

Hello from Idaho!

We hope this greeting finds all well with you and those you love. We have just settled into a new year's winter/spring routine and wanted to send a post-season's greeting. For us 1997 ended with a trip best described as two weeks, four-thousand miles, thirty-five relatives, and two adolescents in a mini-van (suffice to say, at least we didn't bring the dog, cat, and turtle this year!). Consequently, our Christmas letter has turned into just a letter this year.

Life is pretty much going along for us. We each have our own drummer, but we still manage to sit down at the table to eat together probably ten meals a week. This is partly because the kids don't drive yet, but partly because we don't mind each others's company. To give a quick run-down on the family, we begin with Kevin, who continues to be a busy faculty type, teaching, doing administrative and committee work, and doing research, both funded and for fun (not necessarily the same thing!). Last year he made Gold Medallion on Delta, which means he travels more than he would like, but gets nice perks when he does travel. Kevin was honored last year as an ISU Outstanding Researcher of the Year (one of five). He continues as director of a university research center in the area of control systems. This past summer he was an invited panelist and speaker at a meeting in Seoul, Korea (Joshua got to travel there as well and really enjoyed his first trip abroad) and he is currently organizing a meeting of the top thirty people in the world in his research specialty.

Turning to Tammy, most of our readers know she finished with a history degree about three years ago. After that she stayed at home a couple of years and then got involved in hospice as a volunteer. She really seemed to find a niche there. She has a special ability to sit with people who are dying of a terminal illness and to provide comfort by her presence. She has had quite a few positive experiences in hospice that she could tell you about sometime. After a while she decided to go back to school to get a social work degree because to do anything more than volunteer in the social or health services you need a degree. I think we figured that between May 96 and May 97 she took 43 cr hrs total! Of course, that's in addition to being full-time mom, wife, cook, and house-cleaner (remember all that travel Kevin has been doing? someone has to take up the slack). Well, she is now in her last semester and is doing her practicum. After that she can take the licensing test and get a job! She is doing her practicum at the Area Council on the Aging, primarily in adult protection. She has to give them 400 free hours of her time over the next fourteen weeks. It's been tough to have her in school again, and the eight-to-five routine during the practicum will take some adjustment for us, but she will make more of a positive difference in people's lives than Kevin will with all his research and papers and such. The next time you hear a politician (or anyone else for that matter) spouting off about cutting social services, call Tammy and ask for some real-life stories. Talk about family values! Our society really has them (NOT!).

Following the usual formula of Christmas-card-like letters, we now move to the children. Joshua is now a seventh grader and will turn thirteen in a month or so. As those of with kids the same ages as ours know, life can basically be described as Zits comic strip. Joshua is a normal seventh grader. He knows and wears the fashions and he knows the score about how things work. One of his first lessons to bring home from junior high is that one shouldn't use big words except at risk of ridicule from other kids. Innocence lost in the space of a summer. However, he has adjusted

just fine, is doing well with his grades and friends. Joshua is into painting miniatures (like at game rooms where they do dungeon and dragon-type board games). With him we are already having the usual parent problems of getting him to come in at night when he wants to be hanging out with his friends. Joshua doesn't do organized sports, but is currently into skateboards. He and Kevin still ride mountain bikes. They also have been learning to play Go and also play chess together. Joshua is also taking a four-week introduction to scuba diving at a local dive shop.

Last but not least, Julia is a fifth grader (eleven years old). She is comfortably entrenched in elementary school where it seems she is just bidding time. She really is bored there academically. We have debated moving her ahead every year but always feel that it would be too drastic a move. Now that Joshua is in seventh grade, however, it seems that sometimes Julia gets appropriated to the end of the queue. A highlight of year was a trip to Ely, Minnesota to visit the International Wolf Center, of which she is a card-carrying member. It was a great place and she got to do some really fun stuff such as tracking some wolves using radio transmitters and receivers. Julia remains interested in many types of wildlife. She has been saying she plans to become a marine mammal biologist for about three years and we think she just might. Julia has also become a very accomplished practitioner of origami paper folding. She was introduced to origami through a community ed class and took to it like a fish takes to water. The teacher was so impressed with her that she has begun teaching her privately for free and is taking her to give lessons to scout groups. Julia has also made a few of her own designs.

No discussion of our family is complete without mentioning music. Julia still plays classical piano and does so very well. She has about two or three years under her belt. She plays the real classical stuff, taught by the Southeast Idaho Symphony's pianist. Julia could be a scholarship-level concert pianist if she decides to, but boy, is it hard to get her to practice sometimes!. Julia also taught herself to play a penny whistle. I'm hoping she learns to play Irish folk music on it. Joshua is into guitar. He has had two years classical training and can play classical better than Kevin (not that Kevin could ever really play it). He played a classical version of Norwegian Wood (Beatles) at his school talent show. Lately, he has also been playing electric, with barre chords and he knows how to improvise to 12-bar blues and three-chord rock and roll. He is twelve and hangs out with a friend who plays drums. His friend's older brother also plays electric guitar so Joshua gets lots of exposure. The 7th grade band director is talking to Joshua about playing in the jazz band in junior high, so he's psyched. Kevin still play guitar too, and also acoustic or electric bass. He's about as good as he will ever be, although he still has dreams of playing the blues in a smoky bar in Chicago. A few times the kids and Kevin have "jammed" with Julia on electric piano, Joshua playing lead, and Kevin doing vocals and rhythm and trying to keep everyone in rhythm (they are still young!).

Well there are certainly many more paragraphs to add. We could talk about the books we have read (several hundred between the four of us). We could talk about our recent downsizing in the pets department (we lost a cat and a hamster through natural causes and gave away our three year old iguana). We could talk about our extended family (some ups and downs this last year, as the circle of life goes on). But, if you really want to know more, you should take a vacation to Yellowstone or Sun Valley and plan to visit us on the way. Or, look us up on the web at <http://www.isu.edu/moorek~/mooretop.html>. Until we see or hear from you, please accept our best wishes to you for a happy year ahead.