

Hello and Merry Christmas to All! December 2004

1. Looking back at this year, it is hard to imagine that it all fit into just one year. It has been a fantastic year for the our family. We had our fourth boy, Jacob Thomas, who is now 7 months old and crawling all over the place. All of a sudden our house has to be totally baby proofed again. Do you realize how many tiny toys 3 boys can have? And Jacob certainly does put EVERYTHING in his mouth. He doesn't have any teeth yet, but is dying to eat everything we eat! He is starting to squeal and babble too, including "Dada". He truly is a joy and brings smiles and laughter to all of us. It is so wonderful to see such a tiny and new spirit learning and growing. The pleasure of raising children is magnified in the smile of a baby.

Trent has grown leaps and bounds this year as well. He was so patient through Mommy's seven weeks of bed rest. I think he benefited from a Mommy who couldn't do any projects. We told lots of stories and listened to lots of tapes together. He loves Jacob, almost too much, and is a good little helper. His favorite chore is doing the dishes. At 2 and a half, Trent talks as much as the twins do. He says his prayers all by himself, complete with blessing the missionaries, the bad guys to be good, and Daddy to get an agent. He loves the days that Mommy teaches preschool because that means he gets to be involved too. His favorite ride at Disneyland was the Teacups. He loves to sing and has all the words memorized to several songs, like "Hey Diddle Diddle" and "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer".

David and Dean are 5 years old and really good big brothers. They constantly help Mommy when she can't get to Jacob at that minute. They have chores that they do (dishes, sweeping, picking up, etc.) and even cleaned their first bathroom a week ago. They really enjoy the preschool group that we do. They are learning their letters and really loving being able to write some things now. On Matt's birthday they wrote "To: Dad" and then their names. After reading "How the Grinch Stole Christmas" David loves finding words that rhyme. They have memorized several scriptures this year and are excellent students of the gospel. They got bikes for their birthday and love riding around the block or to the park. Dean gave a talk in Primary and decided, all by himself, that he wanted to sing his favorite song to everyone. It was very sweet. David's highlighted phrase of the year was when he said to me, "Here you go, Dollface." He learned that one from Bluto on Popeye. His favorite ride at Disneyland was "Little World" (It's a Small World). Dean's favorite rides were Splash Mountain and the "Darth Vader Ride" (Star Tours).

I feel like I have survived a whirlwind of a year. I started the year off being pregnant and Relief Society President and conducting a 30-women choir. Three months into the year I was put on bed rest and medication for 7 weeks and released from my calling as RS pres. Through loving family and friends, our family got through the bed rest. Jacob was born a month early and was as healthy as an ox. However, during the delivery, his head broke my tail bone and for 2 months I could barely sit. Thankfully, that is practically back to normal. When Jacob was almost 3 months old we decided to have a blast going on three different trips. We went camping at a family reunion, then to a 10-year class reunion for Matt in Utah, then to California for a trip to Disneyland. We had a great time on all 3 trips, but I was sure glad to settle back into a routine. I was then called as the choir director in our ward and I've been having a wonderful time with that. There is something extraordinary about Christmas music—it's about our Savior. We performed our cantata on the 19th and it was beautiful. With all the ups and downs, this has been one eventful year for me.

Matt has had a fun year too. He's been writing stories like a mad-man and entering all sorts of contests. He won one contest and is still waiting to hear back from several others. All of us (including the boys) are still praying that he will get an agent and be able to publish his book. There is one publishing company that accepts books without an agent that Matt will be trying out soon. He had a great time at his high school class reunion and loved seeing some old friends. Matt also went to a fantasy writing convention in Tempe and was able to get a taste of the world of authors. He recently decided that he likes audio books and is listening to those to and from work and while he's working on his computer at night. He'll be taking a college course on C# (a computer programming language) in January so that he can work with a new program at work. Matt has also been working hard on his church calling as Ward Mission Leader.

We love all of you and wish you all the happiness in the world! Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Love,

Matt, Alicia, David, Dean, Trent and Jacob Peterson

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