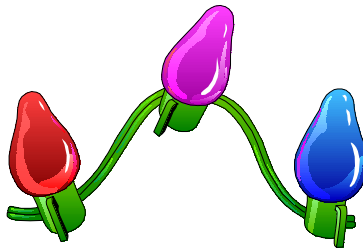


# Mike & Jane's Annual Report



December 25, 1996

*"Happiness... Good God — Unh!  
I got plenty of  
Would you believe, I got peace of mind  
And I'll be groovin' at Christmas time"*  
— James Brown

This time of year, looking at the world through the eyes of a one- and a three-year-old gives us quite a different perspective. For one thing, everybody looks really tall. For another, having a guy in a Santa suit pull up next to you at a traffic light provides a thrill that lasts for weeks. Although having to explain about Santa guzzling a bottle of Ripple does get a little dicey. No wonder he's such a "jolly old elf."

Maggie and David are Way Too Much Fun, and spout nauseatingly cute sayings on a daily basis, which will not be repeated here. . . . You're welcome. OK, OK, just one: Upon being informed that Mike's youngest sister would be visiting, Maggie announced: "I love Trishy and Trishy loves me. And if this dress could get bigger, and bigger, and bigger . . . I would let her wear it." This is a good illustration of her fundamental priorities, which revolve around clothes and hair bows, although anything Disney-related runs a close second.

Maggie's grown into quite the young lady, who thrives on holding nightly tea parties. Sometimes Jane and Mike get so much pretend caffeine in the evenings that we have to pretend to be up all night. She keeps trying to convince her parents to convert her wardrobe into an all-pink motif, right down to the socks and underwear. We figure Maggie has a bright future going door-to-door for Mary Kay. Her other pursuits are exercising her extensive imagination, singing, and dancing. She now wears glasses (except when she takes them off complaining of "swollen eyelashes") which makes

her look smarter than her parents. Which is probably true already.

David, otherwise known as Mr. Trouble or The One Man Wrecking Crew, is a sturdy little guy, who celebrated his first birthday on March 16 by distributing his birthday cake to everyone and everything in sight. Our kitchen floor is still sticky. He started walking some time before that, and immediately commenced his Life's Quest, that being to dismantle everything within reach. Those items which do not have separate parts are conveniently broken into those that do. He can take Maggie two falls out of three, and regularly careens around the back patio on his little plastic car at speeds exceeding the legal limit. So far, he's stubbornly refusing to talk, mostly because he's found that grunting and pointing gets him what he wants. What the heck — it worked for Mike when dating Jane.

We discovered early this year that David has asthma, though we initially mistook it for him hyperventilating over some especially cool Hot Wheels. This has complicated our lives a bit, as we have to do daily breathing treatments and often administer horrible-tasting medications. Fortunately, although we have had several close calls, we and our pediatrician have been able to keep him out of the hospital so far. Or maybe it is because Dr. Porter knows the Big Guy all too well, and fears for the general safety of Richardson Medical Center.

Jane got a promotion this year, so that she is queen of the Interstate Batteries video department in addition to her existing duties of producing printed communications materials. She now gets to order her friends around at work, but so far has refrained from having her minions pick up our dry cleaning. She was disappointed to discover that her new role as

“Webmistress” of her company’s home page (<http://www.interstatebatteries.com>) did not involve any leather attire or whips, but has managed to reconcile herself to dealing with the Information Farm-to-Market-Road on a daily basis. She can be reached at “jkoenecke@interstatebatteries.com”. For what it’s worth, Mike’s e-mail address is “mkoenecke@dfwmm.net”. We both love getting e-mail, especially when it is unrelated to “Make Money Fast Legally.”

Maggie’s third birthday on July 3 turned into kind of a two-week-long extravaganza of sorts, with a party at home for her Dallas friends and another up in Appleton with her cousins. We even attended a small-town parade fortuitously held in her honor the day after the big day, with fireworks, bands, and crowds galore. She figures all the hullabaloo surrounding her birthday, or the day after to be exact, is justly deserved.

This year, Mike has had a few peculiar car troubles with his 1991 Grand Prix. Although most of the time it is a wonderful and fun car, on occasion the gremlins inhabiting the manifold get a little too frisky and break a 59¢ part that costs \$300 in labor to get to. It also fell prey to the Great June Windstorm, which deposited a tree branch through the back window during a rugby tournament.

Speaking of rugby, Mike is still not yet convinced that he is too old to play, although a recent knee injury, which has kept him sidelined for two months so far, has made him think a bit.

There have not been any particularly spectacular happenings in Mike’s law practice, and the rumors about him plea-bargaining Michael Irvin are all false. Since he spends half his time on computer technical support to family, friends, and clients, he felt entitled finally to upgrade his office machine to a hunka-hunka burnin’ computer with a RAM capacity of more than three times the size of the hard drive on

his first 286. Now Windows 95 crashes twice as fast as it used to, which keeps him happy . . . at least until his computer is obsolete again. Whoops — there it went . . .

As far as home life goes, it seems like one constant losing battle against the forces of entropy. In fact, a CNN photographer stopped by the other day; he had missed his flight to Bosnia and needed some comparable footage for that night’s report. The restaurants we patronize all consider an essential part of the dining experience to be a room filled with plastic balls. We also understand that some fairly decent grown-up movies have been produced within the past three years, but couldn’t say so from personal experience.

There have not been any major changes to the homestead, aside from a new fort/swing set assembled with lots of beer and swearing, a couple of ceiling fans on the patio put in via a similar process, and having Mike’s great-grandmother’s wind-up Victrola proudly installed in our living room. We are pleased to say that, come the next great power blackout, we’ll be the only ones in our neighborhood grooving to Tunes. Mike spent a month stripping and refinishing the thing, and getting it in working order, all so we could listen to old Italian opera and children’s records.

We are sorry to have to report that all was not lollipops and roses near the beginning of the year. On January 15, Jane’s beloved Green Bay Packers lost to Dallas in the NFC Championship game. After that, every time Jane saw a blue star on a gray background, she would start binging on cheese curds and bratwurst and muttering “O, Yah” a lot. Fortunately, the problem was solved when Mike agreed to take down all those Cowboys Cheerleaders calendars posted all over the house. And to stop calling David “Bubba.”

Actually, in spite of the exasperation that goes hand in hand with having little children around (not to mention three small dogs with

the cumulative intelligence of a tree), we do know how astonishingly fortunate we are to have the wonderful family and friends we do. Come visit sometime. We hope all have the merriest of Christmas seasons, and look forward to hearing from y'all soon.

Mike & Jane