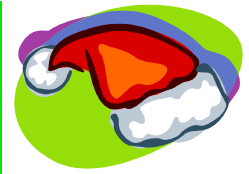




Holiday 2001



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(Past Holiday Letters ONLINE!)



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Wow, what a year. As we come into this holiday season, it is easy to see that we have a lot to be thankful for and that the year was filled with tremendous joy, challenges, and sorrow. Looking back, we are thankful that all of our family and friends are safe and that we have not been directly affected by the horrific events of September 11th. So, with that, let's get on with the annual bit of Price Family news and fill you in on what we've been up to these past 365 days (and it has been a lot!).

With Three You Get Eggroll

The biggest news and greatest joy this year was the birth of our third child, Kiley Nicole Price, on August 19. Kiley was born at 8:05 am after a very different, but still amazing labor that started at 2:00am (we are a bunch of early morning laboring fools!).



In preparation for the event, I had upgraded our digital camera and was snapping pictures shortly after the birth. The great thing about the digital age is later that day, while running on fumes, I was able to print out the pictures for the kids. In my exhausted state, I foolishly sat down with Nicholas (a five year old with a full nights' sleep) and proceeded to go through

some of the pictures. The conversation went something like this: (Ray): "Hey Nicholas, here are some pictures of when baby Kiley was born!" (Nicholas): "Do you have pictures of when they opened mommy up to get her out?" (Ray): "No, they didn't have to open her up". (Nicholas): "Oh, did she come out her butt?" (Ray): (Okay, I walked into this one, gotta think quick to get out of this, so drawing on my super-human parenting skills, I deftly handle the situation as follows): "Look Nicholas, Scooby Doo is on!" The boys just adore Kiley and she is all smiles and giggles when they are around her.



Both boys have become infatuated with the Star Wars phenomena. It started last year and has progressed at a rapid pace. Now, many adults have problems reconciling that "Star

Wars" is a 9 part story composed of three trilogies, of which the middle trilogy was done first and the first trilogy is being done second. Consequently, Star Wars number 4 is actually number 1 from a chronological point of view. The boys took to this unique situation like a fish to water and have never made a mistake when discussing Star Wars episodes 1, 4, 5, or 6. I guess it helps that Tyler is learning how to count (so 1,4,5,6 is as natural as 1,2,3,4), and Nicholas hasn't been around long enough to realize the peculiarity of starting a story in the middle.

Nicholas has been infatuated with the Jedi Knight mantra So much so, that he won an auction on Ebay for a Luke Skywalker figure (I sometimes wonder if the seller realized that his "Nearly mint Luke Skywalker, still in original packag-

ing, with a slightly bent corner (Collector's grade C-9)" sale went to a 6 year-old in Kansas who set a land speed record for reducing the packaging to a "Collector's grade Z-10" upon it's arrival.) Additionally, Nicholas has confided to a neighbor that he is in training to be a Jedi Master, and that he expects to be one of the first humans to become a Jedi. He isn't quite there yet, judging by the other day when I was called to the bathroom where I found Nicholas sitting there with hands outstretched trying to reach a toy on the floor. He asked for me to get him the toy since he didn't have powers like Luke.

Tyler—He's On a Roll!

If you remember from last year, Tyler had a charming pronunciation of Fox, which has naturally resolved itself as these things do. Now, he has decided to switch gears and move on to more visual metaphors. Recently he has started pointing at things with his middle finger. Now this would not be that much of issue if he was 8ft tall and the majority of things he wished to point at were in the downward direction. Unfortunately, being only 3 years old, he is less than 3 ft tall, and there's not too much of the world that he considers worth pointing at below the 3ft mark. So, we've resorted to carrying around a small pocket version of that "fuzzy circle" you see on "Cops". We generally strap it to his hand or hold it up in front of him to protect the general public.

Lastly, Tyler has skipped

right by the tricycle stage and gone immediately to riding a Razor scooter. Earlier this year both boys got them and Tyler spent the first few days saying "Watch Daddy" followed by gliding across the driveway and into the grass where he intentionally "crashed." After that he moved on to zipping up and down the street; gradually getting to the point where he could swerve back and forth with one leg stuck straight out. Even though the scooter handle is practically taller than he is, he has developed an amazing acuity for riding. Now, Trisch is frequently stopped in the neighborhood by people who say "You're the one with that tiny little boy who rides the scooter."



Sugar and Spice and Everything Nice

Coming into our third child, Trisch and I were somewhat ambivalent on the boy vs. girl thing. Over the years we've grown accustomed to the "Boy" procedure and so another boy would tend to fall into the same pattern. On the other hand a girl would be nice, and besides, how much different could a girl be (stupider words were never spoken)? I mean, aside from an equipment change, they're still kids after all, right? Well, over these past few months, I've experienced first hand how wrong that sentiment can be. Exhibit 1 - Jewelry: Kiley was barely a week old when she acquired her first piece of genuine jewelry, granted it was very pretty, but do we have to start going down that road so soon? In looking back over the 6 years spread across our two boys,

(See "Boys vs. Girls" on page 2)

Boys vs. Girls

(Continued from page 1)

I've got to tell you, jewelry hasn't made a major play yet. Give either one of them two partially chewed wooden blocks and they are perfectly happy. Exhibit 2 - Clothing: It is clear to me that while boys enjoy the benefits of having perfectly sane people design their infant clothes, girls on the other hand are victims of a collection of deranged designers intent on incorporating bows and ties where they are not needed and worse yet, replacing perfectly good snaps (one of the greatest inventions of the modern world when placed in certain areas) with **BUTTONS!** What brain-trust came up with the idea to make diaper access dependent upon tiny little buttons and tinier little button-holes?



I Used to Work in a Classy Tattoo Parlor

The greatest challenge this year was that as a result of the current economic condition; work in the office and throughout Accenture dried up over the summer. They went through three waves of belt tightening where the staff was reduced and finally had to bite the bullet further in a fourth wave. Well, in early September (a week before 9/11), I caught one of the bitten bullets and was laid off. I viewed it with mixed emotions; while I enjoyed my time there and the people were generally first rate, the work wasn't consistently engaging. As I started spreading the word amongst friends and family, the truth came out about outsiders' views of the firm's new name. In the words of my mom, "It always sounded to me like the name of a classy tattoo parlor." Well, I would venture to guess that the powers that be weren't thinking along

these lines when the name was selected, but then again, my mom wasn't included in the global demographic, linguistic, and brand analyses that were performed.

So, I quickly started looking for something else to do. From a job search standpoint, timing couldn't have been worse; but from a personal standpoint, the timing couldn't have been better (Kiley was only 3 weeks old, so I was able to stay home and spend more time with her and help out around the house).

The bright spot in the whole affair is that at the end of November, I accepted a position with Cerner Corporation and don't start until Jan 7! What more could I ask for! During my time off, I've been honing my cheesecake recipe and perfecting my omelet making skills.

On the more technical side I've expanded the home network to a cute little terminal in the kitchen and have been brewing a little Java (the computer kind) in the basement office.



Soccer² Mom

Given the preoccupation with our first girl in the family, Trisch hasn't had much opportunity to take up another craft. Of course there are various odd collections of fabric, Styrofoam, and glue laying around the house and if you touch one, you hear "Leave that there, I'm making something I saw on HGTV!" But, aside from that, Trisch has pretty much stuck to her existing skills. Earlier this year we finally finished the basement for which Trisch did all the painting.

As the holiday season approached, Trisch decided to take a seasonal job at Zany Brainy (a toy store). Okay, let's dispense with the jokes: "Isn't that like the fox guarding the chicken coop?"; "Isn't that like the monkeys running the Zoo?"; and "Isn't that like the drunk running the liquor store?". Actually, it hasn't been too bad. Granted, when you balance everything out, Trisch is actually paying to work there (there's a method to their madness!), but it has helped out with focusing the Christmas shopping.



This summer, Kansas City hosted a Cow Parade similar to the one in Chicago. Artists provide suggested designs for decorating a life-size fiberglass cow and local corporations and interested parties sponsor the designs. Here in KC, there were over 200 cows distributed between here (Overland Park) and North Kansas City. We decided to make it a family quest to get pictures of the boys with each cow. We started at the Plaza (downtown KC), which Nicholas christened the "Hot Village", and proceeded to scour the country-side. We had a great time doing it and took over 400 pictures (all of which are posted on our website).

Now, a cow parade is not simply an opportunity to slap some paint on a bovine

We Live in a Real Cow Town



and throw it out on the lawn for the neighbors to see (they do that in other parts of Kansas [With real cows, Yikes!]). Things are a little snootier here in KC and so there were numerous elaborate incarnations that had cows in whimsical poses.



Matriarch Still Going Strong

Kyoto continues to be by our side and, while a little bit grayer than last year, she still gets around fine. This summer, we had a bit of a scare when the vet thought she had a tumor, but it turned out to be a non-issue. Upon Kiley's arrival home, Kyoto took up her customary tradition of always being in the same room with the baby for the first few days.

Tooth Fairy and the Internet

Nicholas has had quite the year, with soccer, T-Ball, and moving from Montessorri school to public school for Kindergarten. He is greatly enjoying all the activities of his new school and has started building some great friendships.

Nicholas lost his first tooth this year and was quite excited to have it gone. The Tooth Fairy folded a dollar bill into the shape

of a butterfly (tip of the wand to the Internet for that trick) and left it under his pillow. The Tooth Fairy was somewhat alarmed to see that the dollar bill has been untouched, and that all future teeth are expected to get the same treatment. So, the Tooth Fairy is frantically searching the Internet again, hoping to find the instructions before another tooth heads south.

