

January 1, 2003

Happy New Year everyone,



If you look closely, in the stack of shots on the right side of the photo, you'll see something resembling a copper spider resting on boy hair. This interesting device (a scalp massager called the Tingler™) has properties quite useful in family photo sessions. It calms the native beast and yet encourages smiles. The main picture shows the boys in post Tingled bliss (and no, they're not humming the first note of a song). I can hear some of you saying, "Tingler huh. Jim, looks like you've been watching way too much late night television. Time to hit the off button and head for bed. You'd feel better. Really." I must admit weakness in this area (still hoping Johnny Carson will return). But my one claim to fame I owe completely to LNT. Yes, you guessed it, the Flowbee: a beautiful marriage between the scissors and the vacuum cleaner. I've been sucking the hair off my head (and the boys') for 9 years now and don't see any trips to the barber in the near future. I enjoy any chance I get to fess up to my Flowbee ways. One notable confession of this kind happened recently in Portland during a follow-up visit to Laurie's sinus surgeon. I asked some questions about the tools they used in the surgery (see Laurie's section). He described one tool as being like a "Flowbee, you know, like on late night television. It has cutting blades in-line with a vacuum for removing bone." [Sorry if you're eating right now. The gory stuff is almost over.] And so, I immediately pulled on my hair and said, "This was done with a Flowbee." I can still see the look on his face.

Joseph (14) wrestled again last season but thinks this may be the end of the road. He's finding that his aspect ratio isn't quite right for the sport: he keeps gaining height while the other guys keep gaining weight. At 5'10' he's getting close to old Dad and keeps reminding me that I'm

shrinking. He's had fun with high school marching band this year. They competed in many events including one big overnight trip to Seattle. In step with his Aquatic Biology class, Joe's been trying his luck with matchmaking and his Betta fish, but says our house is about ten degrees too cold for fish romance. **Carl** (9) continued in his role as chess monster bringing home a flurry of trophies, including being named Eastern Washington champion (2nd grade) at the end of last season. And still enjoying soccer... **David** (6) took the plunge into first grade and likes it (after getting used to the long day) and started soccer and chess club this year too. Both Carl and David have joined (we joined them) the kid's choir at church. Now, if we could just get them interested in piano lessons ("no Dad, no way").

Our David continues his fight with linear scleroderma. His left leg is about two inches shorter, and his foot is about two sizes smaller now, but there are no signs that it is spreading beyond his leg (it seems to be petering out as his doctors predicted). We have an interesting collection of specialists that David sees including a rheumatologist in Portland, an orthopedic surgeon and an orthotist in Spokane, and our local dermatologist here in Richland and another at the Mayo Clinic in MN. The people at Mayo are coming up to speed on a new (to the U.S.) treatment using UVA-1 light. They may soon be ready to work with us. David continues to be a happy and active boy; it was fun to see him motor around the soccer field this year. Thank you for your continuing prayers.

Laurie's had another active year at our church, Richland Lutheran. She's serving on the foundation board and enjoying tapping into skills honed in her Piper Jaffray days in MN. Laurie has a long history of sinus infections (and some very distressing CT scans) which finally led to sinus surgery and septoplasty (break nose to

straighten stuff) in November. She's been a top-flight trooper in spite of the nasty side effects of the pre- and post-surgery medications.

I continue to shift focus at work from science and engineering to software builder. Still not quite sure what I want to be when I grow up. I joined BSF (the Navy SEALs of Bible studies) and am excited to find others there searching for a stronger connection and preparing for active service. Nothing quite like 150 men belting out a hymn.

Laurie and I celebrated our tenth anniversary this summer (and our tenth year in WA). I'm sure many don't know the story behind our short engagement and high-speed wedding preparations. For Laurie, it was very much like being a war bride, except a new job (halfway across the country) and a nearly confirmed old bachelor were in the mix (a wedding photo and transcription are still on our Charter web site).

We made it out on the road with visits to the Oregon coast, Portland, and of course our old stomping ground Minnesota. We demonstrated our MN colors in WA by swimming in the notoriously cold (slush-like) waters at the north end of Lake Chelan.

Thanks for your Christmas cards, your e-mail, and your visits to WA; we really enjoy them! Take good care, and may you be blessed this new year.

Jim, with warm wishes from Laurie, Joseph, Carl, and David.

"Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy..." Luke 2:10