



Christmas 2004 —

What?! Already! Time together was very precious this year. It won't be long now until the kids fly out on their own, and we'll miss them so much. Which some of you who are still having babies in your 40's and 50's probably can't even imagine, but your time will come, too!

Kate's brother Keith was one of those with a new baby, so there are two little girls Down Under now. And brother Ken's new addition is his new home in Elgin's Historic District.

Lots of new things happened to Emily this year as well. She was confirmed in May, finished eighth grade, and started High School this fall. The transition wasn't too traumatic, since big brother James and friends were pretty welcoming. She had to choose between Choir and Orchestra, so the violin only gets played at home now. Besides Choir, she sang with the Madrigal Group this season, and still plays lots of piano.



As "Anna"

This year saw Em blossom as an actress. After two years of singing in the chorus, she landed a lead role in the Junior High musical as Anna in *The King and I*. In August she was in a community theater production of *Fiddler on the Roof*, and she is also involved with the drama department at school.

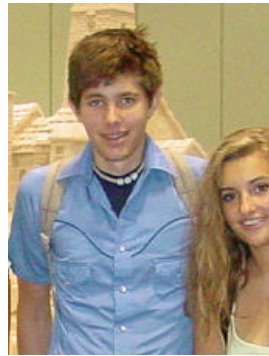
Don also tried something new this year, auditioning for *Fiddler* with Emily. He won the role of the Butcher, Lazar Wolf, which really whetted his appetite for theater. He also performed with a radio theater group and plans to try out for other plays as they become available.



The Butcher, Lazar Wolf

New to James this year is freedom — a driver's license and no more braces. As a junior, he's quite social, but also fairly

responsible. He's driving to two jobs these days: at the climbing gym and at Sam Goody's in the mall.



At Youth Gathering

James made good progress on the guitar, and continues to play his drums. In fact, both he and Emily have been serving nearly weekly with the contemporary worship band at church, newly launched on Easter Sunday.

New at Gnu Media Design Company is that we doubled our staff this year! Now instead of just Don and Kate, we have Kerby and Mary as well. Being Boss is an interesting transition, but they are great additions to the team.

We had trouble gathering everyone for a family trip, which is not new, but our destination was— New Orleans! We went after Mardi Gras, but it was still a fascinating experience on many levels. In other travels, Kate and Emily took a train with Scouts to Colorado, and James did some camping with his Scouts, as well as attending a Youth Conference in Orlando.



Baking with a Visitor

New to Kate is the end of some volunteer responsibilities, namely at the School Library after eight years and with the church newsletter after ten years, but there's still Scouts, Sunday School, Handbells, and babysitting, so she's not bored.

Don decided to pick up Tae Kwon Do again after a decade or two, working back up the ranks, and his brown belt is quite new since he earned it just yesterday.

As we close 2004, we're grateful to look back on our blessings, and pray for more of the same old in 2005. We hope the New Year holds health and happiness for you and yours as well.

— Don and Kate, Emily and James
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