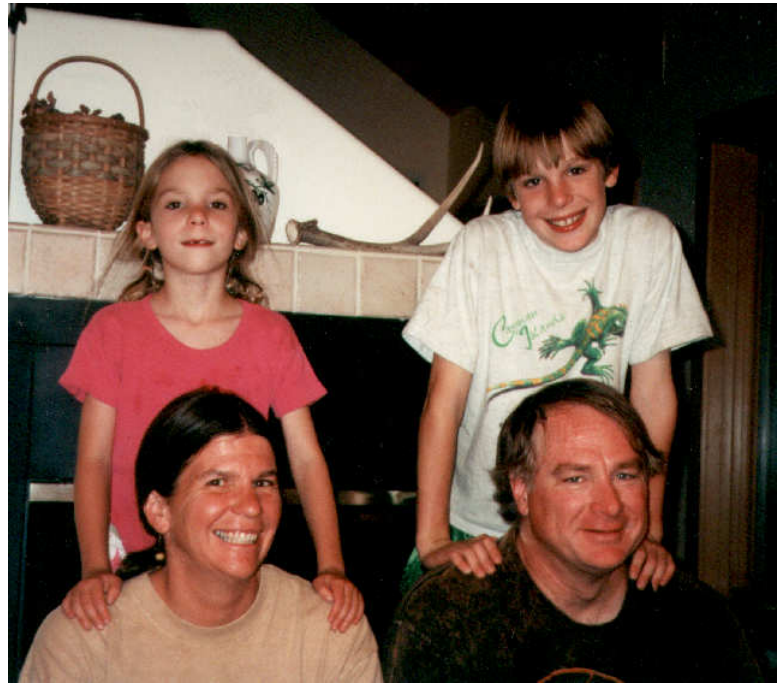


## Seasons Greetings!

December 1999

We've added 70 acres to our spread since last year. We bought it from the ranch that adjoins us. It's mostly wooded hillside, deer and elk habitat, but also adds about 10 acres of pasture for the horses. Living in the country is great, and we have come to realize that rather than the usual four seasons, we have a whole other set of seasons here.

Right now ski season is getting underway here and we are anxious to hit the slopes. In the off season (that's a technical term for any season other than ski season) we have fondly recalled the great runs we had last year, and how much better we're



gonna be this year. Now is our chance to prove it. We'll have to dodge a passel of Texans clogging the slopes at times, but it's worth it. Of course we also throw in a little sledding and skating for variety. Bruce has built an ice rink behind our barn, which means he got to use his tractor to move lots of dirt around and use cool gadgets like a laser level. We have a great sledding hill where Kali, our sheep dog, frantically attempts to herd the sleds as they race down the hill.

As the snow melts in March and April, ski season winds down and mud season arrives in all its glory. We take this as a sign to head for the beach and hope the mud dries up before we get back (it never does). This year we went to Grand Cayman, did some snorkeling, swam with the stingrays, read some books, and played in the sand. Then we came back, planted some fruit trees, rototilled the garden, and waited for the mud to dry up.



Pumpkin – Risa's new cat

That brings us to tick season, which rolls around in May and June. Just when the kids and the dogs can get out and enjoy the fine weather, the ticks start hitching rides into the house on them. So "tick checks" become a regular part of our routine. Fortunately, this is also the time when the crabapples, serviceberry, and various other things start blooming like crazy. The pastures are lush and green against a backdrop of snow-capped peaks. Tick season is probably our most beautiful season of all.

Tourist season gets going strong in July and August. There are no-vacancy signs everywhere, and the town is bursting at the seams. We make our escape by packing up a picnic, jumping in the jeep (with the top down), and heading for the backcountry. Within 30 minutes we are away from it all. We also take a couple of camping trips during this season, which seem to involve more time packing up the camping

stuff and unpacking said stuff, than the actual time spent camping. However, we return refreshed and relaxed from our close encounter with nature, and with a proper appreciation for the comforts of home.



Risa – 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade

In September, the aspen turn golden in the high country. We take every chance we can to get out and enjoy the colors, which will too soon fade. Soccer season gets going, and as Van and Risa both play, we spend lots of Saturdays out on the soccer fields enjoying the fine weather. We took a little break from soccer this year for a few days of fantasy in Disneyland. Indiana Jones and Splash Mountain were the all around favorites, and we had a great time.



Van – 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

Hunting season gets into high gear in October and lasts ‘til November. The roads are filled with pickup trucks, loaded with eager orange-clad guys with binoculars and rifles. They cruise around scanning the hillsides for deer. Although we don’t think our horses resemble deer, we’ve been told that it’s wise to tie orange streamers in their manes and tails to help the hunters distinguish. We try not to dress like deer when we go out in the woods. So far, so good.



Now we’re coming up on the Holiday Season, which is what brings me to write this letter. We’ve got the tree up, the outdoor lights strung, and we’ve got the Holiday Spirit. We even bought the dog a Christmas collar. The kids are busy practicing for their holiday piano recital. Now if we can just avoid the holiday stress and survive Y2K, it’ll have been a great year!

Thanks to everyone who came to visit us this year, we hope you had a good time. Those of you who are “connected” can visit Bruce’s website at [www.objectcentral.com](http://www.objectcentral.com). Bruce’s e-mail address is [bruce@objectcentral.com](mailto:bruce@objectcentral.com) and Trina’s is [trina@rof.net](mailto:trina@rof.net).

Wishing you all happy holidays and a wonderful new millenium!

**Bruce, Trina, Van, Risa**