



Christmas '99



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Welcome to the latest installment of the Price Family annual newsletter. As usual, things have been active around here and so, grab yourself a cup of your favorite holiday beverage, curl up in your Y2K bunker, and settle in for a fun read. You may notice that our volume number jumped a little over last year. During the family Y2K readiness review/contingency planning summit, it was discovered that back in '95 we mistakenly issued a second volume 3! So, we're resynchronizing our volume numbers now, just in time to prevent world-wide disaster on the first of the new year! Whew! That was a close one! One last thing of note: We both have new email addresses, (see the title block), so please update your little black books accordingly.

Vacation—All I Ever Wanted, Vacation—Had to

The big event this year was when we decided to drive from Kansas City to Lake Geneva, Wisconsin - where Ray was having a work related retreat. The only thing was that we decided to go via Virginia! So, during the two week trip, we logged over 3,000 miles and spent an incredible 28+ hours in the van. We wisely invested in a TV/VCR combo for the van, which made the trip downright pleasant. We stocked up with a box full of movies, but could have saved our efforts because we only watched three; over and over and over. It also helped that we had numerous stops planned along the way for either sight seeing or visiting with friends. Of course, the two biggest stops were Ray's parents' house and Northern Virginia to visit with as many friends as we could fit in. While in Northern Virginia, we stayed with friends we had met through childbirth classes so for Nicholas (which seem so

long ago!) and visited with numerous work and non-work friends. It was as great time and we even set aside some time to take the boys down to the Smithsonian. While Nicholas thought the museum itself was Okay, the Metro ride to the museum was well worth the price of admission.

The stop at Ray's parents' house was also a great time, with Ray's brother and his girlfriend stopping by to visit and drop off a Christmas gift that had not made it into the mail. This gift happened to be the biggest teddy bear you've ever seen! Nicholas named him "Comfy" and he looked out the window all the way back to KC. While we were there, Nicholas had a great time playing "Prince" (the "kings and castles" kind, not the "Party like its 1999" kind [thank goodness!]) on the dirt pile at the end of the driveway. He also got to experience camping up on Grandpop's mountain prop-

erty and going to a quarry to pickup a load of stone.

On the way back we visited more friends and passed through Dunes National Park in Indiana. We ended our vacation in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin where we visited long-time friends of Trisch's family. All-in-all it was a great time, and Nicholas still talks about the trip and the people we visited.



Tyler at Dunes National Park

I'm Just Trying to Save a Few Pennies

Tyler has been growing up almost faster than Nicholas did, simply because he wants to do everything that Nicholas does.

He is definitely much different than Nicholas was at this age, and has somewhat of a mischievous streak. He loves to feed Kyoto, and greatly enjoys going downstairs to scoop out Kyoto's dog food and carry the bowl around the basement looking for a suitable place to set it (much to Kyoto's consternation). Then Tyler deftly distracts either Mom or Dad so he can slyly wander over to the furnace where he shuts off the heater by throwing the main switch (which looks just like a regular light switch and

was conveniently mounted by another 18-month old during installation). Of course, Mom and Dad are no dummies and we always turn it back on. Unfortunately, the span of time between Tyler turning it off and us turning it back on usually extends to the next morning when Ray wakes up at o'dark thirty to a house reminiscent of a winter wonderland and stumbles down to the basement to turn the heater back on (oh, the joys of childhood). Tyler has been talking up a storm and has developed into quite a bookworm. He loves to bring a book over to you and has perfected the "here's a book, pardon me while a twirl around and

plop in your lap so you can read it to me" maneuver. It is interesting to listen to him and hear the bursts of full sentences coming

(See "Walking Backwards" on page 2)

Nicholas Price—Renaissance Man

Nicholas had quite an active year and we've watched him continue to grow and change. At this point, he has become quite the "Ladies Man" (sans Courvoisier for you SNL fans). Early this year we decided to start him in preschool, two days a week. While he was very excited to start, the appeal quickly wore off

and based on his reaction we decide to wait until the fall. The fall rolled around (all too quickly) and this time around he was a totally different person. He quickly got to the point where he would tell Trisch he was going in alone, and take off for class. Now he has a great time in class and is even learning French. He is



This Christmas picture was even more difficult than last year, as you can see.

the darling of many of the girls in the class, not to mention the neighborhood, and is now disappointed when it's not a school day.

(See "Molios" on page 2)

The COO Branches out—Has a Green Thumb

Throughout the year, Trisch has been a maelstrom of activity keeping the kids on track and getting more and more involved in the community. She is active in a number of neighborhood groups (the mind-sucking, spouse-devouring, BUNCO squad being one of them) and in a county parents group as well. Between all of these things, it became evident that keeping track of her calendar was becoming a full time job. So, I made the greater sacrifice and gave her my original edition PalmPilot Pro to keep track of her buddies and appointments, and I went ahead and got a new PalmPilot to replace it. Those are the kinds of sacrifices I make for my loving wife (Note from Trisch: Yep, I'd say that's pretty accurate, as far as Ray's sacrifices go!) (Note from Ray: I think I should be offended by that, but I'm not sure).

This year, Trisch decided to follow in her father's footsteps and set up a garden in the back yard. She grew tomatoes (a Barnhill requirement; in fact, she was at risk of being disowned if she didn't grow at least one tomato this year); beans; cucumbers; zucchini; and carrots. Our neighbors tell us the garden was a smashing success (most everything ripened while we were on vacation), but the best we can say about the carrots is that the horses loved them.



For all you whiners that say "But we never see a picture of Ray or Trisch" here you go. This is from the Andersen Winter Formal event in January

happens. Thankfully, I haven't been sucked into much of the Y2K issues and have been working on a number of interesting projects. At home, I've been keeping myself busy with the kids and the digital camera as well as very occasional edits to the family website and the neighborhood website.



Molios (Continued from page 1)

Nicholas' new found hobby is the obsessive collection and manipulation of "molios" or "Playmobils" as those stuffy marketing types insist on calling them. For whatever reason, he has fixated on these toys and they are the only things that he plays with every single day. Over the year he has established quite a collection and now is capable of fielding a small town complete with castle, fishing lodge, and Calvary. He has all sorts of people and is able to look at a person and instinctively know which of the million or so tiny little do-dads came with it. I unfortunately have cluttered my head with 20 or so years of education and 15 years of computer programming, hence I have to rely on a four-year-old to tell me which of the seemingly identical black capes should be worn by a particular "bad guy".

Over the year, Nicholas has also been having a host of new experiences. In addition to the camping he did over vacation, he has also been fishing and caught a number of fish in his Grandpa's backyard lake thanks to his Uncle Steve, since neither Trisch nor I will touch a live fish, let alone unhook one. Friends of mine from work have a number of horses and so Nicholas had an opportunity this fall to ride. He was so impressed that he wanted to borrow the horse for Halloween so he could ride it trick-or-treating in his Prince Phillip (from Sleeping Beauty) costume. We negotiated down to getting pictures of him in costume on Nicki (his favorite, shown at right).



Walking Backwards (Continued from page 1)

through (with a greater frequency as time goes on). This year while decorating the Christmas tree, Tyler squealed "I did it" after successfully hanging an ornament for the first time.

On the physical front, Tyler has developed quite an arm and is capable of launching small objects quite a ways across the room with amazing accuracy. Additionally, he has this interesting habit of walking backwards on occasion. It is hilarious to watch him walk backwards around the kitchen island or in some other area of the house with this big grin on his face and occasional glances over his shoulder.



From the Editor's Desk

As always, I've been busy at work and have been enjoying a greater level of participation in the local office. Fortunately, travel has been kept down to a minimum with just a month or so during January/February being out of town. Anyone who's been following Andersen Consulting (and I know there are few of you out there) has noticed that there are a number of changes that occurred over the year. We have a new CEO, so things are changing and it looks like it will be mostly for the better. Of course, the other big news in KC is the merger of Sprint and MCI. It's too early to know the exact impact, so everyone is just pressing ahead and waiting to see what

Hear Yee, Hear Yee ...

This year for the first time we decided to have a themed birthday party for Nicholas and invite some of his friends over. Given Nicholas' preoccupation with Sleeping Beauty and all things "Princely", Trisch decided to go with a Prince/Princess theme. Activities included: crown decorating, followed by a parade through the house (complete with banners and capes), a disastrous game of musical squares (Folks: don't try this at home with a bunch of 4 year olds), and a balloon sword fight. Trisch gained the new skill of "Balloon Sword Construction" for this last one and was quite popular during the party. Who says you can't teach an old dog new tricks (for those of you keeping score, Trisch takes offense at this characterization)? Nicholas and everyone else had a great time.



The Prince on Parade

Neighborhood News

This summer the Price Family publishing empire expanded when Ray started a website to serve the neighborhood and Trisch volunteered to publish the neighborhood newsletter. Now, every month or so, we go through a flurry of activity to collect, compose, construct, and publish the letter to about 450 homes. Early on it was somewhat of a struggle to generate all the content necessary to fill 8 pages on a more or less monthly basis. Now however, more and more people in the neighborhood are coming forward to assist and it will hopefully turn into more of a coordination effort over the next year.