

Merry Christmas!

from

Dennis, Bert, Tommy, Stephen,
Aaron & Andrew Griffin



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Bert has been having a hard time finding the motivation to start this year's newsletter. The house is decorated in and out, the presents are wrapped and sent. Dennis has even made his famous fudge and pastrami.

But she just couldn't get herself to sit down and write. Andrew finally forced her to it. It was either that or listen to another evening of his endless questions. "Could humans live if there were no bacteria or viruses?" "How many grams are there in an ounce?" "Why do dogs like chocolate so much?"

Now, Bert loves a curious child, but is also fond of her sanity. She decided to hide in the computer room. But still no inspiration came.

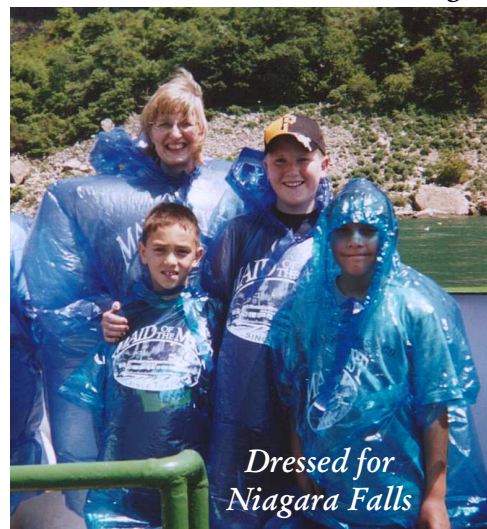


Tommy before braces removal

After rereading all of the earlier newsletters, she came to the conclusion that she is a proponent of the "nature" rather than "nurture" theory of boy development. A description of the pre-verbal Andrew. "He is constantly pointing to things and asking "Daat?" These days, every question has to begin with "Mom?". After Andrew was home sick all of Thanksgiving week, she actually offered him \$100 if he would not say that word for the rest of the day. He didn't believe she'd give him that much, so Bert was forced to lower her offer to \$10. Andrew told Dennis, "Your wife is going to give me \$10!"

And one year old Aaron. "Anything with gears and engines fascinates him." He has now taught himself to draw a train using perspective.

The three year old Stephen. "We see many sports events in our future." He played football again, has just started basketball and is certain that



*Dressed for
Niagara Falls*

he can be on swim team and baseball All-stars at the same time. And the first grade Tommy. "His teacher wishes he would loosen up." Tommy recently took a personality profile test and was proud to announce that he is an introvert. This theory takes the pressure off us as parents too! They'll be who they are!

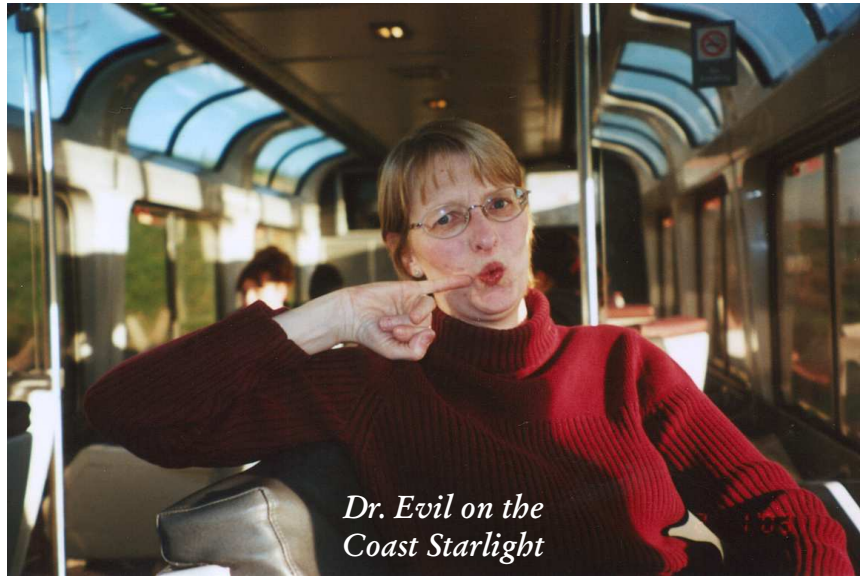
Both Aaron and Andrew are still piano players, practicing daily although their teacher has not been available much due to a knee replacement. They have just joined a 4-H archery club and are begging to dance again next semester. Once again, they have chosen to be in separate classes and have each other's homeroom teachers for reading. They are enthusiastic participants in their school's intramural



sports world of hockey, soccer, speedball, matball, jumprope, volleyball and basketball.

Stephen is adamantly refusing to take dance, but is enjoying his youth group. He is off to honor band with a new cornet but is generally disgusted with middle school and is glad that he will be in high school this fall.

Tommy is contemplating taking a tap class and encouraged his dance instructor to start another partner class. This would give him one more opportunity to spend time with his girlfriend Sarah who is also a dancer. They also go to the same youth group and are in OSSOM which is a school social service club. He has become a passionate writer of poetry and short stories and joined a writers' group. We did notice that Miss Sarah also attended the last meeting. Other than the biology and art classes which he does enjoy, Sarah also seems to be the main reason he attends school at all. Obviously, his parents are also VERY fond of Sarah.



Dr. Evil on the Coast Starlight

The highlights of our year included another train trip east where we celebrated Aaron and Andrew's baptism, a fall visit from Bert's "twin" cousin Kathy, and some short summer trips including two utterly relaxing days along the Rogue River with Dennis, Linda, Carlos and Marcus Hardesty.

Dennis has once again been an overtime slave, (i.e., had a blast) in Alamogordo and down at the Southern California fires. After a two week stint working with the airspace coordinators in Portland, he accompanied Aaron and Andrew home on the train after they attended "Lewis and Clark Camp" on the Oregon coast. He recently enabled "griffin.net" so all five of our computers are on-line with DSL.

Bert is currently trying to learn how to plan a basketball invitational tournament (for Stephen's team in February) and that prompted her to suggest to her writers' group that Lakeview should host a writer's invitational convention. That could be a boost, both economically and culturally, for our little town. It could also drive her quite mad. She was properly initiated as a dance teacher by seven incredibly cute three year olds, and in January, she and Annie will share the thirteen new equally adorable three year olds. Wouldn't you just love to see all of them on stage at once?



Dennis fishing in Mexico

When we bought our piano it came with a free cruise for two to Catalina and Ensenada, Mexico. We decided who would go based on seniority. Bert and Dennis had a great time! After years of getting United Airline miles when we buy groceries, we finally have two round trip tickets burning a hole in our pocket. Dennis wants to check out Steve Chinault's new digs in South Carolina. Stephen says he wants the second ticket so he can visit the Atlanta Braves. Bert says, "HA!"

Uh oh, Andrew has found Bert and wants to know how he can gain enough weight so he doesn't need a belt, and why Daisy hates it when he puts a blanket over her head and can Bert touch her tongue to her nose and did brachiosaurus have only molars? A quick Merry Christmas to you and she's on her way to lock herself in the car.