

We are still having a great time here in Houston as we head towards the end of our second year. We have got in to the final stage of the green card process which means we have been approved as immigrants and just have to wait for all the admin paperwork to be done. Unless we turn out to be criminals (when they fingerprint us) or medically unacceptable the green card is a formality but it will take another 12 - 18 months to actually receive it. However we will get an interim green card and work authorization in the next few weeks.

Job-wise it's been a pretty exciting time for me. The high point was signing the Coca-Cola deal which turned out to be worth over \$6-million. Unfortunately our ops folks did a bad job with some of the management stuff so we lost the follow-on deal. We have recently restructured our organization and I still waiting for some of the final parts of that to fall into place. However it looks as though I will be looking after strategic major accounts and mentoring some of the more junior sales folk. I am still based in Houston but have been working accounts in the Atlanta and New York areas and I think that will continue for the first part of the new year.

The family is really enjoying life over here. Cheryl can't work yet because of the visa restriction but is very involved in community affairs. She is Vice-President of the Lions Club and is very active at both schools. She has also got very involved with the Republican Party Women and spends a lot of time at meetings and social affairs with them. She is also an active member of an International Ladies Club and an interesting research group called the Delphians. Although she will be able to work when we get the interim green card she probably won't have the time now!

Ryan has done exceptionally well at school. He is in his final year and has really applied himself. He got elected into the National Honor Society last year which is a real plus when he goes to college and has just got his latest SAT results where he got 1470 out of 1600. The average SAT is around 950 and anything over 1300 is highly rated so he did really well. He has applied to go to a very good college here in Houston (Rice University - Nelson Mandela talked there in November!) and will need all the merit scholarships he can get. Because he is not a permanent resident he does not qualify for most of the scholarships so we are hoping he gets at least something. The costs are around \$25K a year. Highlight of Ryan's last year was getting his driver's license in December 98, and he has taken over my Ford Contour so he is mobile. He has been very involved with theatre work at school and specializes in lighting.

Lauren is regularly an honors student and has developed a great circle of friends. She finishes middle (primary) school this year and moves on to Ryan's school just as he leaves. She is also doing very well academically and is in the top 5% of her class. At the moment she has ambitions to be a marine biologist which would be fine because the University of Texas runs a course at Galveston an hour away from us. And she will be a permanent resident so in-state fees of \$1,000 a year will apply!

We put in a swimming pool at the house earlier this year which was a real blessing in summer. It can be really hot and humid here for weeks on end and we got plagued by mosquitos this year. We took our first real vacation here in June. We drove to New York and collected a friend of ours from Durban and then drove to Boston and then right down the East Coast and along the Gulf to New Orleans and back home. Total distance was around 5,000 miles (8,000kms) and we did it in just over two weeks. It was a great trip and next year we plan to do a similar one to the West taking in LA, San Francisco, Las Vegas and Phoenix. There is so much to see in this country and you don't realize just how big it is until you start planning to drive across it. I get to see parts of it on business trips but those tend to be real overnight hops.

In December we will be back in SA for ten days and will be staying in Johannesburg and Durban, then back to UK for the Millenium and back here early in January.