

Merry Christmas -- 2001

«Salutation»

2001 has been eventful for us Hesterbergs. The most heart-stopping occurring on May 3rd, when I returned home from dropping Nathan off at his bus stop to find a message on the answering machine, sirens wailing in the background, that Tim was being taken to Harborview Hospital following a bike accident. The medic stated that he was conscious, but beyond that I knew nothing. I headed all the way across town to the hospital, only to be informed that Tim wasn't there. A very kind receptionist called University Hospital for me, but no Tim. More than a little panicky, I called home to check messages and discovered that he'd been taken to the Ballard hospital, a short ten minute drive from home, in the opposite direction of Harborview. Before leaving for the hospital I called the Ballard ER and was able to talk to Tim. He seemed alert, and I quizzed him a bit. He knew who he was and each boy's name and birth date; I didn't bother to ask for the date of our anniversary, figuring that was a lost cause. I headed on to Ballard feeling a little calmer. Tim had a broken collarbone, a "minor" concussion and a glorious case of road rash. The broken collarbone gave him a lot of pain, and he was quite dizzy, but I was able to take him home that afternoon. The cause of the accident remains a mystery because Tim has no memory of it. He was not hit by a car, but witnesses have no idea why he suddenly went down after signaling a turn. He's back to normal (for him) now, and is once again commuting to work by bike. I cut off my brake levers. My best guess is that I hit one of the one of the brake levers with my thumb when I put my hand back after signalling, jarring the wheel enough to lose control at high speed. So I cut 'em off. Huh? Not my thumbs, the brake levers. Cut off the brake levers? Yes! I read a bike book (after the accident) that says to cut off the top part of 2-part brake levers, so you don't get into the habit of using them, as you can't squeeze them enough to stop hard in an emergency. Wish I'd read that before.

Our home swelled with both short- and long-term visitors this summer. Tim's sister, Judy, lived with us all summer while interning in a hospital chaplain program. It was great having Judy around; we got to know each other much better, plus we could play hours and hours and hours of card games! Sometimes we "grown-ups" forced Adam to continue playing long after he wanted to stop. "Please, Adam, just one more game??" Not to say we aren't sufficiently popular on our own, but lots of visitors chose this summer to visit since they could also see Judy.

We headed east this summer for an incredible vacation on Kezar Lake in Maine. First stop was Philadelphia to check in with my mom and siblings and suffer through oppressive heat and torrential rain, before borrowing her car and driving up to Maine. We stayed with a friend at the lake in a wonderful old house, big enough to swallow 4 Hesterbergs, 4 Tillets, 2 Matthews, and one collie dog. The Tillets were tireless in their efforts to feed and entertain us. We took innumerable trips out in the ski boat since the boys loved tubing. They insisted on going ever faster and cracked the whip at every opportunity, careening out of the wake and laughing uproariously. Tim took the small sailboat out for a spin and managed to turn the thing upside down. Luckily, 13-year-old Ellie was able to rescue him. Uh ... I did it to make her feel good.

Adam discovered the joy of math contests this year and is tearing up the competition. In January, shortly after he tried out for the math team, he came home one day and said, "Mr. Reed asked me if I wanted to switch to Integrated II next semester." I was a little taken aback and asked, "You mean Integrated I?" "No, he said Integrated II." That means he skipped two years of math, and finished his sixth grade year in a class full of eighth graders. I think that the math coach, Mr. Pounder, realized Adam's potential and snatched him up into his own classroom. In the MathCounts competition, against mostly eighth graders, Adam placed fifth in Washington state, a hair's breath away from continuing to the National Competition in Washington DC. Maybe next year! His ability to pick up mathematical concepts is scary. In fact, I banned him from the room while I tutored a college student in Calculus. Heavens! I think there should be something that I know, but he doesn't.

Adam has surpassed me in another way, and I'll share an embarrassing story about it. While we were in Philadelphia visiting my mom, I noticed that Adam towered over her. How could this be?? My mom is slightly taller than me, and now I was worried! I know that aging can bring on osteoporosis, but to shrink several inches in less than a year??? I would have to make sure she checked in with her doctor, pronto. I kid you not, that is what I believed until we returned home and I marked Adam's height on the kitchen growth chart. Nothing competes with the strength of a mother's denial.....but I'm still taller than Nathan. Well, I'm still taller than Adam, and always will be. I'm not worried - cuz I've started sneaking him orange juice *without* calcium.

Nathan made a big decision this year. This spring he told me that the extra webbing between two fingers on his right hand was bothering him. As a baby he'd had webbing removed between two other fingers, and we'd been told that fixing the remaining web would be merely cosmetic - trading a scar for a web. Because of his discomfort, though, I made an appointment with a pediatric hand specialist here in Seattle, and got an entirely different story. Dr. Hanel was confident that Nathan could gain function in his hand, and carefully explained the procedure to him. Nathan decided he wanted to go ahead with the procedure, and we scheduled the out-patient surgery in late September. He sailed through the surgery with flying colors, confidently walking back to the operating room after declining a hug from his mom. So different from the earlier surgery when the nurse carried him back as he screamed and stretched out his arms to me.

On another note, Nathan joined his school's chess team and is enjoying learning and playing chess. He took part in a chess competition earlier this month, won one of his matches, and is eagerly looking forward to future meets. Also, Nathan's interest in bike riding skyrocketed. I wonder if Tim's accident sparked this; wouldn't that be bizarre? Anyway, he was a spiffy new bike with a zillion gears, and he loves to zip around on it. And yes, that means another child is leaving me in the dust in yet another way.....

With all our love and a little laughter,