

## Christmas Letter 2001

You know the letter you get from the Waite family every Christmas? This year, I asked if I could write it. My name is Monster, and I am the dog who lives with the Waites. If you're wondering how I'm writing this, it's simple: bark recognition software. After all, it's tough to type with paws. I figure if I write the letter, they will have more time to get me food.

I might as well get this out of the way; Margie worked too much as usual. She's been doing better though, with her average workday only 11.2 hours. That's down from her 12-hour average year to date. Progress! Excuse me; I have to go outside now. I'm back. Wait, I want to go out again. I wish I knew how to work that stupid doorknob. Then I could let myself out. Or in. Or out.

We had lots of visitors this year. My family was very popular, especially with Margie's family and friends. I was glad to see them all. I hope they come back soon and bring me food. I hardly get any food you know. It seems like weeks between times they feed me. Grandma brings me a treat everyday when she brings the boys home from school. I like her. She and Grandpa have a dog called Betsy. She stays with us sometimes. For such a little dog, she sure barks a lot. It's good to have someone to talk with though. She doesn't get fed enough either. Poor thing. She doesn't always finish her food right away, so I do it for her. No sense letting it go to waste.

Margie went with Barry to a conference for planning commissioners. The boys and I stayed with Grandma. I ate pretty well that week. The family went to the Grand Canyon with a bunch of other people to scatter Barry's dad's ashes. Don't you need a permit to do that? I would think so. I hope they don't have to go clean it up.

They had a big party for Barry's 40<sup>th</sup> birthday. At least, that's what I heard. They sent me to Grandma and Grandpa's for the day. They said it was really fun like their wedding, with lots of people they wanted to talk to and only a few minutes for each one. Maybe those people will come back sometime when I'm home. The family saw the Harry Potter movie at Grauman's Chinese Theater on opening day. Margie even took the day off from work for the occasion! Excuse me, I have to go bark at a dog out front. Good, it left. Of course, now there's a squirrel in the yard. They are so annoying.

Alex and David went to Seattle this summer by themselves! They thought it was pretty cool to fly on their own and stay with their grandparents. They won't even let me stay in the backyard alone. Unfair! Just because I run away sometimes.

The boys have had a great year in school, with Alex in 4<sup>th</sup> grade and David in 2<sup>nd</sup>. They are both very strong writers and great at science and math, a rare combination. They want to be scientists with a lab at the cabin. Barry's helping out at school on Fridays. Those teachers make him work. Imagine, people having to learn at school. What is the

world coming to? He taught another class at Cal State Long Beach this year. What I really can't imagine is people paying to hear him talk!

At the cabin, our neighbor is a big Labrador named Jack. One of his people, Dave, is a fireman. He fell through a roof while fighting a fire this September and broke his shoulder very badly. Jack says Dave's a good guy, so I hope he recovers completely.

The family will be spending Christmas with Margie's family in Seattle this year, so they'll have to get their Christmas cards out early. Do you think they can do it? If you are getting this letter in January, you'll know the answer. I'll be stuck here with Uncle Brian. Do you think he'll feed me? As a matter of fact, I could go for a snack right now. Oh look, there's a piece of Halloween candy stuck behind the couch. Chocolate's bad for dogs you say? I really don't think so. Really.

Send an email to us at [waite@earthlink.net](mailto:waite@earthlink.net), or call us at (310) 325-6389. Check our Web site at <http://home.earthlink.net/~waite>. That's about it. I hope to see you soon. Bring a biscuit!