

# MERRY CHRISTMAS

from

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

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..AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR (2007)

So much for a Christmas newsletter this year. Instead, we will have an "Almost in Time for the New Year" letter. During the week of school before Christmas break, Dennis and/or I attended a Cantata (which is not the same as a cantina), a band and choir concert, a three day basketball tournament, a piano recital, a dance and a program at church. Then the day after school let out, we headed to Paradise, CA to visit friends and arrived back home on Christmas Eve. Annie and Casey, and Michael and Jaime and their four girls including the latest addition, three month old great niece Chelsea, joined us for Uncle D's pizza and a hilarious graham cracker house building contest on Christmas evening.

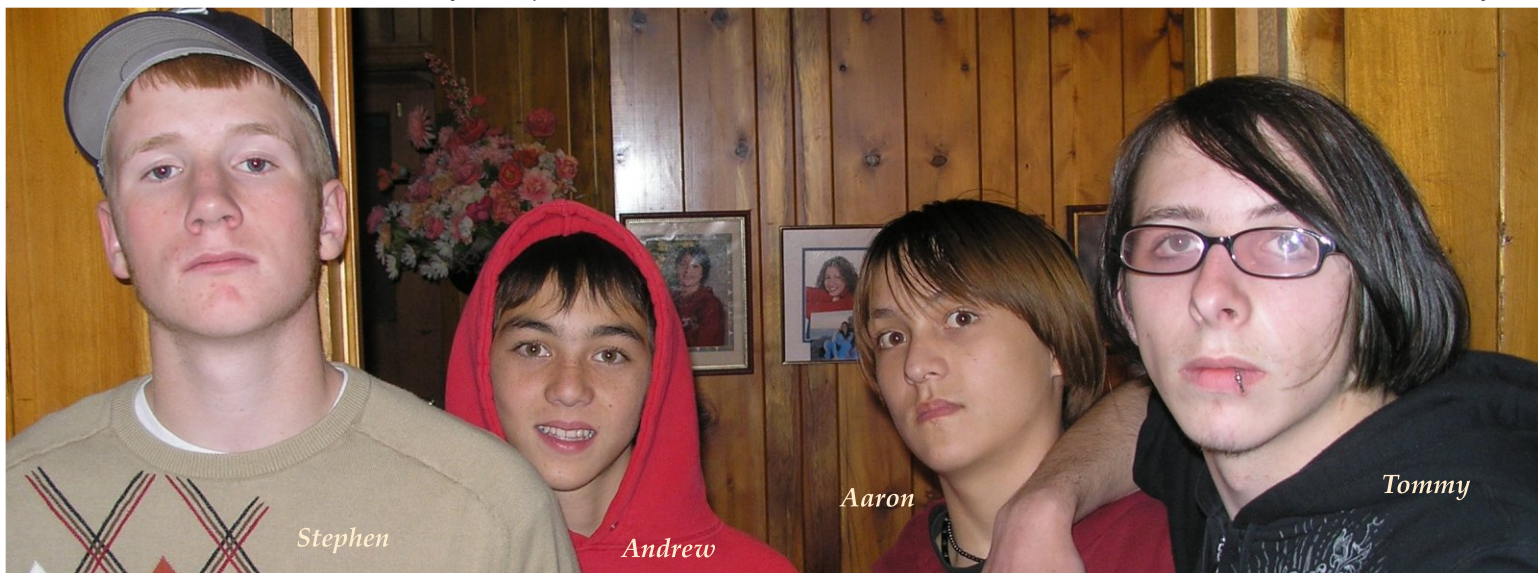
When Aaron and Andrew have their birthday in March, Dennis and I will be the parents of four teenage boys. I don't know if it's the fact that the boys actually like each another or our increasing senility, but we seem to be enjoying this stage of life.

The older boys got their drivers' licenses within five months of each other. Stephen was made to jump through every hoop known to mankind (driver's ed class, driving at night, in the snow, on the freeway) before he was permitted to take his road test. With Tommy we just said, "You

need to drive yourself to work. Anyone that can play video games like you will figure it out in a flash." And the next week he bought himself a car. We barely have three years to recover before we attempt to teach twins. I'm fairly certain that the cardio-vascular system of a 57 year old is NOT designed for that.

But for now, Aaron and Andrew are still in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade. They go to school at 7AM just to hang in the band room and they both are still playing piano. Aaron's second drum set should be arriving soon. Both of them will be singing in the choir by the end of January. Otherwise their approach to school is as different as night and day. One boy must have every duck lined up perfectly in its row and in its uniform. The other just hopes a duck will waddle up when he needs one. Andrew is a runner having completed his first cross country season and he looks forward to track. Aaron will be starting basketball after the break.

As a Junior, Stephen is spending the break practicing on the varsity basketball team in the morning and practicing his pitching and selling boxes of fruit as a fund raiser for the varsity baseball team in the evening. He is seriously considering colleges in warm climates-Arizona or Honolulu-because he has heard rumors that some baseball teams have never had a game canceled due to snow. He runs cross country



Stephen

Andrew

Aaron

Tommy

mainly to get in shape for basketball. He would also like to find a way to squeeze soccer into his life.

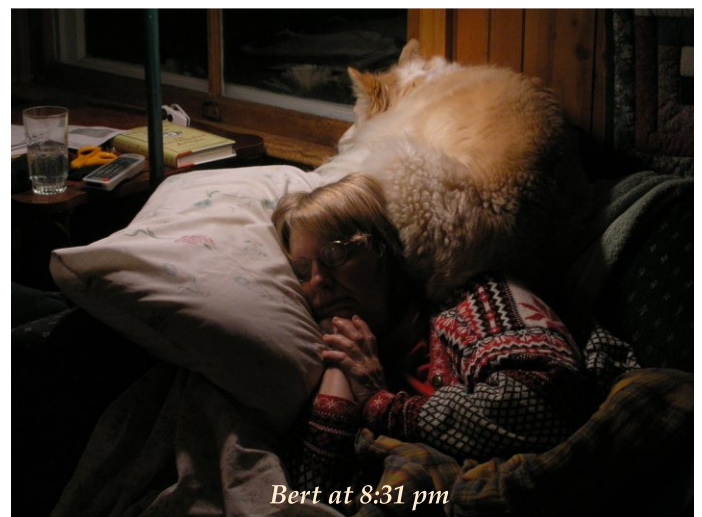
Tommy hopes to relocate to a liberal western Oregon community. He is also trying to decide what he might major in at school. He still loves art and philosophy and writing. He moved out for awhile, but has recently returned. Our home is once again the rendezvous point for his entourage.

I'm thinking he and every other undecided student should seriously consider earning a degree in speech therapy. Again, I'm back delivering services to thirty cute K-3<sup>rd</sup> graders. Just as all of my peers retired, my employers

offered to send me to graduate school. Um..tempting, but no. The demand for therapists is so great that even with a two year degree as an assistant, one could have a nice salary and live most anywhere she/he wanted!

Dennis still lives here and he cooks and he goes to work. He is planning on building a new computer this year. Silicon is just sand, right? How hard can it be? He says his New Years resolution is 1280 x 1024, whatever that means.

So, on that eve of a New Year, as we lift our glasses to all our blessings, we'll be thinking of you. And then it'll be 8:30 and way past my bedtime.



*Bert at 8:31 pm*



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