

# MIKE & JANE'S ANNUAL REPORT

*The Annotated Version*

DECEMBER 25, 2002

Welcome to the Annotated Version of the Annual Report.<sup>1</sup>

Mike had grandiose plans for the Surprise Party to End All Surprise Parties for Jane's 40<sup>th</sup> birthday in January, all of which were torpedoed when Jane overheard him plotting. Jane told Mike that anything involving the United States Marine Band and a flyover of B-2 bombers was a bit more than she really wanted, so the celebration was scaled back and only included a few close friends, plus her brothers Paul and Jim who flew in from Wisconsin.<sup>2</sup>



*Magatola, the Shooting Star*

In February, Maggie earned an Honorable Mention (no cracks about how that's like "kissing your sister," please) for her science fair project, which was about visibility of stars in the night sky. Perhaps that was not the best choice of topic, though, as it seems to have set a habit of staring off into space whenever she is supposed to be doing her homework. The whole family then flew up to Wisconsin for Jane's niece Sarah's wedding, and it was really nice to be together for that.

March brought Dave's 7<sup>th</sup> Birthday Party, held (naturally) with a Harry Potter theme, in which Mike dressed up as Dumbledore, using a fake beard dating from a 1962-vintage cheap Santa suit, Jane as Professor McGonagall, and a special appearance by Professor Trelawny<sup>3</sup>. The Quidditch broom races were a big hit, though no one actually managed to stay airborne more than 0.0006 seconds. They also got to make their own magic wands, which was fun until one of the boys accidentally turned Bob<sup>4</sup> into a newt.<sup>5</sup>



*The Real Dave*

Mike took over coaching Dave's St. Paul soccer team in March. The boys voted unanimously to rename the team the "Digimon," which apparently is *way* cooler than last year's "Pokémon." They all chose names, and Dave came up with "Skullgraymon," making for a jersey we can use to humiliate him with in front of girlfriends in about ten years.<sup>6</sup>

Dave's improving at soccer, and he has a good bunch of friends. Trouble is, attempting to gain their collective attention ordinarily requires firing a flare gun at regular intervals, and practice disintegrates when Mike runs out of ammunition. The Fall season was more of the same, although many parents felt that the lads were finally catching on to the concept.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Seeing as how we ran out of actual creative ideas.

<sup>2</sup> They were really bummed they did not get to ride on an Air Force jet.

<sup>3</sup> A friend of ours who may be a lot older than she lets on, judging from all the hippie clothes.

<sup>4</sup> The hyperactive black poodle we got last year. The laid-back one is Jean Claude. Yes, they *are* weird names for dogs.

<sup>5</sup> We left him that way. He is much quieter and doesn't shed.

<sup>6</sup> How's that for thinking ahead?

<sup>7</sup> Or they're just having pity on Mike.

Dave entered the Indian Guides version of Pinewood Derby in the Spring, fielding a race car with a wooden chassis and an Interstate Batteries #18 shell. We had the only NASCAR-oriented entry, which enabled us to sign exclusive sponsorship deals with companies making bass boats and beer.<sup>8</sup>

It *was* fairly fast, though.<sup>9</sup>

In April we went to another Interstate Batteries semi-annual convention, this time back on Oahu. Although more work than play was involved for Jane, we enjoyed a party on the U.S.S. Missouri<sup>10</sup> and touring a submarine in Pearl Harbor.

In other sporting news, Dave tried his hand (or feet, as the case may be) at Taekwondo<sup>11</sup> in the Spring, which he enjoyed, and also had a successful season playing T-ball. Maggie signed up for her second season with the Shooting Stars in softball.<sup>12</sup>

In May, Jane's college friend Judy, having had about enough of five months worth of snow, ran down to Texas in desperation. They had a grand time going through wine tastings in Grapevine, then worked their way through Scarborough Renaissance Faire and various other activities.<sup>13</sup>

June seemed like one long month of taxi service, as Maggie attended DECATS<sup>14</sup> across town, three weeks of fun classes like sign language and music composition. Mike, as per usual, was deep into rehearsals and shows for Bar None, the lawyer "follies" type show that raises money for scholarships at SMU. Jane flew out to Santa Fe with Mike's sisters and mother in honor of Betsy's 40<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Mike got the chance to attend a NASCAR race with Jane this year, and chose the Loudon race in July, evidently thinking that the concession stands at a race in New Hampshire would have something other than fried pork rinds and tins of Copenhagen. Or something like that. We flew into Boston a few days early to see the sights, and rang

in the Boston trifecta: First, we stayed in the oldest hotel, the Parker House (which does *not*, after all, make Monopoly. That would be Parker *Brothers*). Then we drank in the oldest bar, the Old



*Dave With Racing Trophies*



*Mike, Jane, and Mike the Accordion Guy  
in New Hampshire*

<sup>8</sup> Unfortunately, the YMCA got wind of the whole deal, so Dave's college education still is not paid for.

<sup>9</sup> Unlike a certain *real* #18 race car we could name.

<sup>10</sup> Ask us sometime about how the Canadians messed up the peace treaty ending World War II. Really.

<sup>11</sup> Which is not, surprisingly, an island somewhere in the Sea of Japan.

<sup>12</sup> She's as girly-girl as it gets: people actually burst out laughing watching her run. But she does fine anyway.

<sup>13</sup> At least one of which did not involve drinking.

<sup>14</sup> Daily Enlightenment of Certain Always Tardy Students? At least we *think* that's why Maggie got invited.

Bell Tavern. Finally we ate in the oldest restaurant, too.<sup>15,16</sup>

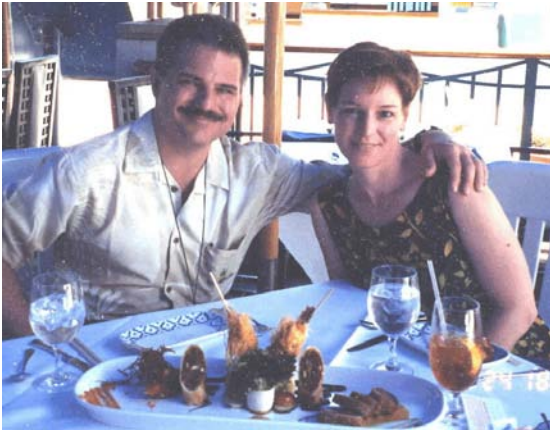
We particularly enjoyed the Freedom Trail, though Mike kept embarrassing Jane by loudly comparing everything unfavorably to the Alamo (“I don’t see no ‘line in the sand’ drawn at this Hill Bunker thing!”).<sup>17,18</sup>

Maggie celebrated her ninth birthday on July 3<sup>rd</sup> with some sort of “girl-2-girl” slumber party utterly beyond Mike’s comprehension.<sup>19</sup>

In August, we hit the road for the grand upper Midwest tour, through Waupaca, Shawano, Appleton, Milwaukee, Lake Mills, Verona, Wisconsin Dells (for lunch) and then St. Peter, Minnesota, all in seven days. Possibly the highlight of the trip was the gaudy sophistication of the Nicollet County Fair in Minnesota, though we missed out on the big demolition derby the evening we were there.<sup>20</sup>

In September, as school and activities ratcheted up as usual. Soccer started up again for Dave (and Mike, aka “Coachemon”), Indian Guides halfheartedly limped into a third year,<sup>21</sup> and Dave joined Cub Scouts too. Maggie jumped into Girl Scouts, but figured that was not complicated enough, so she decided to join the band and learn to play the clarinet besides her piano lessons.<sup>22</sup>

In October Jane flew up to Wisconsin for yet another 40<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration, this time with her friend Beanie, which for her was like being 20 again, “but with more brains.”<sup>23</sup> She had a terrific time seeing old friends. November saw a pretty quiet Thanksgiving.



So far in December have seen the various parties, recitals, and concerts. Jane and Maggie got to see the Rockettes Christmas show<sup>24</sup>, and Dave joined them to go to Wisconsin the weekend before Christmas to visit family.

Our best wishes and warmest thoughts to all our friends and family, and we hope this Christmas is a wonderful one for all.<sup>25</sup>

*Mike, Jane, Maggie and Dave*

<sup>15</sup> Though it was kind of risky, what with their having been grandfathered for 200 years from compliance with health regulations and all.

<sup>16</sup> Mike wanted to put a joke in here about “getting scrod in Boston,” but Jane vetoed that idea.

<sup>17</sup> You know, William Travis, Jim Bowie..? It’s a Texas thing.

<sup>18</sup> They’re not all that sophisticated out East either: in Quincy we had a tour guide who played “Meet the Flintstones” on the harmonica. There were cobwebs in her tip jar.

<sup>19</sup> Rules published for the party included “keep one foot on the floor at all times” and “no talking about somebody who is not here unless it’s a really good story.”

<sup>20</sup> We are not making this up.

<sup>21</sup> The friends and camping are great, but the annual shakedown for YMCA financing is getting tedious.

<sup>22</sup> Her first choice was the trombone. Mike convinced her that she would have better luck playing something she could lift.

<sup>23</sup> Jane claimed they “weren’t 40: they’re 18 with 22 years of experience.”

<sup>24</sup> Mike wanted to say something really awful like “they got a kick out of it,” but Jane vetoed that too.

<sup>25</sup> Made you look!