

Mom — Have a happy Christmas, Jim

*Holiday greetings and best wishes for the new year, from Wendy & Jim, along with Colin, Sanford and Emily, not to mention Joe B. and Lucky (the cats).*

The big news in our family this year, of course, was getting married — that is, the adults got married, and the kids got "blended" as they say these days. Actually, the kids have been blending for some time, and the biggest change for them has been the greater convenience of living together rather than constantly piling into the car with Mom or Dad to drive an hour to Frederick or Bethesda, as we did at least twice week for a year before the wedding! When people ask us how they get along, we say, "Like brothers and sisters" — i.e., pretty well, most of the time!

The wedding itself was a happy, elegant, and entertaining occasion, enjoyed by all (as far as we could tell). The kids liked being included in the ceremony, and they even enjoyed dressing up. Everyone certainly had a good time dancing and/or singing along with Mama Jama, the reggae-flavored band blessed as "very world beat" by a California guest who knows these things! Wendy and I retired early and probably set a hotel precedent as the first honeymoon couple to drive off the next morning in two cars! (Actually, we dropped one off, collected the kids, and went to Chincoteague for a very relaxing family vacation.)

In some ways, life is simpler now. All three kids go to the same school, which is small enough that

everybody knows each other, and all kids usually get the attention they need — although the classes are bigger this year than last. Located so close to Washington, where many diplomatic families live, the school has a great diversity of ethnic and national origins. The principal asks a geography question over the intercom every morning, and we discuss it again at the dinner table.

Emily has garnered prize after prize for good behavior, citizenship, and other worthwhile qualities in her first few months in Kindergarten. Sanford is in second grade but he is reading at the third-grade level. He recently distinguished himself with the most amusing setting for a Thanksgiving turkey: at the beach, complete with sunglasses, Barbie lotion, and kitty litter for sand! Colin seems to be more at home in school than ever before. He likes being with kids his own age in the third grade, and he also participates in chorus and band (playing the trombone, though with wavering commitment). All three kids had big birthday parties this year: Emily (Sept 8) at the Doll House Museum, where a very proper tea was served; Colin (Nov. 5) at Plastercraft, where his entire class painted plaster creations; and Sanford (Nov. 26) at Corner Kick, where a couple dozen boys ran off steam on a soccer field before inhaling Wendy's homemade cupcakes. (Wendy also made cupcakes for Emily's and Colin's parties, as well as Halloween and a few other occasions — this was the year of the cupcake.)

When not making cupcakes, Wendy continues to go into the Octagon Museum, the historic house owned by the American Institute of Architects in Washington, two or three times a week. She is researching the genealogy of the Tayloe family, who built the house around 1800, with an eye toward documenting the furnishings that once occupied the house or have been given to the Octagon since. Wendy has become so popular with the Tayloe family descendants that she is called in whenever an important visitor is expected! Wendy also volunteers at Seven Locks school once a week, spending mornings in Emily's kindergarten and afternoons teaching science in Colin's class. In addition, she has taken on the post of Advisory Board Chairman for the Theta chapter at the University of Maryland, which has put her in touch with many old and new Theta friends in the area. And on top of all this, Wendy sends the kids off to school in the morning and is home waiting for them when they return, maintaining a constant vigil on their moral, intellectual, and physical well-being!

It's also been a good year for "Hoekema Interactive." With the launch of Compact-Disc Interactive in October, the CD-I program I directed, *Treasures of the Smithsonian*, is finally available at department and speciality stores all over the country. Another project, *STV Rain Forest*, will be published this month as a school product by the National Geographic Society.

Currently I am consulting for Philips in Europe on the design of a CD-I program on *Venice*, to be published in Italy in four different languages. (The meetings in London have let me visit with my sister Dot and her family.) "H.I." is also producing two more titles for the National Geographic (*Solar System* and *Restless Earth*), and I'm also still serving as North American editor of the British journal *Interactive Multimedia*. Now if only I could find time to improve my Italian, write that book, and, oh yes, do some of that yard work....

The family cats, both male, have gotten along famously since the first meeting, in which both must thought, "Aha, so you're the creature I've been smelling for so long on my human servants clothing." Lucky, a cat of many qualities but not including intelligence, has learned to chase a mouse now and then from the great hunter Joe B. The latter, however, has learned from Lucky the fine art of whining for his food. Lucky has not yet adopted Joe B's taste for people food, including a particular fondness for pasta.

Well, that's the news. As always, we apologize for the published nature of these things, but this seemed a practical way to circulate the news.

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*Written the 9th of December, 1991, by Jim, the family scribe.*