

Wow! Where has the millennium gone?

We bemoan how quickly time passes every year in our Christmas letter, but how often do we get to whine about our busy millennium? Besides, since we've finally learned how to spell it, we had to use it!



Forty smiley faces greeted Don on the morning of his fortieth birthday.

Much is the same for us, and yet we passed a few milestones as well. Don is testing the theory that "life begins at forty" after facing that emotional event in September. James made the jump from elementary school to junior high this fall, which was probably more traumatic for Mom than for him! And Emily "flew up" from Brownies to Junior Girl Scouts in the spring.

Junior high has been a thrill and a challenge for James. He likes the bustle of changing classes, lots of students and different teachers. His grades are honor roll material, he's playing with the Jazz Ensemble, and he slow-danced with a nice girl just last week. Can our little boy be that grown up already? James has also started Confirmation classes this fall and continues to advance in the Boy Scout ranks.

Emily just turned ten, so we no longer have single-digit children. She's in fourth grade, doing wonderfully on the piano, and has taken up the violin as well so she can have a group experience with the school orchestra. This last report card was the first time with letter grades, but there was no anxiety since she does extremely well. She also volunteered as a Junior Interpreter at the Naper Settlement living history museum this summer, just like James did when he was ten.



Em's first orchestra concert.

Kate trained to be a Junior Girl leader when the girls moved up, and continues to edit the homeowners' and church newsletters. Teaching Sunday School and Vacation Bible School is also a big commitment, and now she splits her volunteer time between the elementary and junior high libraries. The handbell choir just played their first wedding, so that entailed a lot of

practice time this year.

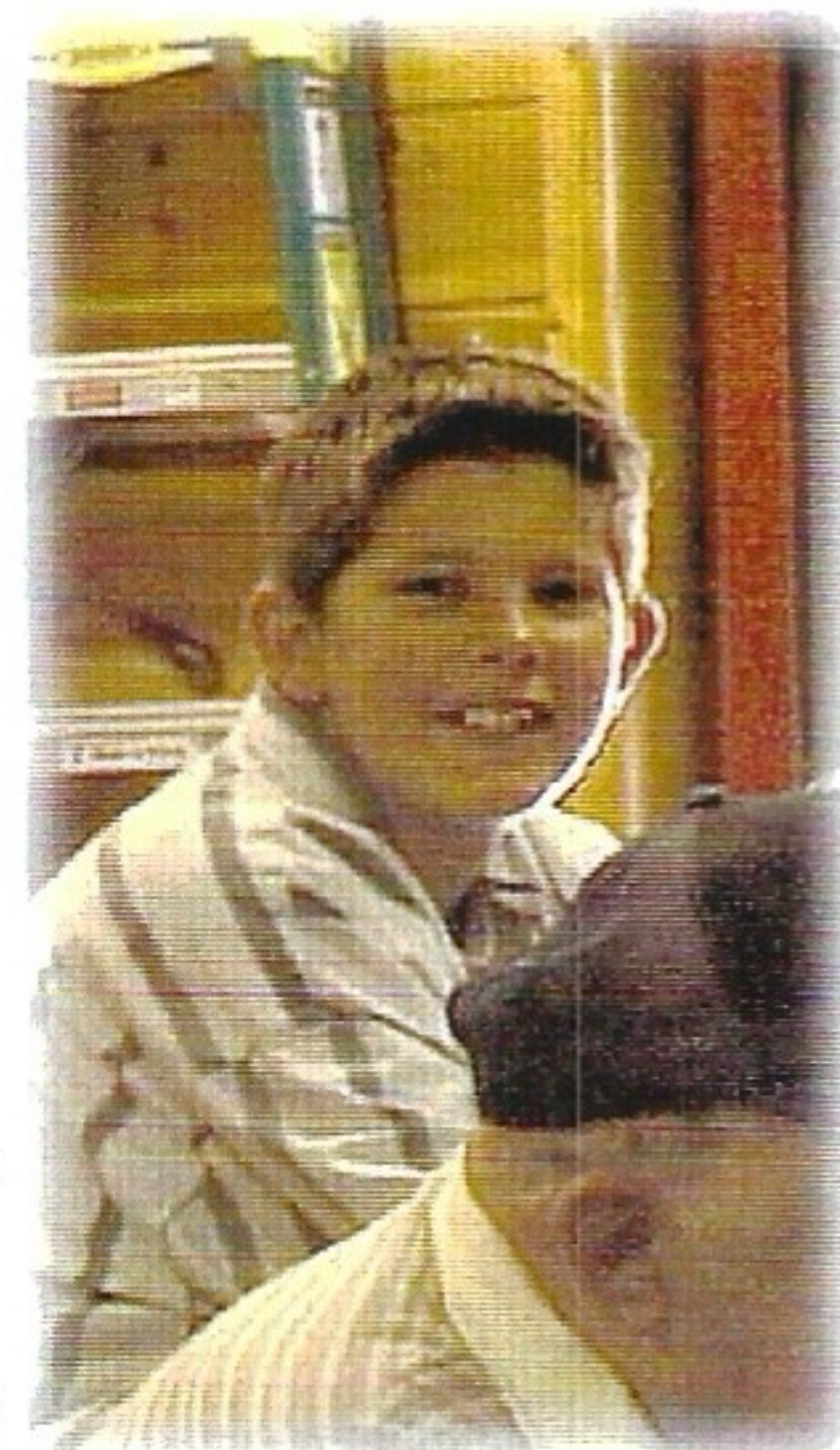
Don traded in his Lay Ministry position for Vice Chairman of the congregation at church. He's also been busy growing Gnu Media Design Co. While still acting as Sears' intranet webmaster a couple days each week, he's had more days to build a larger client base. Things are going well enough that we have had to bring in an extra person to help, and hopefully we will be doing that more often in the coming year.



Handbell playing seems to be serious work!

The summer just flew by for all of us. The traveling Viet Nam wall was in Naperville for a week. James took a producers course at the community television station, and with Dad's assistance, filmed visitors every day at the wall as a service to the local VFW. We also tore out our thirty year old bushes from the front yard and poured a concrete porch along the front of the house. It took from June until December! Thank heavens for the unseasonably warm weather. In Spring we'll finish the landscaping and paint the house.

In August we took a trip to Canada for a reunion of Kate's dad's family. We drove it in the mini-van, camped, swam and reintroduced the kids to their extended family. The last time we made that trip, James was two and a half and Emily eighteen months. We continued to Mount Rushmore, the Badlands, Wall Drug and the Devil's Tower. Fortunately for us, that scorching heat of last summer ended the day before we left, and we had a wonderful time. Even the day of the hail storm was fun, although our tent got beat up, and our sleeping bags were very wet. That pushed us to make a decision we had been contemplating, and we purchased a pop-up camper in time to try it out over the Columbus day weekend. Now we're ready for hail! And it's a great Y2K bunker!



James enjoys the corny shows at Wall Drug.

Seriously, we plan to have nothing but fun on New Year's Eve, and we hope it will be the same for you. Don't let another millennium go by without us hearing from you! Write (341 Berry Drive, Naperville, IL 60504), call (1 630 355-3102) or email (don, kate, james or emily @gnumediadesign.com). We'd love to hear how you and yours are spending the 00's!

Wishing you all the best in the new year,
Don, Kate, James and Emily Gingold