

# MIKE & JANE'S ANNUAL REPORT

DECEMBER 25,  
2001



*"Santa won't be coming by this year.  
I'm really sorry kids,  
But I spent all my money on alcohol.  
And you won't be getting any presents.  
\*\*BUURPPP\*\* Well, at least I got a buzz..."*

— TVTV\$, *Daddy Drank Our Xmas Money*

When we last checked in, Mike and Jane had been suspended by the Catwoman over a pit filled with cranky chihuahuas...

Uh, actually, we looked back over the past year and concluded that if we were to relate anything remotely exciting here, we would have to make stuff up. Or at least embellish what we really did beyond any link with reality. Same as usual.

So, Jane's brother Paul introduced Maggie and Dave to snowmobiling during our Christmas trip to Wisconsin, and kept it under 80 m.p.h. only after having been bribed with a case of Coors Light.

And we returned to Dallas, while Mike continued in the year of the Dual Law Practice. In November of 2000, Mike began spending half his time doing estate planning and probate work for a law firm in Arlington who wanted to hire him. The idea was to keep working at his own office half the time until Mike's lease expired, then move over to Arlington full time at the end of March. This did not come without its drawbacks. For one thing, the commute each way averaged around 45 minutes. For another, keeping track of two separate practices got really confusing, especially when Mike accidentally sued himself in January, and could not even recover attorney's fees.

With all this going on, no wonder Mike and Jane suddenly ran off to Cancun in February in a pretty pathetic attempt to recapture the spirit of Spring Break. After a remarkably short flight (it takes less time to fly from Dallas to Cancun than to Chicago), we entered Mexico, having thoughtfully armed ourselves with mace to handle the swarms of time-share salesman in full attack mode. We went on to stay at the *Gran Caribe Real*, which is Spanish for "Really Big Pinto Bean." We think. It has been a while since high school Spanish for both of us,

which might have explained all the giggling we encountered.

Overall, Cancun was fun, and we recommend it, but it is not the place to go if you are looking for authentic local color. Unless the locale you are looking for is, say, a random mall in suburbia. We did spend a day traveling on a bus to visit Chichen Itza, which turns out to have absolutely nothing to do with Colonel Sanders.

By the end of March, it was becoming evident that the Arlington law firm did not have enough extra work to keep Mike busy for two days a week, let alone five, so he moved his office home instead.

Maggie had her First Communion in the Spring, though we have already had to get her out of the habit of swigging the whole bottle of sacred wine at the altar.

It was about this time that Jane and Mike had the lunatic idea that their lives were not sufficiently complicated. Or their carpets were way too clean, or perhaps they were getting altogether too much quality sleep. For whatever reason, we decided to adopt a couple of dogs. Off we traipsed to Lone Star Poodle Rescue (poodles being one of the few breeds to which Mike's mother is not allergic), and returned home shortly with a matched set: black and white. We agonized over clever names for several days, then settled on... Bob and Larry.

So the overall annoyance factor was back comfortably in the red zone. Bob turned smart, affectionate, and fun. Larry turned out to be really cranky. After he bit all four of us in the span of the next few weeks, we were required to trade him in on a draft pick. The replacement house critter, Jean-Claude, turned out to be equally dangerous to our children, as his constant flopping on his back begging to be scratched creates quite the tripping hazard.

For Dave's sixth birthday in March, we felt a major production was called for, so invited quite a crowd of his little pals to the "Mad Scientist Party." featuring a toxic waste relay race, a papier mache



volcano, geode smashing, ooze making, and an eventual raid by the EPA.

In the Spring Maggie decided she wanted to try organized athletics for the first time, so played machine-pitch softball with her friends on the "Shooting Stars." She met expectations by going six games without coming remotely close to getting on base. Fortunately, she kept trying, and started hitting consistently after that, although her drives rarely traveled more than twenty feet or so. Still, seeing as how the fielding skills of the eight-year-old girls were roughly on a par with the Texas Rangers, she got on base every time.

To round out the annual list of traveling, Jane went to Hawaii for a few days for business. Or so she claims. In June Mike went to Philadelphia for his twentieth Haverford reunion, where he got to live in a dorm with his college roommate, just like old times. Now he is staying up all night drinking beer and playing quarters all over again, which wears Jane out, what with Pink Floyd blasting out of the stereo and all. And in October the whole family flew up to Wisconsin to visit Jane's side of the family. We took the kids to an orchard to pick some apples; this was a whole lot more fun than the Texas equivalent of cactus harvesting. Safer, too.

After a long hiatus, we enjoyed the chance to participate in friends' weddings: Joe & Renae in April and, and Jean (aka Beanie) and Dan in June.

As is now an annual ritual, Mike participated in another year of Bar None in June, singing, acting, dancing, and generally making a total fool out of himself. Which is what people usually get to see for free at parties, at least until the police arrive.

In the summer, Maggie's friend Manöelle visited for a couple of weeks, flying in from Paris, and we had several of their friends over for a big slumber party, which set the all-time Giggle Density Record and hospitalized Dave for a week with a severe case of cooties.

Dave played his first season of T-ball in the Spring and another season of soccer in the Fall with his pack of buddies. The teams are both called the "Pokémon." We are hoping that when they get older they do not settle on a name like the "Duke



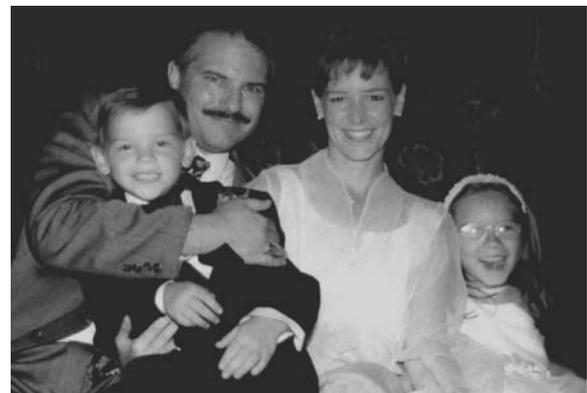
Nukems" or something. Watching these guys is way better than watching the Cowboys; at least Dave and his pals are not being paid millions to fumble around like klutzes. And they have fun.

Mike eased his way back into what passes for athletics by playing on the Knights of Columbus softball team. He managed to injure himself twice over six games, probably out of habit from playing rugby for so long.

After the events of September 11, Jane and Maggie could not stay away and flew up to New York to visit her brother Joe while Mike and Dave were on an Indian Guide camp out. They especially enjoyed seeing *The Music Man* on Broadway, and learning the Whale Dance from Jane's friend Amy at the Museum of Natural History, which still failed to coax Geppetto and Pinocchio out from the model.

For Halloween, Maggie dressed as Norbert (a dragon from *Harry Potter*) emerging from his egg, which was a lot more creative than Dave's choice: some random and weird Pokémon character. Let's see... Maggie continues to enjoy piano and third grade at St. Paul the Apostle, and David loves first grade there. Now it's December, and we will be staying here for the holidays, seeing as how we will be back in Wisconsin for Jane's niece Sarah's wedding in February.

Our best wishes and warmest thoughts to all our friends and family, and we hope this Christmas is a wonderful one for all.



*Mike, Jane, Maggie and Dave*