

Happy Holidays 2000

«Salutation»

I broke a solemn vow this year. I, Bev Hesterberg, who vowed never to own a minivan now has a '97 Honda Odyssey and am firmly ensconced in the "soccer mom" demographic. Ouch. After watching Adam grow so tall that his head clearly outdistanced the back of the seat in our '86 Toyota, and fearing that a sudden tap on the brakes might cause severe whiplash, we went on the search for a larger and safer vehicle. I must confess that I've grown to like the thing, although I'm still trying to figure out what my left foot is supposed to be doing now that it has no clutch to operate. There's room enough for each of the kids to take a friend along on outings, and when we drive as a family, each one can have his own row. Ah, peaceful transportation! As a generational sidebar, it's interesting to note that when I called my mom and moaned about succumbing to minivandom, she laughed and said that back when we were kids, she vowed she'd never drive a station wagon. But did we have one?? You bet. Like mother, like daughter!

We have entered the land of middle school and it is good. Adam is thriving in sixth grade at Washington Middle School and never seemed to bat an eye at the transition. During the first weeks I quizzed him as to whether he could get from class to class on time, whether he got lost in the big building, whether he could open his locker... "Yeah, yeah, yeah," he blandly replied. "So, the only one having middle school adjustment problems is me?" I queried. "Yeah," he blandly replied. Does he sound like he's eleven or what?? He had a brief fling playing the oboe, but found that the volume in band class was unbearably loud, so he dropped that, but continues to play the piano. As part of a service project in his math class (I think the math part has to do with data gathering and statistics), he and three other boys are volunteering at Northwest Harvest, a hunger program that distributes food throughout Washington State.

Nathan has recently found his niche in this household of readers with the series of *Sideways School* books by Louis Sachar. Several mornings I've had to guide him to the bus stop as he avidly reads the hilarious adventures occurring in that 30-story school. I'm hoping that nothing similar happens in his own 3rd grade classroom. Nathan's new musical endeavor is the violin. He started taking Suzuki violin lessons in September and is progressing nicely. I've had to learn to play too as I help him with his music. If you ever get a hankering to hear a duet of "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star," we'd be happy to oblige. He still likes to play and imagine heroic events carried out by his little Lego guys. He's expanded these adventures onto paper by drawing numerous pictures of battle scenes and other death-defying maneuvers. (Like father, like son; as a boy I used to spend hours creating battle machines with Legos, and drawing pictures of fighter airplanes shooting each other. And hey, I turned out all right? Right? Say yes, or else.) He may fixate on conflict during play, but he has a truly generous heart. Last spring when there was a fund drive to raise money for homeless children, he donated every penny he had saved from his allowance for those kids.

I've backed off a bit from volunteer activities since my stint as the treasurer of Adam's elementary school PTA ended in June. Although I still volunteer at the kids' schools, I don't plan to take on another big PTA job this year. I hadn't realized just how much time that responsibility took until I suddenly had more free time. I continue to work out regularly at the local fitness club and have added yoga to my regime twice a week.

Sadly, my father passed away this past spring, five years after a massive stroke left him severely aphasic, and partially paralyzed. He gradually declined following the holidays last year, slipped into a coma in mid-March and died a week later. We attended his memorial service in Elkhart, Indiana where it was moving and inspiring to share memories of him with Dad's friends, family and colleagues. Since Tim was unable to make it to the service, his Dad drove all the way in from Minnesota, stopping to pick the boys and me up at the Chicago airport. It was so comforting to have him around, although he did manage to confuse some folks. One family friend, having only met Tim at our wedding, took me aside and whispered, "My, Tim's certainly aged!" Really, I don't think I'm that hard on my husband! (Uh, sure, whatever you say dear.) Later Tim met us in Philadelphia where we spent a week visiting with my mother. It was good spending time with her and we took the opportunity to travel to Lancaster to visit with some of our friends there.