



Merry Christmas!

December 25, 1990

Yo Ho Ho and a Bottle of Rum, Y'all! Or is that the wrong greeting? Make that a Bottle of Eggnog . . . The first major event of the year 1990 concerned Jane's new job. The people at Sammons Cable were putting just too much pressure on her to become a major media personality on a Local Access Channel, so she jumped ship over to Interstate Batteries, figuring that at least our flashlights would never lack for power. Interstate is an interesting place, largely populated by Southern Baptists. They immediately launched efforts to save Jane's heathen Catholic soul; until, that is, she put up an 8 x 10 glossy of the Pope in her cubicle along with a couple of rosaries.

Mike launched into one of the more bizarre "home improvement" projects in the Spring when he constructed a railroad track, complete with two bridges, around the wall in our den, and then put a train on it. He kept muttering stuff about "resale value" while building the thing, but it is hard to assess his objectivity about the value of the project when he's wearing his engineer's cap and making choo-choo noises.

During the Spring rugby season we hosted vistsors from Kelowna, British Columbia, and Teignmouth,

England. This is all part of the wonderful world of rugby touring, where total strangers come from overseas mainly to try out the local beers and get in trouble with the gendarmes. Though hanging out in bars until 2:00 on weeknights becomes a trifle strenuous, the guys are still fun to have around.

Toward the end of the rugby season, we traveled with the team to El Paso to play in a tournament, and lost several million pesos at the dog races across the border in Juarez. But we found a dollar in the street and so came out ahead on the weekend. By the end of the season, strangely enough, Mike was neither injured nor sick of playing yet, so he tried out for the Texas Select Side. He made the Select squad, but ticked off the coach plenty when he decided not to travel over to England and play a few matches with the Texas team in September. Boy, you know you're a homeowner when you'd rather spend your money on a new kitchen floor than travelling abroad.

We spent the rest of the year mainly in rambling around, hosting guests, and attending weddings. Among the guests we'd be glad to have back were Jane's brother Joe, who flew in from New York, and her brother Jim and sister-in-law Debbie, who came in for a convention.

Due probably to innate brain damage, in June we decided to drive up to Wisconsin for Jane's 10th High School Reunion in Mike's rice-burner Mitsubishi. We have determined that the car is actually Hirohito's Revenge, as during its five-year life it has gone through a multitude of weird ailments, including many strange electrical problems and, once, catching on fire and burning up the engine. True to form, the air conditioner quit about five miles north of Dallas, which made for an interesting, if sweaty, trip.

Sometime in there we celebrated our very first wedding anniversary on July 1st. What a milestone. And they said it wouldn't last.

We later popped on down to San Antonio, this time in Jane's car, to visit Mike's sister Katie and her husband Tom, and attended the Texas Folklife Festival, where the last thing we remember was swilling down some hallucinogenic strawberry wine which was otherwise only available at the Quik-Stop in Poteet (we are **not** making this up). After that everything was kind of warm and fuzzy, but we assume we had a pretty good time.

In the Fall Mike decided that, having recently turned 30, he would **really** get in shape for a good rugby season. This worked for a while, until the guys from Pembroke College, Cambridge came into town and he sprained the heck out of an ankle during the game. Not content to let that one lie, he screwed the thing up worse in a game against Shreveport, and so spent quite a lot of time

hobbling around, muttering "Arrrrr" a lot, and calling everybody "me hear-ties." He wanted to buy a parrot for his shoulder, but Jane put her foot down at that.

After various house guests and home repair / remodel / refurbishing experiences, including installing a new kitchen floor and having a bout with termites, we flew up to Appleton in September for Jane's friend Beanie's wedding. Just because we hadn't driven several hundred miles in nearly a week, we then drove down to Fredericksburg with our friends Paul and Lisa (in their car -- they knew all about "Hirohito's Revenge") to attend Oktoberfest. We stayed in a log cabin, drank lots of beer, banged a few steins together, then spent the rest of the time wondering what to do after they rolled up the sidewalks at 9:00.

After that there were a bunch more weddings to attend. We lost count after three or four. Fortunately, it seems that most of our close friends are finally married off by now. and we can relax. At least until the baby shower invitations start rolling in.

Pretty soon after that, as if by magic, it became holiday season again. Mike transformed the train in the den into a special Holiday Train, with lights and everything, and he somehow thinks that justifies it. What the hey, it's Christmas time. The merriest of holiday seasons to all of our friends and relatives, and we hope all goes wonderfully for y'all in the New Year.

Joy!