

H A P P Y H O L I D A Y S 2 0 0 9

To All of Our Wonderful Clients, Suppliers, & Friends

**2009** **Be careful what you wish for. . . like a little peace and quiet, which is what we were hoping for at the end of 2008, our busiest year ever. We got it, and then some, when 2009 proved that the Research Triangle was not recession-proof after all.** Things slowed down (a lot) this year, so in the best Kontek tradition we did the obvious thing: emptied our savings account and headed to Mexico's Playa del Carmen for a (way) offsite company retreat, with Jan serving as dance instructor and Tim as responsible adult chaperone. *Wes proved his remarkable gift for tardiness by showing up 24 hours late to his own offsite meeting - he blamed American Airlines, but the staff knew it was just another example of "running on KONTEK time".* Linda got her scuba certification and discovered that those rum drinks with little umbrellas in them are a LOT more fun when your bloodstream is nitrogen-saturated from a long day of diving. **Jonathan achieved the coveted Crestron Certified Programmer designation, although his idea for a laser-powered chocolate truffle cutter is still in the research stage.** Brenda's house burned down. Fire department investigators have now cleared her from suspicion despite a 911 recording of Brenda describing the conflagration as an "amazing shopping opportunity." DJ finally retired from skateboarding after attempting a 720 on the half-pipe and learning that Blue Cross has a substantial deductible for weekend emergency room visits. Gigi dominated the downtown Durham feline rescue scene, with the National Geographic Channel rumored to be developing a regular feature titled "The Cat Whisperer." Scott set a land speed record traveling from the Kontek warehouse to 9<sup>th</sup> Street in Durham, where he used a golf club to free Erik from the wreckage of Kontek's newest van (OK, we made up the part about the golf club). Julian designed a security system for Frank and Ellen's new home "Cassilhaus", guaranteed to stymie the best efforts of the Navy Seals. Unfortunately Frank did not ask Julian for help rewiring the furnace control system on the coldest night of the year. **When Billy wasn't designing further refinements to The Link, he was selling bootleg CDs on Pettigrew Street in an attempt to raise more money for college tuition payments. Erik and Laura welcomed new baby daughter Ena on November 1<sup>st</sup>.** Sammy bought a car, which to the astonishment of his co-workers was equipped with windows, brakes, a functional dashboard, and paint, qualifying it as "transportation" instead of "a project." Ben's son Alex started kindergarten on the new "AV Technician" career track. Monica discovered to her chagrin that the job of "office manager" included evicting unwanted overnight guests from Kontek's roof and fire escape. Brian challenged Frank for the annual frequent flier record, including a trip to Colorado during skiing season. Pete and Cameron managed to fit in some AV installation work between Carolina home games. They remain bitterly disappointed that Kontek's warehouse is located on Duke Street. **Mike terrorized children and small pets on his frequent high speed bike runs down the American Tobacco Trail.**

We're happy to see the taillights of 2009 disappearing in the distance. Recession is no fun, especially when the Triangle's colleges and universities (our core market) are so deeply impacted. On the other hand, we discovered new reserves of loyalty and commitment in ourselves and found that shared adversity drew us closer together than ever before. We sacrificed equally, worked hard, managed to have some fun, and kept our whole team together - quite an achievement considering the circumstances.

Tough times made us appreciate our loyal clients even more - especially those who were resourceful in finding ways to keep investing in technology. The UNC Friday Center staff was a standout, continuing to update this elegant building's meeting rooms, auditorium and public areas with new AV control systems and digital signage, despite a difficult state funding climate. The NC Central University Law School was another, with its IT team continuing to push forward with upgrades that have kept their program ranked among the top 20 American law schools for technology integration.

One of Kontek's newest clients is just across the street from the Friday Center. The Institute for Defense & Business provides a forum for the interchange of business practices and technologies between the military and the private sector. IDB's new offices and training center include state of the art presentation systems by Kontek.

Our largest projects of the year was WakeMed's groundbreaking Medical Simulation Center, with an extensive array of robotic patient simulators linked by a sophisticated network of video and audio monitoring, capture, and videoconference systems. The Sim Center opened in the fall to widespread acclaim, and has already made an impact on the quality of clinical training not only for WakeMed's own staff but also for other Wake County health care providers who train at this unique facility.

Although we rarely work on K-12 school projects, we made a special exception for the Duke School, whose newly expanded campus combines the former Lower School and Middle School facilities in a single location. The new teaching spaces feature green building technology including extensive daylighting, sustainably grown materials, and a soaring vaulted space that feels like anything but a traditional school. KONTEK was proud to provide Smart Board based projection systems for the new classrooms.

Another very large and rewarding project was the Hill Center's new Kirby-Horton Teacher Training Center. The Hill Center offers a unique program that helps make confident learners of kids with learning disabilities in grades K-12, and the new building will be a powerful tool in extending the Hill Center's research based techniques to teachers from all over the world. Kontek collaborated with the center's staff in developing presentation, web capture, and videoconference tools to fit a wide array of meeting, training, and conference rooms in this beautiful new space.

In good times or bad, two things remain constant: we love what we do, and we treasure the friendships we have made. The opportunity to do good work in support of organizations with important missions is a great blessing for us. We wish you and your families a wonderful holiday season and a New Year filled with peace and joy.

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This year's holiday card picture was taken by Frank at the Laumeier Sculpture Park in St. Louis, Missouri

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Frank Konhaus, Wes Newman, Dan Sanville, Gigi Krapels, Brenda Pratt, Billy Morris, Ben Wallace, Sammy Truong, Scott Sublett, Tim Rabalais, Mike Juday, Jan Stutts, Jonathan Danforth, Cameron Powell, Julian Milano, DJ James, Linda Guzynski, Erik Benson, Kim Durack, Peter Rehm, Brian Peters, and Monica Ellis

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