

## Welcome to "Channel Surfing 2005" with the Aldrich Family

Family photos are online at [www.jonaldrich.com](http://www.jonaldrich.com)

Last time you 'tuned in' we were heading out West for 2004 Christmas vacation...

*Driving along a paved desert highway (on what the map clearly showed as a direct route north to Las Vegas), we were listening to an 'Adventures in Odyssey' CD - not knowing that we would soon be on our own 'family adventure'...*

*The remote Mohave landscape became increasingly rugged and then the paved road abruptly ended. We continued over bumpy washboard terrain, rutted from recent washouts, wondering if we had missed a turn or if we were even on the right road after all. Within moments of turning back, a park ranger pulled up beside us and we were sure glad to see him! In his comforting Georgia accent, the ranger told us we were indeed on 'the right road,' -- and that it would get worse before it got better, but that we could make it. (Craig told him that it had been a long time since he had driven a dirt road back home in Iowa; it reminded him of the tracks he'd followed through the hay fields as a boy...)*

*The ranger continued on and so did we. Several times we came to crumbling washed out furrows in the path, crossing back and forth on the road to avoid deep pits. Regularly we would catch sight of the ranger stopped just beyond the next rough spot waiting to make sure we 'made it'... Then came the worst encounter - water rapidly streaming across where the road had been and the embankment on the other side of this creek was a foot higher than where we were... A stream in the desert! How could we possibly make it through?*

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### Click to "The Family Channel:"

Adam, Rachel, Kayla (8), and Kara (3) are in Chicago Heights, IL. Adam is a pipe fitter who bowled a 300 game this year! Rachel works at Walgreen's and declares, "Shopping is to me what hunting is to Adam." Kara is beginning pre-K and Kayla is a third grader at Sandridge Elementary where her teachers remember teaching her daddy. Rachel is anticipating thyroid removal surgery. Please pray for her that the parathyroid gland can be saved and that all goes well.

Aaron currently shares an apartment with his childhood friend Jordan, works two jobs, one as a waiter at a local Mexican restaurant, the other at Williams-Sonoma, a cooking store at Baybrook Mall. We think that he's doing much better than he has for years. He has a nice girlfriend named Laura who spent five months in England this year with her parents -- and we are thankful for his positive progress.

Philip (16) is a sophomore at Clear Creek High School. His strong subjects are Chemistry and Computer Applications. Timothy (11) is in 6<sup>th</sup> grade at Creekside Intermediate School. He's made the transition well, despite the uniform dress code and bus ride. Ben (9) is in 4th grade at Hall Elementary. He's an insightful child-- when our microwave oven 'bit the dust' recently, he observed, "You really can have food without a microwave!"

### Special Guest Appearances:

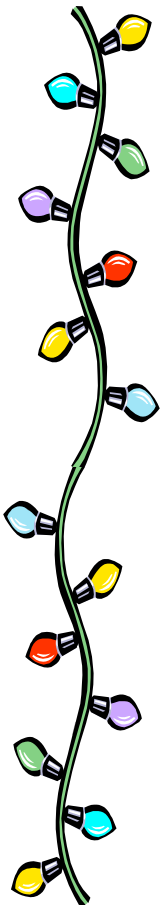
Sharon's mom Irene and sister Sandy visited in February, met Sharon's k class, and saw the mural she inspired in her school cafeteria. For Sharon's birthday, Craig and Sharon flew to Alabama for Tim and Connie Norris' daughter's wedding. It was great to see Connie and Melissa again when they came to Houston in September.

### Push that remote to "The Weather Channel:"

Hurricane Rita's evacuation scenes of Houston were worse in real life than your TV showed it. After a two-hour drive to the airport (usually a twenty minute trip), we missed our initial flight. While waiting in 'stand-by,' Rita strengthened to a 'Category 5.' Realizing the magnitude of the situation, Jon deployed Aaron and Philip to retrieve Mom's Suburban and load out as much expensive video equipment and keepsakes as they could. At midnight, they set out driving North all night finally making it fifty miles to North Houston where they stayed with Jordan and Aaron's friends. We flew to our sanctuary in Austin at Vinton and Michele Stanfield's peaceful Liberty House Bed-and-Breakfast. ([www.libertyhousebandb.com](http://www.libertyhousebandb.com)) Thankfully, all was safe upon our return.

### Make way for the "Discovery Channel:"

Meanwhile, Katrina brought new students from New Orleans, including one now in Sharon's class who had 'lost everything'...but has gained a fresh start in a new place. Teaching this year has been very challenging. Thankfully, after 24 years at Northside, she still works with wonderful colleagues. That is a blessing and she even has a former student now at West Point!



### Change to CNN (Craig's News Network):

Jon and his six co-workers have enjoyed the new office location in Friendswood. Editors Drew and Quinton have been with him the longest, then Jessica and Jason were followed by the newest: Wyndi and Eric. (Eric is from Wisconsin--Go Cheese-Heads!) It is amazing to consider that 25 years ago, the business was started with only one video camera and VCR! ([www.keepsake-video.com](http://www.keepsake-video.com), [www.vtigroup.net](http://www.vtigroup.net), [www.avchouston.com](http://www.avchouston.com))



### Here comes "The Travel Channel:"

Nee-how! "Hello" from China—In March, Jon, his brother Donald, and two sisters Marilyn and Connie spent three weeks touring China! ([www.rupipertravel.com](http://www.rupipertravel.com)) Pagodas and pearls, cruising the Yangtze River, dining on interesting tidbits like chicken feet and lychee fruit... (BREAKING NEWS—while they were away in China, the Texas City Refinery, where Jon used to work, experienced a massive explosion March 23. At that precise moment, Sharon's kindergarten class was at recess, heard it, and hustled inside to 'shelter-in-place'...)

June 7<sup>th</sup> marked our 30th wedding anniversary!! We celebrated with a trip to Las Vegas for the InfoComm Convention followed by a Grand Time touring Grand Canyon, Natural Bridges, Monument Valley, Mesa Verde, Canyonlands, and Arches National Parks in Arizona, Colorado, and Utah. (Aunt Connie came over from Austin to watch the boys for us— a BIG THANKS is due to Connie!)

### Flip to "The History Channel:"

Two big celebrations commemorated monumental events this year: Sharon's mom Irene had not one but two 75<sup>th</sup> birthday parties—one in July, the other in October, in honor of her September 19<sup>th</sup> birthday. Jon's brother Don, had both his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday and Golden Wedding Anniversary the same week in August. Jon's team put together priceless photo montages to celebrate Don & Lois' historic moments!



### On to "The Food Network:"

Sister Marilyn came from France for two weeks in October to inspire us to change our eating habits. "Lean and green is our cuisine" and we are now six weeks into the South Beach diet-- successfully. Hopefully, you will be seeing less of us filling your screens by next season! :o)

### This just in...

The Aldrich cast is once again planning a 'rerun' to Las Vegas for Christmas!! We leave December 18 to spend a week there. We are already looking forward to celebrating Christmas Eve again at Central Christian Church. Christmas morning Philip will fly to Chicago to be with Rachel and her family and the rest of us will head toward Southern California. We will fly back from San Diego on Dec. 31... wonder what new adventures lie ahead???



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*The ranger was nowhere in sight. We prayed, hoping the low riding car wouldn't get stuck mid-stream or hung up on the ridge. As all four tires climbed to higher ground, we spotted the ranger who had once again waited for us just beyond the curve ahead...*

*Suddenly, 'it clicked!' This wasn't just a crazy, nerve-racking adventure - but a revelation of life. Just like the ranger, we have a Heavenly Father who knows the road we must travel, what lies ahead, what we must go through. He waits for us, ensuring that we get where we are supposed to and provides experiences to prepare us. He keeps us ever in His watchful eye... but often just beyond our sight...*

*As we parted, the park ranger drawled, "I suuure am glaaaaad you're a coountry boy!" Heading away from our three hour, 20 mile long trek, inching through the California desert toward the interstate and civilization - we thanked the ranger-- and 'The Ranger!'*

### ...Happy Trails to you until we meet again....

*May the Lord go before you, keep His watchful eye upon you, and give you the blessings of Christmas--Jesus, the Savior, is born! Now turn off this TV and live! That's the real reality show!*

Jon Craig, Sharon, and the boys --- 281-554-6365 h 281-992-4100w [jon@vtigroup.net](mailto:jon@vtigroup.net) [sharon@vtigroup.net](mailto:sharon@vtigroup.net)

