

2002 Year In Review

Jeanel & Gary Gressel



After years of hope, begging, and pleading, Jeanel finally received and accepted a FMP (Force Management Package) from AT&T. On April 19th, Jeanel retired from AT&T with just under thirty-one years of service. Along with her standard retirement (with a significant reduction because she is so young!), she received some additional cash and payments. Along with that was money to be spent for relocation, training, or new equipment for a business. Neither of us felt like moving just for the fun of it, so she spent the money between five courses at DePaul University in Chicago, and a shopping spree at Best Buy.

Retirement!!!

Gary has never had so much fun going to a "toy store." Jeanel had called ahead to arrange a "volume purchase discount," so we had several sales associates eager to assist us. By the time we reached the cash register, we had no fewer than five associates with us. We walked out with two shopping carts full of computers, printers, and other things.

Of course, Jeanel doesn't plan on staying in retirement. Yet eight months later she still enjoys the hard life of getting up, searching the web for jobs, modifying her resume, visiting with friends, and calling it a day. She has been working of late with friends in Arizona and Florida to use her skills and knowledge at the high school level. In mid-December she'll be in Arizona making a proposal to a private school.



The first weeks of January found us in Las Vegas attending the Consumer Electronics Show with several friends. Talk about a wow factor. Five HUGE convention halls full of the latest & greatest gadgets. On the first night we listened to Bill Gates give an hour presentation on his vision for the near future. Jeanel and Gary won free MP3 players from the Microsoft booth later in the week.



The last weekend of January brought the worst ice storm in Kansas City's history. For two days it rained ice. Although Gary & Jeanel were without power for only a few minutes, over half the Kansas City area was without power for several days and many for several weeks. We took a little water damage in the kitchen but otherwise were fine.

Gary's parents came out for a visit over Memorial Day Weekend. We visited the Negro Baseball Hall of Fame and the Jazz Hall of Fame located in downtown Kansas City. We weren't overly impressed with the Jazz museum, having been to Seattle's Experience Music Project a few year's back, but the baseball museum is incredible! Another bonus was the opportunity to see brother Brian while "on the job" as a sheriff's deputy.



For concerts this year, Jeanel arranged tickets for a jazz performance by David Koz in the summer and late in November we attended a free concert from Jim Brickman.

Gary got a handful of rounds of golf in during the year. He still likes to just use irons but did get the woods out a couple of times and didn't kill anyone. Gary also claims the best thing for a sprained back is a round of golf. The night before a round, Gary was home alone and picked up a fairly light box of papers. In the blink of an eye he found himself on the ground in pain. He traveled to the golf outing planning to only chip and putt but once he got there he started stretching and swinging the club and before long he was teeing off on hole number one. With all the motion of a golf game, his back felt much better!

Over Labor Day Gary's parents and step-brother Duane returned for another visit. We saw an IMAX movie, a free exhibit showing all the weird things people collect, and in the evening went to play two games of bowling. Although Gary beat Jeanel 131-117 in game one, Jeanel got into a groove during the second game and obliterated Gary 151-108.



You know who

Jeanel got to catch up with old friends by attending her thirtieth high school reunion, conveniently located just down the street. Several weeks later she invited several of those classmates over for lunch and further remembrances.

While Jeanel has enjoyed eight months of retirement, Gary continues to work at AT&T in downtown Kansas City. He also volunteers as his church's webmaster, keeps a couple of other websites going, and remains active with his credit union. Although Jeanel will spend over an hour a day working out, Gary's workout regiment involves forty-five minutes a week of recreational volleyball with the church. Oh, his age and lack of activity will catch up with him someday.



Last year we were hopeful Kansas City would get an Arena Football, or at least a minor league hockey, franchise and so got tickets to the indoor soccer team, the KC Comets. Neither happened but we got a surprise new minor league baseball team about ten minutes from the house. So next year we are season ticket holders to the Kansas City T-Bones!



We hope the holiday season finds you well! Be sure to keep up with us throughout the year—whether in person, by phone, or via the Internet!

Teddi (April 14, 1987—December 7, 2002)

Although Teddi celebrated her fifteenth birthday earlier in the year healthy, old age finally caught up with her. She had been a part of Jeanel & Jason's life since Jason was nine years old when they picked Teddi out in a pet store because she was the only dog laying on her back with her paws up.

Throughout the years visitors to the house could always expect Teddi to beg for food (and for Jeanel to give her some). After the meal Teddi would then come up to each person and with her long nose attempt to push their hand towards her back to, in a not so subtle way, request a back rub.



Teddi in this year's Halloween costume. A true "hot dog" dog.



Teddi and Buster (Jeanel's brother Mike's family's new puppy) taking a break on July 4th



Teddi celebrating #15 with cake



Teddi sleeping on the dashboard on the way to Indiana in November