



Seasoned Greetings



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

December, 1998

Welcome

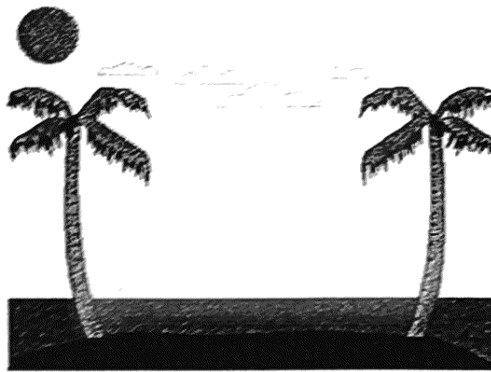
Welcome to this year's Seasoned greetings. It's been a busy year, but one of learning. Claire is learning letters, and how to be manipulative, but also how to be sensitive and caring. Zoe is learning songs, and how to say no and sulk, but also how to be assertive and yet polite. Joan and Steve are learning too. Though they still lead an over-active lifestyle, they are becoming more aware of it, and are trying to heed the advice of many friends and family to "slow down". They've taken the nickname of the Goddadu Family: "We Goddadu this, and then we Goddadu that". They've tried to cut down on unnecessary projects, for example, like not making a simple Season's Greeting card into a major production. Whoops, oh well, we can't change everything at once!

Beaches / The Island Vacation

Late June, the family went on a vacation to "Beaches" in Turks and Caicos Islands, an all inclusive, Club Med type, mostly family, resort.

The facilities and food were good, but the service erratic: some staff were extremely friendly, but others were unfriendly and not helpful. Overall it was nice, but somewhat disorganized, with a lot of little hassles.

The kids had a nice time, especially liking the pool and beach. No sunburn, no diarrhea, and no diaper rash! The kids were basically well behaved, but Claire had a few bad tantrums. We had a



reputation from her yelling and running on the flight going there: on the second day a waitress came up to Claire & I and asked "Did you come on the flight from Philadelphia?", "Yes", "Oh, I heard about the little girl with the red-haired Dad...is she behaving now?"

Steve had a bit of a change in his usual activities. He DIDNT get involved with everything. No color wars, no talent night!

We did a bit of sailing, a little snorkeling (saw a shark), ate good food, danced a bit, and tried to relax. Joan and Steve had massages at a spa there, and Joan actually had time to read a book, quite a "novel" experience! We learned something too: at this point in our lives you can't always "relax", and you CANT plan for things. Too many things change and/or go wrong. But this unpredictability can help us to "go with the flow", and THAT can be relaxing!

Thoughts About a Swing Set

There's been a lot of talk this past year about "family values", whatever that means. I guess it means something different for each of us. This fall, some friends of ours gave us the swing set their children had used. I was a bit philosophical at the time, and thought about some deeper meanings.

Joan had been wanting a swing set, but I had been somewhat resistant, both because of the cost, and my image of it as a suburban ornament "keeping up with the Jones". When our friends offered us their swing set, it felt special because their kids swung on it. It had a history. It wasn't simple though. We borrowed another friend's pickup, and with her son, and our friend ("men's work!"), we tried to take

the swing set apart to move it. We couldn't take out some of the bolts because they were rusted (it was over 10 years old). Eventually we managed to take it apart, and fit it all onto the truck, but only with teamwork, using our muscles together, as well as our brains. So even getting the swing set brought out important values (mind and body, teamwork).

When I was a child in New York, I had a swing. It was a tire hanging by a rope from a big tree in front of our house (yes, they do have trees in New York!). Our "new" swing set is similar: it didn't cost anything, was put together ourselves, and it was wood. Wood is different from plastic or metal. It was a living tree once. A living tree now giving joy to other young lives.



A swing is like life in other ways too. We don't enjoy it when we're not moving, it's only fun and exciting with the ups and downs. It also doesn't work well if we push too hard, we have to flow with its natural rhythm. Lastly, and maybe most importantly, because of being "too busy" I realized I haven't used the swing with the kids as much as I'd like, and I regret it. I guess I'll have to try to play more, and change some priorities, even though it may be difficult.

The Kids Sugar & Spice

Claire has been attending a music class on Saturday mornings with Steve for several semesters, and in the Spring, Zoe and Joan joined in. Claire tried to take over at times, telling the teacher what to do, but could usually be re-directed. Zoe hasn't been as active, but clearly is developing more of a musical sense and seems to enjoy music.

In the Summer, Claire started swimming lessons, while Zoe continued with music. The girls' musical taste is truly diverse. In addition to Disney tunes and the usual kids stuff, some of their favorite songs have included "ABC" by Michael Jackson, and Tennessee Ernie Ford's Greatest Hits.

Claire is extremely expressive with her face and voice. A real ham, and as her day school teacher says: "she's a real leader".

That also translates into admittedly getting her way too much with her parents! Zoe's still the quiet one of the two, but is speaking up more now, and tells Claire off as needed: "go away" is heard fairly often. Zoe now goes to day care two half days a week, joining her sister. It's quite cute as Steve, Claire, and Zoe walk from the car to school, all holding hands, with the kids carrying their little lunch bags.

*We do not quit playing because we grow old,
We grow old because we quit playing.*

-Oliver Wendell Holmes

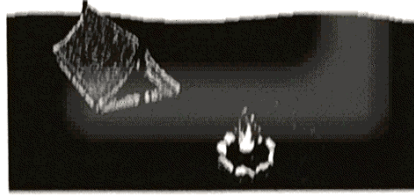
The Great Outdoors



The family went camping for a weekend this summer at Ricketts Glenn State Park in Pennsylvania, accompanied by good friends. On Saturday the family all started hiking together, with Steve carrying Zoe. After a short time, Claire "requested" to be carried. Joan was pretty pooped out with a cold and allergies, so she turned back with Zoe, and Steve started carrying Claire. He reminded her that he was getting tired, and that she would have to walk when they got to the waterfall.

When they finally arrived, Claire had to go pee-pee. Waterfalls at State Parks are very popular, so it took a while to find a private area, and she did what she had to. The trail was rocky at that point, so Steve asked Claire to let him carry her until they got to a flat part, or at least to walk slowly. Yeah, in your dreams! So of course Claire ran, fell, and yelled. He washed her cut knee ("it burns!"), and had to carry her all the way back ("my leg hurts, I can't walk!"). Steve had his harmonica with him and Claire began to sing along. She even made up some lyrics ("a caterpillar in a tree, is so nice to be!").

Back at the campsite everyone took a nap, except Claire, who wasn't tired of course, and Steve, who got nominated to take her to the lakefront beach where she made mud-pies.



Everyone packed up on Sunday and drove home. They used a CB radio in each car to talk to each other (e.g.: "emergency potty stop, pull over at the next diner!" or "emergency hot dog stop, pull over!")

Packing, setting up, dealing with colds & allergies, kids running off, and unpacking, were all hassles, but the fresh air, outdoors, time with family and friends, and lack of phones, computers, pagers and other "necessities" made the overall experience a good one.

Steve went hiking for a weekend in the Berkshires with a close friend. A lot of talking and a lot of walking. We enjoyed the simple pleasures, like being with a good friend, eating lunch by a babbling brook, taking pictures (which don't usually capture the beauty of the scenery), and talking about kids and Keogh's vs. Roth IRA's.

Miscellaneous Stuff

Joan worked this summer...but not at the High School...She was an "at home mom"... Luckily, she at least had the assistance of our wonderful nanny, part-time.

Steve has been jogging a bit, running 5K, and ran one 5 mile race this year. Joan and Steve started tennis classes in May, but during the second class, Joan injured a leg muscle and had to stop. She was out of commission for a while, but she restarted in the Fall, after it healed.

Steve's Psychiatry Practice has been growing well. He has given several lectures this year, and in addition to medication, he is now doing more Psychotherapy (both group and individual). He also runs the "Mind and Body Info Center" web page (contact Steve to get the URL).

Life in the Suburbs

A skunk visited us October '98. Luckily he (she?) didn't leave any small change, not even a "scent"! After having consultations with animal control as well as the exterminator (not Arnold), we realized skunks are nocturnal and don't like light, so we left the garage door open and she (he?) left without a trace.

Matching Game: Can you match the Halloween costume with the person?

1. Clinton (planned, but not worn)	A. Steve
2. Tweety Bird	B. Joan
3. Sylvester the Cat (planned, but not worn)	C. Claire
4. Monica Lewinsky	D. Zoe

(including stained dress & knee pads)

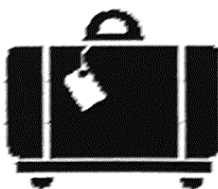
(Answers: 1B, 2C, 3D, 4A)

More Travel

Steve & Joan had a nice time at their nephew

Noah's college graduation

mid-May in Washington D.C. Bob Dole gave the commencement speech and was quite good. The whole family went to that area again, early June, to a close friend's High School graduation party.



In between, Steve went to Toronto, to the American Psychiatric Association annual meeting. He experienced the usual APA activities: learned a little, mingled a little, and ate a lot! He also indulged in the circus atmosphere of the exhibit area, and various outside activities which

included a real circus, and a front row center seat at a Bernadette Peters concert. Also, as usual, Steve missed his family.

Also in June of '98 (a busy month), Steve went to his 25th Bronx Science High School reunion. It was great seeing old friends. Everyone looked just as they did in High School, while at the same time looked very different. Changed in many ways, but very much the same in others. Left him feeling a bit homesick for "the good old days", but also knowing that we tend to forget the angst and emotional turmoil of those times.

Early November, Steve gave a lecture in Cape May. Joan and he went by themselves and enjoyed the Shore on a beautiful Fall weekend. Early

morning jog on the Boardwalk, dinner at a very nice restaurant, crafts show, and just walking around.

Mid-November, the family went to Kutsher's resort in the Catskills for a three day weekend. It was a friendly atmosphere with fair food but lots of it. The kids swam, Joan and Steve played tennis, walked, and basically relaxed, with the kids in the kiddie camp for a large part of the day. It was difficult trying to shift gears and relax. It was a trip down memory lane for Joan and Steve, who had been to the Catskills often as children. It was the same yet different. It was an older crowd, and instead of being one of the younger ones there with our parents, we were still one of the younger ones there, but with our kids!

Reflections: Magic, Smoke & Mirrors

What is magic? Is it just some smoke & mirrors? Smoke clouds our vision, mirrors re-direct it. Magic is more than that though. The whole is greater than the sum of the parts, and "Magic" is the excitement and wonder above and beyond the actual "trick" being performed. "Smoke gets in your eyes", and you can miss seeing the magic in front of you, if you focus on the mechanics too much.

Children can be mirrors. I see my face in Zoe, Joan's in Claire. I see my personality in Claire, and Joan's in Zoe. It's not that simple though. Zoe has my appetite, she'll eat anything (e.g.: curried noodles, radishes, lemons, brussell sprouts).

Children can be mirrors for our personalities. The same traits can be both good and the bad: a sense of humor vs. sarcastic; vibrant, active and involved vs. controlling and pushy; organized and efficient vs. compulsive. Also: calm and quiet vs. shy and fearful; helpful and giving vs. being taken advantage of; easy-going vs. passive-aggressive.

Watching my children grow helps me to see things in myself and Joan. It's exciting seeing these things, but also troubling. In addition to parenting and educating our children, we also have to grow ourselves, using what we learn about our personalities and skills in a positive way.