

Dear Family,

29 December 2002

A hectic December is almost in the books.

It was particularly consuming for Crystal, who was responsible for spearheading the ward Christmas party as well as Hannah's sixth birthday party. (I demonstrated my continued support by showing up to both events.) The ward party, comprising the standard potluck dinner, singing and Santa, went well. As usual, my standard request to institute a labeling system identifying who brought each dish was denied. As a result, I once again restricted myself to the store-bought and restaurant carryout fare. Hannah's party brought an interesting mix of church and school friends—there is no overlap—to the house for, among other things, the ceremonial smashing of a very cool Rainbow Fish piñata fashioned by Crystal in an hours-long labor of love. It was touching to watch her fight back the tears as the children excitedly obliterated her creation. I think we'll probably just buy one next time.

As some of you know, Hannah shares her birthday with her Grandpa Kent. This year, Grandma Kent's birthday present to Grandpa Kent consisted of a trip to Washington, DC to see the grandchildren. It was enjoyable having him here. We were not the most entertaining hosts, basically just subjecting him to four days of our own Christmas preparations and ditching him with the kids while we attended an office holiday party, but he's not really the complaining sort.

Lucy's adventures in potty-training have gotten a lot of ink in recent months, so I feel obligated to report that she's just about there. Her seven consecutive accident-free days were rewarded with a jaunt downtown to "Daddy's work" for lunch on Christmas Eve. The visit was fun for Lucy, Daddy and co-workers alike

Christmas Eve and Christmas Day both brought snow for the first time in recent memory. We fought through the Christmas Eve storm to get back into town to Coco's place (5 blocks from "Daddy's work") where we enjoyed a pleasant evening with Rick and Carla<sup>1</sup> and newlyweds Britt<sup>2</sup> and Mark.

The Christmas Day storm was considerably more severe. After doing our own little family Christmas (i.e. opening presents) in the morning, we embarked on a treacherous 4-hour journey up I-95 to Moorestown (a trip that usually takes about 2½ hours). There we met all the brothers and their families for more present opening. Following the annual caroling visit to Mrs. Pittman, our declining beloved piano teacher, we were joined at home by two missionaries, forming a dinner party that would struggle to fit around any dining room table. Instead, we ate from lap trays around the living room, where, in keeping with the Christmas spirit, I did not rat out Elder Federson for not using a coaster. (Mom noticed anyway.) Succeeding days saw all of us descend on Matt and Andra's place to celebrate Morgan's second birthday, and several of us invest the better part of a day taking in *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers*. I continue to maintain that no movie is worth three hours of my life, but must admit that this one comes close.

Finally we seem to have almost finished taking turns being sick. It began with Lucy throwing up on Christmas Eve before making its way through Sophie, Crystal, and now me. I blew off most of church today, making an appearance only during the third hour, where I was responsible for one-third of the Priesthood/Relief Society combined lesson. It wasn't really my best effort, which annoys me, but I'll get over it.

We hope the season has treated you as well as it has treated us, and sincerely wish everyone who has bothered to read this far a happy and prosperous 2003.

Love,

Tim, Crystal, Hannah, Lucy & Sophie

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<sup>1</sup> My mother's brother and sister-in-law

<sup>2</sup> Rick and Carla's daughter