



Seasoned Greetings



All The News That Fits...With a Little Spice

December, 1997

Welcome to Readers

For those of you who have received Seasoned Greetings in the past, welcome back. For those of you new to Greetings, welcome to the family. The staff here hopes this newsletter will not only provide you information about ourselves, but also a bit of humor, and even philosophy, fulfilling our motto: *all the news that fits...with a little spice.*

Recent issues of Greetings have generally had almost all positive news to report, but sadly, this year has not been all positive. The commitments of work and family take up much time, and though some of it is enjoyable, time limitations have forced us

to cut back on other things. Also, there have been illnesses and a unfortunate loss in the family. It is too difficult to describe a loss or illness in words, and these can be very personal matters. So even though these things effect us strongly, we will not address them here.

Recently the Resnicks bought the modern suburban family vehicle: a mini-van. They were criticized for it's environmental wastefulness (by an environmental consultant, no less!): "it takes up too much parking space", "it uses too much gas". To compensate for this wastefulness (and also to

save time, which has recently become a very precious commodity) the staff at Seasoned Greetings decided to be more efficient. Some of the contents of this issue are from articles edited and recycled from the family home page on the web. This move is also an attempt to remain politically correct, by providing equal access to the internet-challenged readers.

The Staff at Greetings hope you find this issue both informative and entertaining. You can keep up with updates at our website and/or E-Mail us (see below).

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Editorial: the Passivity of High-Tech

Please press 1 for blah-blah, 2 for yada-yada, 3 for doo-doo...thank you, please hold.... "Hello?"... "Hi, I was on hold for 15 minutes"... "Well, I'm sorry, but we're very busy"... In the old days when businesses got busier, it was a sign of growth and a signal to hire more employees. Now they don't feel any personal responsibility because of the detachment high-tech gives.

Businesses take the attitude that the computer is in charge. "Well, I'm sorry but that's what is in the computer, I can't change it". Companies are too big and each section doesn't know (nor care) what the others are doing. Voice

Mail lists options to press that don't include what you want. No one feels any responsibility to change these things. Ironically, my worst interactions with voice mail have been with phone and computer related companies. They should be best at using technology to simplify things, but instead they use technology to avoid personal contact (which would often be more efficient). People often give up after being on hold for 15 minutes, or after talking to three or four different people, each telling you "you'll have to call the other department". when you don't get through the company doesn't have to refund the billing error, or

accept an item for repair under warrantee. But I'm sure the companies regret this.

The "not my responsibility" attitude extends beyond this and contributes to our "Sue now, ask questions later" mentality. Don't people who smoke realize that it's dangerous? Don't people who drink at a bar and drive realize it's dangerous? Should they be responsible for their actions? Of course not, it's the fault of the tobacco companies and the bartenders! These types of interactions occur constantly, and leave me feeling powerless, frustrated, and angry.

Maybe we should try to change these things, and start being responsible for ourselves again. Don't you agree? *Press 1 if you agree...2 if you're not sure....*

THEY WEREN'T VACATIONS, THEY WERE ADVENTURES!

Beautiful Mt. Airy Lodge: Our first adventure this year started off as our traditional family weekend: a chance for Steve's family to spend a lot of time with the kids, and free baby-sitting for Joan and Steve! Joan got sick a few days before, so she stayed at home with Zoe. Steve, his parents, Steve's sister, her friend, and Claire all went up for the weekend to Mt. Airy Lodge in the Poconos. After seeing the extent of boom boxes, beer drinking, profanities, and other problems, we quickly realized that a club was having a Ski & Rap Music weekend there! Many guests (mostly families) complained, and as compensation for our aggravation we received a free weekend to return. We went back in July (this time with Joan and Zoe) and had a great time. We spent time by the pool and ate too much, but most importantly, we relaxed and had a good time.

Jamaica: We started by planning a relaxing vacation with the kids to Jamaica August 1st through August 8th. It quickly turned into an adventure...

Woke up at 4:00AM, got the bags and kids in the car (a lot of bags), off to the Airport, check in, dragging bags & kids, and then to the gate (definitely not relaxing). Even though they asked families with children to board first, they let everyone board, so Steve ended up carrying bags, a stroller, and Zoe, through a pushing crowd of people.

At the airport in Jamaica, we realized Air Jamaica had broken our stroller, so we had to carry Zoe, along with the bags (a lot of bags). At baggage claim, Steve sprained his ankle on a very slippery floor. The car ride to the resort was over an hour with an overly talkative and fast driver, through pouring rain, winding roads, and other fast drivers. Luckily we made it there safely.

Now for the bad part:

The resort was cramped and small. The first room was small and grungy, switched rooms. Second room was up a flight of stairs (remember Steve's sprained ankle?) and inadequate air conditioning, switched rooms again. The third room "was just right" (sort of like Goldilocks and the three bears, but they weren't exhausted from a long trip!).

Well, we made the best of it, and things picked up a bit: the resort lent us a stroller, Steve got crutches, and we got a nice nanny for the week (part of the package).

During the week Joan finished a book and Steve worked on the web page. There was swimming (one of the first times for Claire), kayaking, snorkeling, diaper rash, bingo (Steve won), open bar (no little umbrellas though!), dinner with an ocean view and a band, and, believe it or not, no one got sunburned!

On the return plane trip both kids were screaming, we changed Zoe on the roomy airline seat and Claire in the spacious airplane bathroom, and then carried the kids and bags again (a lot of bags) through baggage claim and customs. We finally made it home safely though, with a sigh of relief, and a promise never to try traveling with the kids again!

Washington: The end of October, Joan and the kids joined Steve to a Conference in Washington, D.C. (where Joan lived for 17 years). They all visited some friends, went to the zoo, and stayed at the Omni hotel. They took two cars since Joan came back earlier, so Steve hooked up CB radios in each car so they could chat and give directions. The first two nights Claire kept jumping out of bed, waking up Zoe, and refused to go to sleep until very late... Joan and Steve were exhausted. When Joan and Steve got home, they promised never to try traveling with the kids again!

Boston: Mid-November Steve and Joan took the kids up to Massachusetts for a four day weekend. They left on a nice Fall day, but arrived on a bitter cold night. It snowed several inches. They stayed the first night at friends, where Claire would only sleep in a bed with Joan, so Steve slept on a small mattress in the middle of a playroom. The next day they went to another friend and stayed there. Claire was in the same room as Steve and Joan and kept getting up and running around. Mom and Dad didn't get much sleep for the next two nights.

(see *Adventure*, next page)

(Adventure, continued)

In the morning Claire and Steve built a Snowman, and in the afternoon they went to a mall. It was good seeing the special sights of Massachusetts (we don't get to see many malls in New Jersey). Claire smeared chocolate on her shirt and belly, so she got a new shirt there. The drive back wasn't too bad, but Joan and Steve were exhausted from the poor sleep and watching the kids. After they got home, they promised never to try traveling with the kids again!

New Year's Eve: Our tentative plans for New Year's Eve are to go to an assortment of activities at Princeton's "Curtain Calls" (like First Night in other cities), with Steve's parents coming out to watch the kids (Thank you!). We're not sure what we'll be doing exactly, but we know one of our New Year's resolutions: "Never try traveling with the kids again!" (but how many New Year's resolutions have you kept!)

BUSINESS REPORT

"Back" to Work for Joan

Joan has been working very hard this whole year. The first half of this year she took care of the kids and the house. April through August she also worked as the transitional office manager for Steve's practice, and in September Joan returned to work in the special services department at West-Windsor / Plainsboro High school...but not at the School she used to work at...they opened a second building, which is where she now works with ninth graders:

Getting back to work being a mom and wife has been quite intense. I was dreading the beginning of the rest of my life when the alarm woke me at 5:00am the day after Labor Day. This was not a dress rehearsal, this was the real thing (i.e.: no more babies and no more breaks from working). "Well, if the rest of the world can do it, we'll see how I survive". I'm working in a new school

building, and the general environment is fabulous. Much calmer than the school I was last in. It's a very teacher friendly place. The hours are tough though.

Steve's Office

There have been many changes in Steve's Psychiatry practice this past year. His original office manager left for greener pastures in Pennsylvania. Joan got an A+ for her role as office manager during the transition. Steve's new office manager has been great dealing with all of the challenges such as the paperwork and inefficiencies of managed care, the record keeping of a large practice, as well as Steve's idiosyncrasies. His part time office assistant still works two evenings a week and continues to do a great job.

The practice is still based in Princeton, but Steve works in Somerville on Tuesdays. Every other week, he spends one morning in Hamilton, and

on the other Monday mornings, he does Psychiatric consultation for Community Options, a residence facility for people with Developmental problems.

Steve is now part of a network of therapists mostly in the Highland Park / New Brunswick / Woodbridge area called "Counseling Associates". The practice is very busy, so Steve will be getting another part time office assistant.

The Schedule

With Joan back teaching and Steve's practice in high gear, the whole family is on a new schedule: Joan gets up around 5:15AM, leaves around 6:30AM, with a good-bye kiss to Steve. Steve wakes up a short time later to Claire's voice announcing from her room down the hall: "I awake". He gets the kids changed and starts to feed them. Three days a week Claire is in day care. Our wonderful nanny, Kathleen, takes care of Zoe, and also Claire on non-school days. Joan gets home 5-ish, Steve at 8 or 9, to bed early, and start again.

Steve and Joan get to talk on weekends....sometimes.

Thoughts on Time

It was the best of time, it was the worst of time.... Time itself has been both good and bad for us this year. Time showed us what happens with age: we watched many we know become more frail, ill, or die. We've also seen children, and adults, grow, learn and develop miraculously. This is wonderful, but I also feel time moves too fast, babies don't stay babies, and children grow up too quickly. As we grow, I see the different roles we have as we age, from dependency to independence to dependence again. We start off bald, toothless, and get sick easily, we change, but then we end up that way again.

I'm getting older now (I get colds more easily, ache more with exercise, and don't quite have the energy or passion I once did), and my role is ambiguous. I am more independent, because I am free to make my own decisions. I am also more dependent. The decisions I make effect our children, my wife, family, friends, and the people I work with.

There is a lot of responsibility and I often feel "trapped": I work, and resent the hours I have to put in and the aggravation, but sometimes I see how much I can touch people's lives, and share, and help. I'm a Dad, and often bicker about who has to watch the kids, but I love seeing the sparkle in Zoe's eyes, and the other day, as I watched Claire play Princess, I was honored to have her ask me to be the Prince. I whine about feeling tired, or having a back ache, but even though it's not much, I feel special as I cross the finish line in a 5K race. I don't see friends or family as much as I used to, but there's a certain comfort when I'm with those special people.

As time goes on, I see more and more things that life has to offer, but have less time to appreciate them. Lately we've been running around so fast, and so busy, that we hardly have the time to stop and smell the roses, or to wake up and smell the coffee (Regular or Decaf?). It's hectic now, and I feel unsettled and uneasy in my current role....*Time heals all wounds. good things come to those who wait....* I guess I just have to wait to get readjusted. I do still enjoy the smell of my coffee in the morning, though.

The Halloween Presentation:

It's ironic how the one balloon in the Thanksgiving Day Parade to be mischievous and make a mess was the Cat in the Hat! Guess what Steve was on Halloween?....

*Now how about that,
I'm the cat in the hat.*

*And here's my inspiration:
It's Claire the Dalmatian.*

*To make sure we haven't
missed her:*

It's Zoe her pumpkin sister.

*We'd appreciate some treats,
In the form of some sweets.*

*We'll leave you now,
With one final rhyme:*

Thank you for the candy,

Miscellaneous

Bored of Directors: Steve was elected to the Board of Directors of his Home Owners Association in October. It has been very interesting. By-laws, politics, and a lot of personality clashes. There is a lot of conflict and hostility between certain groups. It's aggravating but challenging dealing with the politics and personalities.

Claire: Claire turned three in October, and is still a bundle of energy...fun... but also difficult. She seems to be calming down a bit and behaves fairly well (at times). She's in day care ("school") three days a week and loves it.

Zoe: Zoe celebrated her first birthday in July, and has had some changes. Instead of smiling *all* of the time, she now occasionally frowns or cries. She's getting much more active and assertive, and loves watching Claire and her antics, laughing whenever Claire puts on a "show" for her. She's walking now, and is starting to say a few words. The clearest is "no", though she seems to say "Da-Da", "Ma-Ma", "up", and "thank you"!

Happy Holiday & Have a Wonderful New Year!