

The Gardners Christmas 2009

This year's poem is dedicated to the memory of Marily's father, who passed away this year after an extended illness.



Ralph Stewart Braden

November 2, 1922 – June 2, 2009

It has been said that one's life is represented by the dash between the dates of birth and death. Ralph certainly can be proud, as we all are, of what he did with the 31,625 days in his dash.



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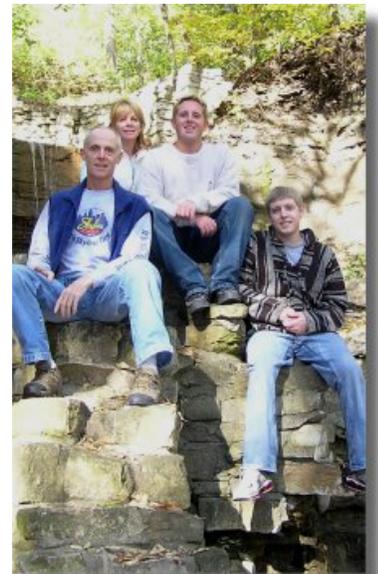


With the cold weather on, and the holidays here,
It seems two thousand nine's been a pretty good year,
Realizing the sum of the year that we've had
Without much excitement is not all that bad.



The contention, uncertainty, worry and wait
Of the turbulent struggles of two thousand eight,
Have been mostly replaced by the calm peace of mind,
That result from events of a happier kind.

With each year that goes by at an increasing pace,
This is one time I try to sit back and retrace.
It seems hard to believe as the years roll away,
That a decade has passed since we cheered Y2K.



We are minus a boat, but we now have four cars,
And four cycles, two homes, and two dogs to call ours.
Our possessions that own us are more than enough;
From now on, it's our mission to get rid of stuff.

Little Meemo has changed some in two thousand nine.
She's reverted to blonde, but she still looks divine.
Getting older, she says, is a bothersome thing,
But to me, I'm just glad we're extending this fling.



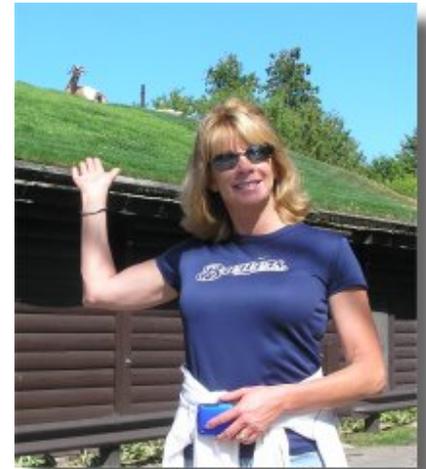


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For her birthday, we went to Door County for fun,
To unwind for a while and relax in the sun.
We spent unscheduled time that was long overdue
And took pictures of goats, just like all tourists do.



On her job she has had great successes this year,
Although Marily's methods are not always clear.
But she always gets all of the stars to align
In her own special way, chasing objects that shine.

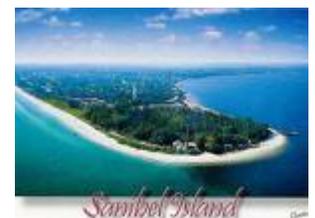
All my classmates' and my Indiana return
Was a time where we got reacquainted to learn
All the stories of kids and grandkids and careers,
And what's molded our lives in the last 40 years.



Both our boys are still living up U of M way,
Getting more Minneapolis-rooted each day.
They have stopped being kids with no word of farewell,
Taking care of the house and each other as well.



At the first of the year, the boys managed to take
A vacation to Sanibel during their break,
Treated well by their own patrilineal kin
With their own place to stay (many thanks, Cap and Lynn).





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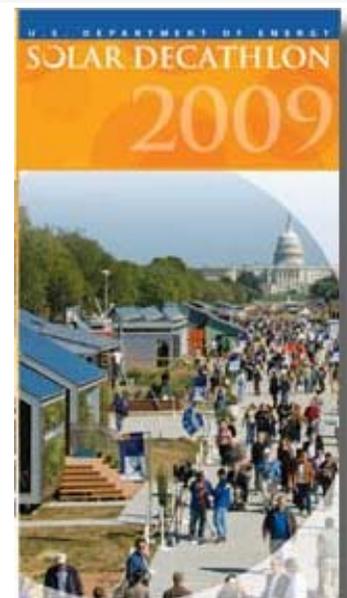
We are proud to announce, as I think you'll agree,
That our Grant persevered and received his degree.
Dedication and focus are what got him through,
With a dose of amazing self-discipline, too.



In a year of successes, he stayed to the course
Turning history into his own driving force.
He first worked on a job with a carpenter's rule
For the Russians outside till he got back in school.

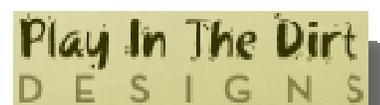


Then secured a great intern position with pay,
To be building a building on campus by day.
After working full-time at the new building site,
He completed the rest of his classes at night.



And on top of all that, he was doing his part
To help build an original state-of-the-art
Solar house that ranked high in this year's DOE
Competition event in the fall in D. C.

Warren gained firsthand knowledge with shovel and rake,
Learning landscape design on this year's summer break
On a job with an outfit called Play in the Dirt,
That resulted in cash and a really nice shirt.





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Warren still has some credits he needs to accrue;
A semester or two yet before he is through.
And the campus activity that he pursues
Is a group that spends time building concrete canoes.



And the bright spot for his engineering degree
Is the chance that our taxes might cause him to see
That his classmates and he might just soon be the ones
To get jobs that result from those stimulus funds.



Meemo's asked many times (although I just ignore)
For a mirror to mount on the back of a door.
So she stands on the tub to obtain a good view
And approve of the way that her pants meet her shoe.

The technique had a flaw, she unluckily found,
When she fell off her perch with a frightening sound.
So I raced up the stairs to see what was the matter,
Thinking how I would miss all her incessant chatter.



She survived with some bumps, but what hurt most of all
Was a finger that caused her to sit down and bawl.
As she sat on the floor, she began to appraise
How it bent in some new and mysterious ways.



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But the worst that resulted from such a great fall,
Was she couldn't maneuver her Reflex at all.
So the Honda was part of the growing montage
Of the vehicles sitting inside our garage.

So we're all doing fine in a troubling year,
With the bailouts and tea parties, crises and fear.
We've held on to our jobs and have managed to grow
Not just older, but smarter than one year ago.

And so now for a close as I lay down my pen,
I have said it before, but I'll say it again:
How we don't keep in touch quite as much as we should,
But in spite of all that, Santa thinks we've been good.



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Warren, Grant, Marily and Larry

October 17, 2009
Hidden Falls Park
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!