

1996 Christmas Letter

Merry Christmas from Ronda and Art King and our wee little family.

Newsworthy events from our year can be found here:

- **January:** Ronda and Art take a weekend getaway to a romantic cabin near Mt. Adams for our traditional "naming war weekend". It snows 2 feet but we are cozy. We come back home with agreement on a boys name and a girls name. Ronda's intuition says it's a boy. Art laughs at her, smugly convinced a girl is on the way.

- **February:** Feb. 19th, 7:13PM Caleb Steven King is born! Bethani, Brenden and Elissa are present for the birth. Bethani cuts the cord. Caleb is healthy and we come home rejoicing.

- **March:** On a cold night we get away from the city lights and enjoy a breath-taking view of the comet Kyakutake splashed across the northern sky.

- **April:** Brenden and I fly to Montana and join my three brothers to celebrate Mom and Dad's 50 years together. Their anniversary party brings many friends to wish them well.

- **May:** (Elissa with sidewalk chalk in hand): "What shall I draw?" (Dad) "How about a picture of your beautiful mother just before the baby was born?" (Elissa, without missing a beat) "I don't have that much chalk." (Mom) "Grrr...!"

- **June:** Over breakfast we talk about weddings. Sierra listens a while, then pipes up; "Mommy, when Daddy got down on his knees and asked you to marry him, did you say "yes" because you knew how many nice children you would get?"

- **July:** Ronda stages a big surprise party for her husband's 40th birthday. Black balloons, cake and fun.

- **August:** We mourn the passing of Ronda's grandfather, Edwin Rigby at the age of 97. The family enjoys a week in the sun and water at Camp Mivoden in Idaho.

- **September:** We spend a wonderful week on a houseboat on sunny Lake Billy Chinook. Tranquillity, family reading, jumping off the roof of the boat...a very refreshing vacation. Elissa starts 7th grade at TVJA, the twins start third grade at home.

- **October:** Zoraida Lopez from Chiapas, Mexico arrives. She will be with us for the school year, teaching Spanish classes to everyone in the family. The Korean foster mother who cared for Brenden his first year of life visits Portland. Brenden and all of us have a very wonderful, emotional meeting with her.

WRAP-UP: The holiday season is here. We enjoy the annual Singing Christmas Tree concert, and the joyous rounds of Christmas music, celebration, and family. Caleb has joined the family meals in his little chair. His smile brings such sweet joy. Taylor and his tractors fill the house with mischief, Hannah and Sierra add little girl spice, Bethani and Brenden discover a whole new world of books this year. Elissa consistently whips her dad in basketball. Ronda and Art have found abundant blessings in the unfolding lives of each child.

We wish for each of you in our extended family and circle of friends the warmest and best holiday. In the Spirit of the One who brings us all together, We Wish You a Merry Christmas!

Art, Ronda, Elissa (13), Brenden (9), Bethani (9), Sierra (6), Hannah (4), and Taylor (2) & Caleb (9 months)

Favorite Books of 1996. Our family tradition is a half hour of reading together each night before bedtime. We read many good books this year, and a few outstanding ones. We've listed the outstanding ones here:

Family Read-aloud: *The Lantern Bearers*, *Watership Down*, *The Yearling*, *Horse of a Different Color*, *The Cutters*, *A Wrinkle in Time*

Little children's picture books: *The Rag Coat*, *The Potato Man*, *Wilfred Gordon McDonald Partridge*, *Grandfathers Journey*
Art: *The Physics of Immortality*, *The Bell Curve*, *The Living Planet*

Ronda: Emma, The Pearl, Lord of the Flies