

Greetings! It has been ages since I have written and I must apologize profusely. I began a Christmas letter for 2001 and, for some reason, just never finished it and got it sent. So I guess I'll give you a 2 year update.



We are all doing fine. We started 2001 as usual, in New Jersey with Susan's family - banging pots and pans and wishing everyone a Happy New Year. We did not travel much during the first half of the year, saving up all the vacation for summer. We took a week off to attend Blue Lake Family Suzuki camp where Rebecca played violin. In late June and early July, we took a vacation in

Europe. We stayed at a very quaint Bed and Breakfast near Ghent in Belgium and at a rural cottage in Kent in England. One of Susan's nieces, Paulette, who is a couple of years older than Rebecca came along also. Susan posted on a slide presentation of the vacation on the Web (www.egr.msu.edu/~masten - click on The Year 2001, at the bottom of the page). We did quite a bit of sightseeing but (wisely) with three kids we did not push it. It was nice staying in the Bed and Breakfast in Belgium as the three kids could play with the owners' two children and swim in their pool.



2002 has been pretty uneventful. In January we took a short trip to London, Ontario. It was a relaxing weekend - just visited the Children's Museum, the IMAX theater and swam in the hotel pool. Rebecca graduated from Book 1 Suzuki Violin. She had numerous concerts at school and Jeffrey had several sing-a-longs at school. They are always fun. We have not traveled any great distances this year, and in fact, spent the 2001 and 2002 Christmas holidays at home. We missed family but took the time to be together.



In May, we traveled to Syracuse, NY to celebrate my niece, Jennie, graduating from Syracuse University. It was wonderful to see family again.

Rebecca attended Interlochen Arts Camp to study violin. We went up on weekends to visit - and Jeffrey completed his Van-Travel Award. For example in one week, he traveled to Jackson, Michigan on Wednesday with Summer Camp. He visited the Air and Space Museum there, returned home and went up to Harrison, Michigan with me to Girl Scout Camp with my troop. He had a great time herding sheep, sorry, girls, and learning silly Girl Scout songs. He enjoyed camping outside, swimming in the lake, going boating, and sitting around the campfire, telling silly stories. We came home on Friday only to turn around again on Saturday to go visit Rebecca. And summer is supposed to be relaxing! Jeff also played t-ball and attended a

number of summer camps. In August, we had a wonderful visit with family in New Jersey.

The big news on the work front is that Susan was promoted to Full Professor and passed the Professional Engineering exam. Yah-hoo! (She took the exam now, because they Licensing Board changed the rules so that her graduate engineering degrees sufficed and she did not have to complete another seven credits of humanities courses to have the equivalent of a ABET certified engineering degree). Simon is still in Agricultural Engineering and we continue to work together. This past year submitted several proposals together on drinking water treatment. Along with another on estrogenic compounds in dairy cattle manure. So we go from the clean to the filthy or the sublime to the ridiculous. Take your pick!

Rebecca is doing well Middle School (seventh grade) - doesn't seem possible. Jeff is in a 5-6-7 year old Montessori classroom within a Public School. He had adjusted well to a new program and a new school. Jeffrey's main interests are science and playing, playing and science! Rebecca is interested in music, social studies, and math. Science is fine as long as it does not involve dead animals! On the other hand, Jeff is quite happy to explore anything - including the skulls, fur, feathers of dead animals. Rebecca loves classic music. Jeff listens to "rock and roll". Rebecca is a vegetarian, Jeffrey an omnivore! How did they get to be so different?



Susan continued to teach Jeffrey's Sunday School. Both kids say that they are also the teachers. Makes things interesting some times! It was really wonderful to watch the kids grow, as some of them Susan has had in class since they were three years old. This is a special year for all of them as they prepare to receive First Eucharist.



Recently, Rebecca's Girl Scout Troop bridged to Cadettes. There are still six seventh graders in the troop, along with six sixth graders – not too bad for this age group. Jeff is involved in Cub Scouts. He is proud to also have a uniform, which he wore to the recent Bridging Ceremony. Rebecca is also involved in a local Peace and Justice Group for Middle and High School students. They spent much of this semester creating a three-dimensional mural depicting Iraqi citizens living their



normal lives. They have taken the mural to various churches and other locations in the Lansing area. The group was also involved in a local peace march. We all participated in that event!

Other than that, things are pretty normal here. The living room has been transfigured from the Island of Sodor, complete with Thomas, Diesel, and all sorts of other Thomas the Tank Engine friends (the 2001 favorite), to Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. If it is not Hogwarts, it is filled with assorted Lego creations or every type of paper airplane. The dining room has been turned into an office where the kids can do their homework, play computer games and everyone can access the Internet. Susan is STILL finishing the manuscript for a textbook (Principles of Environmental Engineering and Science) that she is co-authoring with another professor here at MSU. She wrote six chapters and Simon wrote one chapter on "Agriculture and the Environment". We are ALL anxiously awaiting its completion!!! It is due out July 2003 – hopefully, it will make the AEESP Best Seller List (AEESP= Association of Environmental Engineering and Science Professors). But, don't expect to see it on the NY Times list!

May 2003 bring you much happiness and may it bring the world peace with justice for all.