



*Christmas is next week*, so we'd better get this out before it turns into a New Year's letter.

We hope this note finds you well and happy. In looking over our past year, it doesn't seem that we accomplished as many "things" as last year, and yet we were plenty busy. What *have* we been doing with our time?

Thanks for asking! This seems to have been the year of the Gnu. No, that's not a Chinese zodiac thing. I'm referring to Gnu Media Design Company, the business Don and I have been running since 1996. This spring, we participated in the Naperville Business Expo for the first time and were surprised to win the best booth award. In the fall, we were honored as Goodwill Ambassadors of the Year from the Naperville Chamber of Commerce. In between, we've been so busy, we had to hire folks to help out. A good problem to have!



Besides Gnu Media and the Chamber, we're also still involved with the Boy and Girl Scouts, the church newsletter, Sunday School, and the bell choir. Don also spent some time this year finding, and then getting to know, his birth mother. It's been a very positive experience for both of them.

We stay with the Scouts because the kids still are. James was Senior Patrol Leader this year, and reached the Life Scout rank. Next stop: Eagle Scout! He also earned his snowmobile license. He had a ball zooming around with the Scouts last February, and plans to do it again this winter. Emily



earned her Bronze Award last year, and has been working toward her Silver. The Gold Award is the Girl Scout equivalent of Eagle, so she's also well on her way.

Both kids are still very involved in music. Em plays piano at school, at church and all the time at home. She also plays the violin, the tin whistle, hand chimes, and sings in the chorus. On the top of her Christmas list is a mandolin.



James continues to play drums at school and at home, and has recently bought himself a guitar that he's learning to play.

In their "spare" time, Emily is now a trained interpreter in the Paw Paw Post Office at Naper Settlement, while James works part time at Indoor Summits climbing gym.

Last year's letter hoped we would do more traveling, but it didn't happen. Besides camping with the various Scouts, and a few quick family weekends, we were only able to get away once, so we jammed as much into the trip as possible! We drove through Kentucky and Tennessee, camped and hiked, swam in a waterfall pool, visited relatives, and went to Disney World. It's getting harder and harder to align everyone's schedules.

You are undoubtedly just as busy in your lives, but we can always hope to see more of our friends and families. Email us at [kate@gnumediadesign.com](mailto:kate@gnumediadesign.com) for a virtual visit. We're better at that than writing or even calling.

We hope 2003 was good to you, and wish you many, many blessings in 2004!

*—Don, Kate, James and Emily*