

Greetings from the Staleys - Ken, Donna, Little Frankie and Benny Jean,



Hope your 2011 year is coming to an end with some planned down-time to spend with friends and family - and also with a few dollars left in your pocket.

You are receiving our letter because we have crossed paths through church activities, doing church service together and as friends.

The Staley families are all doing fine.

We see Chris, Tawney and Benjamin several times per week and it has been great spending fun times with Benjamin who is now over two years old and is pretty much a happy-go-lucky boy who usually gives a hearty long "OK" when asking him to pick up his toys or take a nap. We also see Shaun, Kristin and Sophia about once per week. Sophia is now nine months old and always smiling and happy and growing fast.

Donna and I are doing pretty well considering everything. We both have hit our sixties and you can see the physical changes taking place (not good) and feel the aches. Getting out of bed in the morning has to be a planned event by stretching legs and toes before planting my feet on the carpet or down I go. "Pain management" has become the latest phase in our household these days. About eight months ago I noticed both of my index fingers became painful and it turned out to be arthritis. Simple things like pulling my keys out of my pocket can be a painful experience. Donna is quick to remind me that I am getting what I deserve because of all the times I argued with her, sticking my index finger in her face to make a point. I now keep Aleve in my house, my car, my briefcase, my desk and even in Pastor T's desk. Donna's choice of pain medicine is Alka-Seltzer - with orange juice and a lime wedge - three times a day. A typical argument between us and getting all worked up forces both of us to the pain medicine drawer where we make up trying to assist each other opening our child-proof bottles. I keep a nut cracker in the same drawer and after two failed attempts to get the lids off, the nutcracker gets it's turn. Yikes!

Our Daughter-in-law Kristin had mentioned a desire for all of the Staleys to go on a cruise together to the Bahamas in 2012 so we decided not to exchange gifts this Christmas and instead put our money towards a cruise. I volunteered to pick up the cruise expense and take care of all reservations.

I knew Cathy McGaughey had travel agent connections and could help put our cruise together with the total package costing just over \$3800. Pastor Mark overheard Cathy and I talking and mentioned that he also had some great travel connections and I could even save some money. So I went with Pastor Mark's travel contact instead of Cathy's package and we are now good to go.

I told the kids the tickets are purchased and they will get all of the cruise details the day we leave. I got such a great five day cruise deal and all for just \$450 for the eight of us! It was nice to know that the Pastor Mark's buddy is not only the owner and the person on the phone who took my money but also the captain of the boat. Pastor Mark's cruise buddy, Harlo Farber provides a wonderful experience on the "Red Beaver Cruise Line" that begins out of Live Oak, Florida and heads up the Suwannee towards Georgia and makes the trip every five days or so depending on tides and storms.

The cruise package includes oversized bunk beds for each of us where all nine of us bunk together in the same cabin above the engine compartment. I know, you're probably thinking – wait there are six adults and two grandchildren so why nine? Well, I got an additional \$50 off our cruise package by allowing one of the boat-hands to sleep in our cabin. He's not very tall so I think all nine of us will fit just fine.

Food and drinks are limitless as Harlo leaves all of the vending machines open 24/7. The boat stops along the Suwannee several times for some fun activities. On day three Harlo gives us some river diving training so we can go mud-diving for eels that we cook up and eat that evening. Can't wait! The kids are going to be so happy.

On a serious note in closing I would like to say thank you! Thank you to those who have served with Donna and I in all aspects of our Children's Ministry. Thank you to those who are serving and involved with our other church activities. Thank you for being our friends. We wish you a Merry Christmas and the very best and God with you in everything you do in the coming 2012 year. (Colossians 3:17)

Ken and Donna

To catch up on previous letters visit www.kenstaley.com

