



Seasons Greetings Friends and Family

December 15, 2000

It has been a very exciting year for us, with a new addition to the family (a 2000 Honda Odyssey minivan), the trip of a lifetime (to Tahiti), and watching our Baby Emma grow into a real person, and quite an adorable little person at that!

Emma's experience in flying to Colorado and Oklahoma paid off as we embarked on an 8-hour flight to French Polynesia in October. She was a consummate traveler throughout the trip. We visited the islands of Tahiti, Bora Bora, Moorea, and Rangiroa. Each island was magnificent, and we all had a fabulous time. We started out by relaxing on Bora Bora, taking in the spectacular views and occasionally venturing out in kayaks and outrigger canoes to explore the lagoon. On Moorea we took in the scenery on the island, seeing an ancient temple and a Tiki Village complete with native drums and fire dancers. On Rangiroa our bungalow was over the water, and it had a glass coffee table built into the floor through which we could watch the fish in the water below, much to Emma's fascination. David and Christy snorkeled through the Tiputa Pass, an activity known as "shooting the Pass" because of the surge of ocean water that fills the lagoon with the tides. We saw an abundance of fascinating marine life, and swam with white- and black-tip reef sharks during a shark feeding – tremendously exciting! Another highlight was watching wild dolphins jump and play in the surf which they do as the lagoon empties back into the ocean. Emma loved playing on the beaches and in the water – we could hardly keep her dry. Among her most enjoyable experiences were feeding bread to the fish and listening to Tahitian drums which could often be heard and always captivated her.

David is still employed by Apple Computer and has been toiling away on his little corner of Mac OS X, Apple's next-generation operating system which will be released (finally!) in the first half of 2001 (he can't say more than that or they might fire him!). In his spare time, David has forayed into the world of high-power rocketry by joining a local group which is attempting to become the first private, civil, amateur group to put a rocket into space. During the summer we (yes Christy and Emma, too) traveled to the Mojave Desert in southern California and the Black Rock Desert in Nevada to participate in the firing of two hybrid test rockets.

Christy and Emma have had an active year, adding a number of weekly activities including organizing a Bible study for stay-at-home moms, participating in a gymnastics class for toddlers called Diaper Dashers, and going to San Jose for story time at Barnes & Noble. Once a month Christy teaches a few signs to the moms and kids at story time, which satisfies her teaching urges. In addition to our rocket excursions, we have taken several family trips around Northern California to hike, play on the beaches, and simply appreciate our beautiful surroundings.

Emma is a joy, amazing us daily. This year was marked by many firsts, including her first Easter-egg hunt, birthday and trick-or-treat at Halloween, all of which were very entertaining for Mommy and Daddy. But Emma was probably much more excited about her greatly expanded mobility and communication skills. She communicates with us largely by using sign language, which we have been using with her since she was about 9 months old. She has developed a vocabulary of more than 80 signs, and is adding more and more spoken words as well. She understands quite a bit of French, and spoke her first French phrase while we were in Tahiti – "Au revoir!" She is a great thrill-seeker, loving fast slides, high swings and rambunctious games of hide-and-seek and chase with Mommy and Daddy. She adores animals, especially cats and dogs, and her preferred activities include "reading" her books and being read to, climbing on anything, and playing in whatever water she can find. Her favorite song is "Old MacDonald," – she sings "E-I-E-I-E-I moo moo" – and her favorite books change from week to week. Emma loves her baby dolls and stuffed animals, especially kissing them and sharing her food and drinks with them. She also shares nicely with our kitties, although they don't always appreciate her generosity – they haven't developed a taste for goldfish crackers or Cheerios yet. Emma delights in making us laugh, and we are always glad to oblige her.



We hope that you and yours are happy, healthy and enjoying a wonderful holiday season. May God bless you in the coming year!

GO SOONERS!

The Pond Family



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