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It's that busy time of year again....and you heard it first from Julie and Jay,

So, you might ask, what exactly can happen to two boring people like us in one year? Well, let's just say this was a banner year with more excitement than you can shake a stick at! The biggest event of the year was June 19, 1998 when Katarina Margaret Baltisberger was born at about 5 AM at Central Baptist Hospital in Lexington, KY. As you will see in the picture, Katie resembles (I suppose as she should) a mixture of both Baltisberger and Duckart attributes. The ears and nose (maybe the eyes too) are most certainly Jay's. The head and facial appearance probably resemble Frank Duckart (Julie's big brother) as a baby more than anything! We won't bore you with details about what we think she looks like, rather you should either see a picture or just come and see her in person! The only difficulty with the entire birth process came two weeks after baby Katie came into the world. She was fully healthy and fine, but Julie developed a blood clot in her right leg. This required a total of eight days in the Berea hospital. The first night we did not have a private room, so Jay had to take Katie home for the night, Julie's first away from Katie since the recovery time in the hospital following the birth. It was hard, but our friend at the hospital, Sharon Sarvey (nursing professor at Berea College), helped us secure a private room and both Jay and Katie spent the remaining seven nights beside Julie in the hospital room! Julie has recovered well, from rolling about the house in a wheelchair to wearing Jobst tights which help her circulation to now doing full aerobic workouts just like before the baby came! Julie will certainly be back in top shape before long and the leg feels better each day. On the baby front, at the 5 month mark, Katie has two teeth just starting to come in on the bottom of her jaw (just broken through the skin). I suppose by Christmas she should have a few more. Also she rolls over both directions and can almost sit up on her own. I must say, human development is an amazing concept!

Enough with the medical history, our second big event was the purchase of our new home (as you might note by the address). The search for a house started in January and took about a month and we found this one in the Central Park subdivision. It is a very nice location about 1.5 miles from campus and it is a three bedroom, two-and-a-half bath, two car garage home. The living room is directly adjacent to the kitchen and is a large vaulted ceiling room. Basically, we really enjoy it and have been moved in since May. There are only a few other houses built in our subdivision right now, but there will be 50-100 houses out here by the time it is all done. Also, the schools are very close, with a new elementary school slated to be built in the next two years across the street (literally). I think this whole location will be a good one for families. The only real drawback was that the dogs (Indy and Toby) really did not fit in well. They are just too big and rambunctious to let in the house with a small baby about. Not to mention coating everything with a nice layer of fur. So they lived in the garage for a bit, but now have made the move to Wisconsin to live with Brian Volkman (Jay's old roommate from Berkeley who was involved in co-purchasing/rescuing Indy from the Humane Society way back when). Our subdivision did not allow (by rules) fences or pens, so we really could not have the dogs outside, but Brian has a home that is more friendly to keeping the dogs. The dogs don't seem to mind who is with them, as long as they are loved, and Brian certainly has strong feelings for them.

On the school front, Julie has been continuing her Occupational Therapy graduate study, after a break from classes this summer. Julie remains at the top of her class and is working hard on her thesis. She will be done with her classes and work this spring (1999) and will then be ready to embark on a job in the schools as a pediatric OT. Jay's work has also gone well. This is his sixth year of teaching which means he comes up for tenure. The documents are slowly coming together, and the indications he gets from his department and dean are all positive. In addition, Jay was informed this summer that his proposal to the National Science Foundation for a \$200,000 NMR spectrometer was funded. This

means that Jay will be able to do most of his research work at Berea from now on and in addition will be able to improve numerous labs in his physical chemistry course.

As far as family and travel, Julie and Jay started the year with a trip to Europe where they visited Paris, Madrid, Barcelona, Nice, Florence and Venice. The trip was truly outstanding in all areas. Julie had a bit of tiredness from the pregnancy, but we really did a ton of walking in all of these cities. The food was superb, with the best meals in Paris, Avignon and Florence. Jay drank about one liter of wine each day (half a liter with lunch and dinner respectively) so he was pretty much enjoying life (since he was drinking for three). The museums were probably the most amazing part of the journey. Our hotel in Paris was only about four blocks from the Louvre which we visited for an entire day which ranks with some of the best days in our lives. It is beyond description to see the walls of paintings, sculptures and other artifacts housed there. On smaller note, we visited a museum called the l'Orangerie which houses an impressionist gallery. The heart of this museum is in the basement where two 40 forty foot rooms contain Monet's "Waterlilies". The room was specifically designed for this piece and was built around the turn of the century. The painting curved around the entire rooms for a 360° experience. This was probably the single most impressive (yeah yeah...ignore the play on words) work we saw. Although the Picasso "Guernica" was a close second. Enough about Europe, if you want the full tour, we'll tell you some other time!

Jay did a trip out to California in the beginning of April for the Experimental NMR Conference and stayed with Julie's family. We did a few trips up to Columbus as well to see the Tabits and Baltisbergers up there (including an awesome baby shower for Julie in the spring). At the end of the summer, Julie went back to California with the baby to attend her high school 10 year reunion. This was a lot of fun for her to see her old friends, Suki, Robbie, Samantha, Patrice, Rebecca and others. Also, this was a fun time for her to see her family with the baby, including a time when four generations were present (Katie, Julie, Patricia and Grace). Katie seemed to really love her uncle Rick and aunt Beth who held her for many hours during that visit. In addition she got to meet Uncle Frank and Aunt Jaimey just before they headed out to Boston (and we'll see them in Washington DC on Thanksgiving). A great visit which Jay missed because school at Berea was just getting started. To cap the year off, we will be heading to Washington D.C. for Thanksgiving and up to North Dakota for Christmas.

People came to visit us in Berea as well, including Julie's parents staying for two months in May and June and Jay's parents and aunt visiting in July. The July visit also involved a trip to Lake Cumberland for a Tabit family reunion which was a great time. The visits in May through July by family proved to be a true godsend with all the added help they gave us while Julie recovered from the birth process and blood clot. We can never say enough thanks to these people. Jon and Kelly made the trek out to Kentucky in early September and we had a handful of joy with both Katie and Chloe (Jon and Kelly's baby who was born April 1, 1998) playing together. Chloe is a beautiful bouncing baby who appears to love her cousin Katie (or at least she gets quite worked up and wanted to eat/grab her....) I suppose as we approach the bottom of a second page, I am probably getting a bit long winded, so I'll just wind this up with a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. May your next year be blessed with all the joys and happiness that we have had in ours.