

BURNHAMISH

HOLIDAY 2005

Number Eighteen



No, John did *not* forget to wash his face before taking the picture, smart-aleck.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS (ALL-INCLUSIVE)!

Let's get started- we've got a lot to cover. We started the year off by continuing with last year's remodeling project, the Family Room. More specifically, John refaced the fireplace surround with travertine tile. It was his first time tiling anything, and it turned out better than we expected. February found John adding trim to the family room. This task normally would be pretty straightforward, except when you give it to someone like John. It turns out three-piece built-up crown moulding takes exactly three times longer to install than one-piece crown moulding. Who'da thunk?

In April, the old oaks in front of the house were introduced to Mr. Chainsaw. In general, we like having tall, mature trees around. The leaf cleanup in the fall is worth the shade and beauty they provide. However, these particular trees were reaching the end of their natural life, decaying from the inside out (as oaks do), and threatening the

house (and whatever occupies the driveway). The tree service left John with several cords' worth of trunk to (eventually) chop into firewood, which will be periodically introduced to Mr. Fireplace over the next few years.

Lauren continued swimming lessons at the YMCA and progressed from "guppy" to "ray" status, which means she can tread water for a few seconds and is willing to go underwater. She will advance beyond "ray" (to "squid" or "manatee" or something) once she can swim the length of the pool unassisted. Shae has demonstrated a strong affinity for water as well, especially when it involves climbing something and leaping off (whether someone is ready to catch her or not). She has also found herself underwater, mostly because her ol' dad can't move fast enough.

A Word or Two from John

At first, I thought this was going to be a short newsletter. Not that nothing has happened over the past year, it's just I couldn't remember a lot of it.

I know we remodeled, because the house looks a lot different. Or, I have been living in the wrong house for a few months (?). There is a nice lady here and two little girls who look familiar somehow, and they don't seem to mind that I use their shower. In return, I wash the dishes and get things from the top shelves of the cabinets. I've even taken on some light carpentry and floor installation. Maybe I can be a live-in handyman. There also appears to be a lot of firewood that needs chopping.

I'm kidding. I kid. I am a kiddier. Although, I wouldn't have been surprised if my kids woke up one morning asking who I was and what I did with their daddy. The year began with remodeling, and the year ended with it, but we did manage to do other things in between. I have pictures to prove it.



John attempts to catch falling children as they drop from the sky.

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In May, we finally bought a boat to go with our lake access and boat slip on Loon Lake (across the street). We thought a small pontoon boat would be nice and safe while the girls were small, and we could enjoy leisurely cruises and picnic lunches out on the water. But, life is short, so we bought a used competition ski boat.

Shae turned two in May.

She is still very much two and will continue to be two for the foreseeable future.

Shae takes being two very seriously, and strives to experience all there is to being two. Apparently, costumes are a big part of the Two experience. Shae is perfectly happy dressed up as a cat all day.

In June, Chuck and Janet Gentry (Carolyn's parents) met us at Keith and Joanne Burnham's place up in Leland to celebrate Shae's birthday. This was their first trip to God's Country, and hopefully, we didn't

scare them too much with the whole "Up North" thing. We think they'll come back again.

John's Army executed another successful invasion of Leland in July, with outstanding performance exhibited by the newest recruits. This year welcomed the return of the Pam and Dr. Ed Ward family, who have been conspicuously absent for several years. We made sure Ed thanked everyone for coming.

Lauren turned five in August and started kindergarten. (Editor's note: I don't remember much from my own kindergarten experience except for Legos®, and blue finger paint that had a tendency to get moldy. The alphabet was big, too, I think.) Lauren, on the

other hand, gets actual homework. Each week she has to memorize a short poem and complete other tasks, all of which are apparently designed to get her reading *War and Peace* by the end of the school year. Miss Hagan, Lauren's teacher, has also recognized certain "leadership" qualities in Lauren, and will help develop these qualities. No doubt, Miss Hagan's efforts landed Lauren the role of "Rudolph" in the Kindergarten holiday music performance. You go, girl!



Waterford School District has a somewhat relaxed dress code.

The next, and much more substantial, remodeling project began in August. As many big projects sometimes do, this one began quite small. Our original idea was to simply replace the leaky doorwalls on the first floor with something less leaky. Naturally, we ended up having the 2-story addition off the back of the house ripped off and rebuilt, which, in turn, led to replacing the roof, siding, and gutters. The house is much improved, with a gracious living space where the drafty 2-1/2 season "Florida"

room use to be, and an expanded master bathroom, befitting the master bedroom. Just a little more painting inside (more trim!) and we should be ready to tackle the outside of the house; namely landscaping and a deck.

In September (after a false start in April), John finally finished building the black walnut fireplace mantel, the last step in the long-delayed family room project. We were originally going to buy a mantel, but John got it in his head he could build one, custom fitted, for less money, blah blah blah. Right. After a lot of sawing, planing, sanding, and finishing (and emotional fortitude on the part of Carolyn), John had the final product fixed in place exactly

thirteen months after beginning demolition of the fireplace wall. There was much rejoicing.

Although we hired someone to do the major remodeling work on our house, we took on some additional work ourselves giving the kitchen a facelift, doing most of the painting, and installing laminate flooring. We basically had to get all the affected areas of the house back to "normal" by the weekend of December 16, when the Gentry side of the family came for an early Christmas weekend. We accomplished our task in time, only for Shae to fall victim to the stomach flu, followed closely by Lauren, and Carolyn, who was out of commission for half the weekend. John escaped more or less unscathed. For the second year in a row, we gave John G. and Chuck the stomach flu for Christmas.

Finally, we spent Christmas at our own house this year, making it easier for Santa Claus to find us (and making it easier for John to continue the "house" projects left over after the major construction tied up).

We leave you now with a little free association John calls "poetry"

*We can only blame ourselves
For the burden we are sharing
When purchasing This Old House
We knew*

It needed some repairing

*The lawn had been neglected
The phone jacks were not working
We tried to hazard not a guess
In walls what may be lurking*

*We tore down some bricks
We put up some drywall
Installed some new lights
Recessed and eyeball*

*Refinished one floor
Installed another in laminate
Put FOUR coats of red
On the kitchen walls (darn it)*

*Replaced the addition
With one we don't hate
Now that construction's complete*

We must decorate.