



Christmas 1999

Dear Friends,

When Emily turned 13 this September, teenagers outnumbered the adults in this household. That pretty summarizes the quality of life around here. Need we say more?

Okay. To elaborate: Emily is joined in rampant adolescence by Sanford, 16, and Colin, 17. They all generally prefer their peers to their parents for company. They listen to their own music (overlapping but distinct for each). And above all, they spend inordinate amounts of time on the phone, or on American On Line, or both at once! That quality of idolizing their parents seems to have declined precipitously. Indeed, when they look at us, they seem to see, in descending order of importance:

- transportation infrastructure
- gatekeeper/barrier to rightful fortune
- food service
- laundry service

For us adults, it's been a quiet year. We continue to treasure our lovely house. It truly is perfect for us, and even Jim enjoys doing a little work in the yard on weekends. (We've had plenty to do: Hurricane Floyd knocked down half a dozen trees!)

In addition to running a shipshape household and keeping close tabs on the kids, Wendy has been busy with many activities. She's been active at church, helping to organize functions, and volunteering at the food pantry. She is still involved in Theta, and this year she joined two garden clubs. She has enjoyed the

outings, lectures, and lunches immensely. She also designed and produced a project on "cartonnage" which appears in the current issue of the magazine Romantic Homes. In April, Wendy began substitute teaching, mostly at the junior high where Emily goes or the high school where the boys go.

Jim generally enjoys his 35-mile scenic drive along the Hudson River every day to Philips in Westchester County. The upmarket widescreen "regular" and digital TVs, for which his team designed an animated on-screen menu system, will be on the market in the U.S. by mid-year. Jim traveled a few times (to the Netherlands, Belgium, and Knoxville) but less than in previous years. In his off hours, he wrote a story for the local paper, and he ventured tentatively onto the golf course, of all things.



The boys enjoyed a successful season rowing this fall. In their last meet in Boston, they won every event they entered! (The picture is from Kingston.)

Colin had great fun this summer, when his friend Alistair visited from England. Colin continues his erratic progress through high school. He does well with teachers he likes, and this year that means history and English. He is back in photography, which he enjoys a lot -- he now has his own Pentax.



Colin also joined an after-school ceramics group and amazed everyone by throwing a beautiful little pot on his first try at the wheel! The other good news for Colin is that he has a more active social life than ever before, including a fairly rapid succession of girlfriends.

Speaking of girlfriends, Sanford celebrated his first anniversary of going steady with his dear friend Danielle (the mysterious fourth child on the card photo). They met on the rowing team, and have been inseparable (especially by phone) ever since.



Sanford is working hard and enjoying one of the benefits of a large high school: he is taking painting, sculpture, and industrial drawing all at once! Sanford also took up the bass guitar (electric, of course) and was part of a band. He still paints his incredible miniatures and enjoys his computer games.



Emily continues to enthrall us with her strong will, artistic talent, and sociable nature. She is an excellent student, and she continues to draw and paint for her own enjoyment. She is in the Girls Chorus and has taken up piano again. She is always on the phone, or AOL, or both. Emily is never alone, traveling with her friends in packs. She loves clothes and has an unerring eye for what's fashionable. Emily also claims to have a boyfriend, although from our perspective — but, hey, we're adults. What would we know?

The sad news this year was the passing of Wendy's mother, Gerry Taylor, in October. It was a huge comfort for her to hear from so many friends.

We are more grateful than ever for the many blessings we enjoy. We wish you a blessed Christmas and a happy new millennium!

Wendy and Jim Hoekema
Colin, Sanford, and Emily
(and of course Livia, JoeB, and Pancake)