, very anemic and eventually a brief out-patient surgery was required to correct the situation. For most of 6 months, I had not the energy to move, never mind run a house, (Thank heavens for such a wonderful family to pick-up the slack!) I don't know how we managed, but we did.

Okay, so there was a trip to somewhere in the world... I just wanted to save the best for last! Den took me with him to southern England and then to Scotland - with only 3 days notice! For 1 week Den had business in Portsmouth, UK and then we headed North... On the way we spent the day at Hampton Court Palace, Oh-my-gosh! The brochures say it is Britain's greatest palace, and I'd have to agree. The massive Tudor kitchens were worth the price of admission, not to mention guided tours, with costumed docents, of the state apartments of Henry VIII, Elizabeth I, William III, and the 60 acres of Gardens on the River Thames. We spent 6 hours there and only saw a small amount of it... and there are little shops in every corner of the palace. It was a grand day! We took the train and tube into London for a night, and after a partial day at a meeting, we headed to the Imperial War Museum. This place covers every major war that Britain has been in, but we were there mainly to see WWI, and any time leftover the WWII exhibits.

When I was teaching the girls about WWI it was nearly impossible to find good, reliable information about it. Well it was there - the sights, the noise, even the smell of gunpowder. The Brits lived it and these exhibits are a testimony to their faith, courage and strength - both those who survived and those left behind. In the WWII section, I cried at the pieces of evidence from the Nazi death camps. I loved going through the 1940's house - it was a BBC special, sort-of a British 6 week reality survival show, of a modern family chosen to go back and experience early 1940's... living in a house, dressed in the clothes, experiencing the bombing in a bomb shelter, food shortages and volunteer work. They disassembled the house and it is now a permanent part of the museum. We had a grand time, and I only bought one book!

Our second week we spent driving north to Scotland, and visiting Blair Castle in Blair Athol, Scotch whiskey distilleries (from the smallest to some of the largest), a cruise on Loch Ness and more castles. Wee bubbles coming up to the surface were probably Nessy following us, you never can tell! Our last days were spent driving back down towards London, the airport and Home. We spent a night in a quaint pub near Sherwood Forest (est. in the 1600's), and opted to see one last Big house, instead of visiting King Richard, Robin Hood and black John Lackland, before we left England. I must admit that after 2 weeks, home looked really good! Since I was a young girl it has been my dearest dream to go to Scotland... and I'd go again in a twinkle!

Only one unfilled travel dream left and that... I'll never see because my ex-Navy man... will never go willingly on another ship, much less, on a cruise to Alaska... Surprise! Instead we are going to the Caribbean for 7 days... to celebrate our 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary on Dec. 1<sup>st</sup> Folks, I am so

shocked, I thought I'd never finish this letter... but it's real, I have been shopping to prove it! This Christmas greeting will be in the mail before we sail... (or I'll die in the attempt), so if you want to know how the weather is where we are... go to [www.chateauwhite.com](http://www.chateauwhite.com) about mid-Dec (or whenever) and we will post the PS. to this 2003 letter.

We at the White House wish you a joyful Christmas and Happy New Year, as we celebrate the birth of our Savior, Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ, the Anointed One. We pray that His peace would be your peace on this earth!

With much Love,  
Dennis, DJ, Jenny & Bridget