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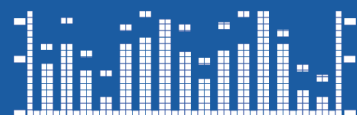
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BURNHAMISH - HOLIDAY 2006

Children Claim "We Didn't Do It!"

But they know who did!

I often have a hard time thinking of a good way to start *Burnhamish*. Maybe "often" isn't the best term, since I only do this once a year (at best). How about this: I *sometimes* have a hard time coming up with a good opening line for *Burnhamish*. Well, that's not entirely accurate, either, since I *always* have a hard time coming up with a good opening line. I could just launch into a recap of the last twelve months, but I should first extend some sort of inclusive "holiday" greeting. So (raising an imaginary tumbler of eggnog-flavored milk), "here's to another trip around the sun in one piece, you are welcome to continue reading *Burnhamish* my Annual Holiday Letter."

Hmm. That's pretty much what this has become. This newsletter used to be an outlet for my literary creativity (remember *Elvis Taught Me Trombone* and *The Sun is a Big Ball of Fire?*); has it simply settled into a rehash of the previous year's events and activities, maybe a picture or two, wishes for a happy and healthy new year, blah, blah, blah? What happened to the original artwork? The short stories? Interviews? There have been poems, sure, but really, where's the substance? Where's the *beef*? Is all I have left to offer a chronicle of the last 12 months?

What exactly did we *do* during the past 12 months? A better question yet, what *didn't* we do? Maybe I'll go through what we *did not* do, and if you subtract those things from everything that we possibly *could have done*, you are left with what we *actually did*.



Lauren knows something you don't, and you're going to have to guess what it is. Shae is just mocking you.

A Few Words in Edgewise

Burnhamish interviews Lauren and Shae during a break in holiday decorating activities

BURNHAMISH: Thank you both for taking a time out from tree-trimming to chat with me.

LAUREN: I was getting a little tired of hanging ornaments. I mean, could there *be* too many ornaments on this tree?

SHAE: Mom doesn't think so.

L: And what's with that *Romulan Warbird* ornament?

S: What kind of geek puts up a Star Trek™ ornament?

B: <ahem>

L: Well, it has pretty green lights, which are Christmas-y...sort of...

B: Tell me, what was significant for you in 2006?

L: I learned how to ride a two-wheeler without training wheels!

S: Me, too!

L: Shae, you still have training wheels.

S: Well, so would you, if Dad hadn't backed over your bike with the minivan...

B: Now wait a min-

L: I would have learned, anyway <thbbbf>!

S: Let's see, what else? Well, I stopped wearing diapers!

L: Yeah, we're finally diaper-free!

B: Good for you!

S: I sure miss the convenience, though...

See Interview, Side Two

Side One

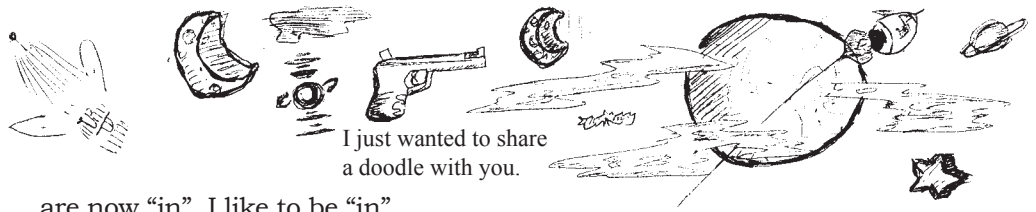
Didn't Do It (from Side One)

I dare you to diagram that last sentence. That's one thing I did not do- sentence diagramming! The long division of grammar. Not exactly a marketable skill.

After thinking it over for some time, I realized there were a *lot* of things we didn't do. We didn't actually finish the remodeling we started in 2005. There are still things to paint, you just don't see them right away. Besides, do you ever really finish remodeling an old house? We decided that the summer would be dedicated to landscaping. We didn't really do that, either.

I didn't take my family to Japan in April. I went by myself to take pictures of the cherry blossoms. I like cherry blossoms. While I was there, I stopped by DENSO headquarters to say "hey" and see if there was any training I could take, you know, as long as I was in the neighborhood for a while.

I continued not shaving, much to the amusement of Carolyn and the girls. When I finally shaved in April, I left the sideburns, since sideburns



are now "in". I like to be "in".

I didn't *feel* 40 when I turned 40 this year. You will have to tell me if I *look* 40. Don't let the sideburns fool you. I heard somewhere that 50 is the new 40. Does that make 60 the new 50? 70 the new 60? If this keeps up, I may not be able to retire until I'm 90 (the new 80). If my investment strategies don't start working, I may not have a choice.

Lauren didn't connect with soccer, but has taken a liking to gymnastics, along with Shae. I just wish they wouldn't practice during bath time.

We didn't go on a vacation, mostly because we were too busy traveling. We hit the major attractions: Chuck Gentry's 70th birthday at *Spamalot!* in Chicago, Easter in Leland, a *grande* June wedding for Carolyn's cousin Jill in Wisconsin, July 4th fireworks, Joanne Burnham's birthday, and an reduced-force *John's Army* in Leland, a memorial for my

Grandmother Garnet in Chicago, back to Rockford for Thanksgiving and finally Christmas in Leland.

Last, but not least, we still didn't move back to Chicago.

For not having done so many things, I feel unusually exhausted.

Interview (from Side One)

L: So, what did *you* this past year?

B: What *didn't* I do?

L: Let's not start *that* again!

S: At least *we* were physically active!

L: I think he may have broken a sweat chopping all that firewood-

S: He broke the axe!

B: I rode my bicycle...

S: What, five times?

L: Remember? He rode twenty miles that one time-

S: He thought he was riding east, but he was really riding north.

L: You got lost! Ha!

B: And and you've ridden, what? Around the block?

L: At least I know my limitations.

B: Speaking of limitations, I think-

S: We're out of time? Too bad, this was getting fun.

L: I'm glad we could sit down with you- I always see you around, but we never get to talk.

B: *Some* of us never get to talk...

S: Hey, be nice.

John Burnham is the creative force behind Burnhamish and is often seen at the dinner table desperately trying to tell his wife Carolyn about his day at work, when they can get a word in edgewise.

Contact Us



Shae, Carolyn, and Lauren enjoy not remodeling the house at the Brookfield Zoo

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Side Two