

*Q: What has 10 legs, 5 heads, 2 jobs, excess laundry, and a penchant for Mexican food?*

*Tick tick tick tick.....BUZZ!*

If you answered: A typical construction crew, you're **WRONG!** The answer is.....

The Lefton Steinbart Family!

## **2002 Lefton Steinbart Holiday Letter**

Since this is a palindromic year (the only one our kids will likely ever see), we can tell you what's up with us either forward or backwards. So we'll start at the end.

Last week we took a family vacation to Disney World. Lew's sister Linda met us in Orlando and it was great to visit with her and to have a third adult, too. Monica missed our day at the Magic Kingdom due to a stomach bug, but the Disney resort staff gave us plenty of clean sheets and towels and, after a day of sleeping and watching cartoons, she was ready to hit the parks again.

For awhile, it looked like Lew would miss the Mouse completely. He came down with the flu on the Saturday before Thanksgiving, and after 10 days of not feeling better he returned to his doctor for a chest Xray which confirmed pneumonia. His strength was slow to return, but after two weeks in bed, he's almost back to normal (whatever that means for Lew). He is convinced that antibiotics are truly miracle drugs, at least for another 10-20 years. Thanksgiving brought a wonderful visit from Lew's sister Irene and from Dione, Seymour's second wife. We could call her Lew's stepmother but Disney pretty much ruined that moniker. Besides, we've never seen Dione throw back her head in a maniacally evil cackle. Of course, Lew spent the entire holiday weekend in bed with brief appearances in various shades of off-white. We were glad Irene was able to stay for the first few days of Hannukkah.

October was when the viruses first came to our neighborhood. Natalie, like dozens of other kids in her school, fought flu-like illness for almost two weeks. She even had to stay home on Halloween night which meant one less angel to offset the slew of Spidermen. Fortunately, Hannah the cowgirl and Monica the monarch butterfly were sweet about sharing their solicited sugar. Hannah and Monica also battled the bug, but Natalie seemed to get hit the hardest of the three. Lew's sister Charna visited for a couple days on her way back to Bolivia. She got to see a typical daily slice of our lives, which, on any given weekday can include ballet class, soccer game, Girl Scout activity, homework, whining, laundry, bike rides around the neighborhood, etc.

Other Fall activities included PTA efforts such as Enid helping to run the Math and Science Fair and Lew performing as William Shakespeare for a special 4 week "Time Travel" program. Hannah played beautifully in the bell choir at church, Enid travelled to Finland to speak at a special conference, and we enjoyed many visits with friends and family. We still like our little neighborhood in Decatur and we've all made some great friends here.

Natalie's soccer team this fall was all first grade girls. The coach made two rules: #1. Have fun. #2. No hugging or kissing (otherwise it would have been out of control). Natalie loves to sit in a quiet spot and read a good book from cover to cover.

Monica's second year in ballet will end with her final performance at the GA Tech Center for the Performing Arts. This is the same stage which hosted the famous Al Gore and Dan Quayle vice presidential debate in 1992 for you trivia buffs. Monica loves to create things. Sometimes they are works of art; other times they are imaginary worlds of dolls and stuffed animals.

Hannah works twice a week as a video mixer/news reporter on the TV show "What's up Winnona" which is a news and announcement show created, written, and produced by kids at the elementary school. It is broadcast on closed circuit to all classrooms several mornings per week. Hannah loves to sleep, eat, and talk. No. She's not a teenager yet. She's just practicing.

In September, Monica, Natalie, Lew, and Enid went apple picking in North Georgia where we got several bushels, some of which we took straight off the tree. At the same time, Hannah was completing her first solo flight with a visit to Albuquerque to see Linda and Charna. She got to see the NM State Fair, a rodeo, and a live Country Western concert.

Summer was sad. Enid's mother Agnes died in July after a long battle with cancer. Fortunately, we took a trip to visit her only a month before. On that trip in June, we got to see Agnes in the wonderful hospice care facility where she spent her final weeks. We all really enjoyed spending this precious time with Agnes, who was weak but alert and conversant. Our girls also liked playing and snacking in and around the kid-friendly facility. And of course, the silver lining of Agnes' funeral was the opportunity to see cousins, aunts, and uncles. The rest of the summer was filled with camps for the kids, including a weeklong sleepover Girl Scout camp for Hannah.

Our house construction was completed in March giving us a new roof with a skylight at the top of the stairs, a usable den, and a large screened porch/deck which adjoins the kitchen and rises above the backyard. When you visit us, we'll serve you a meal in our "tree house". We also joined the YMCA this spring, and Lew and Enid exercise there regularly. Indeed, you may note that we have now both been removed from the list of endangered species of whales. We took a short weekend trip to Chattanooga which was more fun than it sounds.

Enid and Lew are still at Georgia Tech. Enid taught an honors calculus class this fall. As the undergraduate Math advisor, she spends dozens of hours every week helping math majors, transfer students, and naïve furry woodland animals (a.k.a., engineering majors who are having issues with their math courses). She gets up early and works in the pre-dawn hours so she can pick up the kids after school. She's not a Supermom, she's a Spidermom. Lew likes the extra six arms. Lew taught a class this fall for the first time since the move from New Orleans. It was cross listed with Computer Science and titled Vector and Parallel Scientific Computing. He learned a lot and enjoyed getting back in the classroom, but it was very time consuming. His main job is still to manage the computing environment (all servers, desktops, networks, etc.) for the School of Math at GA Tech. He oversees the technical staff, too. And, he is still managing to keep a little research activity going.

But I know what you're thinking. "To heck with the people, what about the pets?!" Here's the pet scoreboard:

<i>Animal</i>	<i>Year Begin</i>	<i>Mid Year Net Change</i>	<i>Year End</i>
Fish	2	0	2
Gerbil	1	- 1 + 1 - 1	0
Python	0	Don't ask...	0

Yes, we're going through gerbils faster than a python with a tapeworm. But hey! Once you invest in the cage, the rodents themselves are cheap. Hannah is considering branching out from gerbils to other families of the rodent order, but we've explicitly disallowed naked mole rats.

We wish you a happy holiday season and a wonderful new year!