

Dear Family:

2 November 1999

Per the instruction in the David Willis family letter, I scanned the crowd at Lambeau during Monday's contest. I didn't see David or Peggy, but didn't see much of the game either as Monday Night Football doesn't start until 9:00 here. Games occasionally end too late for the result to be included in the edition of the Washington Post that lands on our driveway, and I rarely stay awake through the second quarter. I hear the Packers got creamed though, and have always wondered what it would be like to be trapped with a bunch of drunken Wisconsinites watching their team get clubbed. I expect we'll all know in a month.

Lucy, like most people her age, still looks a lot like James Carville. Moreover, in what resembles an attempt to more fully ape the prominent democrat, she emphasizes eating and wailing at the expense of a good night's sleep. We're not entirely sure what Hannah makes of all this, but surmise that she enjoys her big sister status. That said, she'd probably just as soon figure out some way of retaining the title without having to share the stage. She has compensated for the decrease in attention by becoming increasingly demanding. Paradoxically, this period is coinciding with an at times equally irritating I-want-to-do-it-myself phase. Net effect: She insists on walking across the room and climbing up the entertainment center to put the cassette in the VCR all by herself. Upon returning to her spot on the couch, she immediately requires that someone hand her the blanket lying at her feet. She's still sweet most of the time. Although not a paying client, Lucy's arrival has pushed the day care population to the legal limit of eight. Last week, the day care survived the county's annual unannounced drop-in inspection. It is fortunate that the inspector isn't the world's foremost authority on judging children's ages since (shhh) we have too many infants.

Some rather bizarre weather is to blame for some rather erratic foliage this year. We drove up to Catoctin National Mountain Park a couple of weeks ago. About 45 minutes north of us (next to Camp David), we assume it qualifies as a "mountain park" because portions of it are alleged to be more than 1000 feet above sea level. We had to cut our visit short when we realized we'd left our oxygen canisters at home. Actually it was because we forgot Hannah's coat—we're still trying to figure out this whole 2 kids thing. Our abbreviated walk was pretty though. Autumn is Crystal's favorite season, and she is in charge of ensuring that we do a sufficient amount of "fall stuff." On the way home, we made the requisite stop at a quaint farmer's market for apples, pumpkins and cider. One of our favorite aspects of where we live is the ability to be simultaneously 5 minutes from Washington and 45 minutes from the middle of nowhere...not Moab nowhere, but you know what I mean...more like Tooele nowhere. Oh come now, we kid because we love.

Halloween, as most of you know, fell on the Sabbath this year. Rather than doing what my father did when I was of trick-or-treating age, (i.e. send fliers to all the neighbors asking if, in deference to the Lord's day, his boys might come trick-or-treating on the 30th) we invited some people over for what would have been called-if it hadn't been Sunday—a Halloween party. But since it *was* Sunday, the event was actually a "Family Home Evening Fireside Activity"—so called I suppose because at least one of the invited non-members actually came—note to Coco (who also came): the non-member was Dawn (a fellow New Jerseyan whose name is therefore pronounced "Doo-AHn"). Anyway, we ate chili and caramel apples, and topped it off with everyone escorting the kids around the neighborhood for trick-or-treating...which was okay even though it was Sunday since it was all part of the "Family Home Evening Missionary Fireside Activity." Hannah and Noah wore their beloved Po costumes (note to the blissfully uninformed: Po is the red Teletubby.)

The job front hasn't moved much from last month's position. An unusually busy streak at work combined with added paternal responsibilities (and a little bit of burnout) have conspired to slow the hunt. All the same, I press forward faced with the realization that in all likelihood I will at the very least finish the calendar year in my present position. My boss (who unofficially is aware of my intentions) claims to be seeking to sell senior management on an offer that would keep me in the organization. I'll believe it when I see it. No one at work is overly excited about the y2k paranoia-induced moratorium on annual leave in effect from 12/15 thru 1/15. Merry Christmas everybody!

We are deeply appreciative of all who have come by to visit during the past weeks. We realize that Lucy was the underlying attraction, but have nonetheless enjoyed being with Mom, Dad, Coco, Grandma et al. In the same vein, we are looking forward to seeing everyone planning to attend the blessing this weekend.