

Dear Friends and Family:

Yes, yes. Everyone wants to know what exciting things the McKinnon's have been up to this year. After turning down repeated pleas for interviews from People Magazine and the National Enquirer, we are going to give you, our friends and family, an exclusive.

Since it is the holiday season, it seems fitting to mention that we have not been invited to a single Christmas party this year. We only mention this to make you feel guilty in case you had a Christmas party and failed to invite us. We've been free every weekend in December and most in November. One friend was kind enough to invite us for New Year's Eve, but it was more of a pity thing.

We took a number of trips this year including a fun few days in San Francisco with Mom and Dad, Jim and Carole. We stayed at a lovely hotel, ate breakfasts, lunches, dinners, afternoon snacks, and late night desserts, and then came home. There may have been a trolley ride in there somewhere, but mostly we remember the weight we put on and never lost.

In fact, Jeanne never stopped gaining weight from that trip. She's up 30 lbs. now over and above the 5 she put on while we were there. This is primarily because our preferred method of birth control (abstinence) failed once again. We are expecting our third child to begin keeping us up all night sometime in February. Despite rumors to the contrary, Angus is NOT on our list of possible names. (Absolutely no offence intended to those of our friends who have already named their children Angus!) We are leaning towards either Michael or Connor.

But we were talking about trips. In June we took the children to Hawaii for one expensive week of whining (children), dizziness (Jeanne), and seasickness (Jeanne). The kids were in heaven as long as they were in the water. The highlight of the trip was a Catamaran cruise during which Duncan sighted lots of giant sea turtles and porpoises, the children fed bread to vicious fish, Duncan steered the boat, and Jessie shared our family's most precious secrets with a number of strangers. The children are now planning their own trip to Hawaii for when they are teenagers. Jessie informed Jeanne that all she will require is a ride to the airport. She plans to raise money baby-sitting, and has promised to allow Duncan to run a background check on any boys she meets there.

We visited "Puppy" and "Papa" in Arizona not once but twice this year. And sadly, due to Jeanne's inflated condition, we had to miss a trip this December with Jeanne's family. We hope there's a next time!

Peter chose this year of his 40th birthday to have a mid-life crisis. He's been behaving oddly, stashing copies of the Victoria's Secret catalogs before Jeanne can recycle them, buying clothing that is far too trendy and offering to pet-sit some co-worker's dog for two weeks. Next thing we know he'll probably come home with a Miata and take up parachuting. On the upside, he's been doing a lot more illustration this year, which is fun for him, and he's enjoyed doing several pro-bono drawings for the school's PTSA materials.

Jessica is still determined to have a baby when she is a teenager and any advice to the contrary only makes her throw a temper tantrum. She has also decided to have her nose pierced when she is a teenager and has informed us that it is her body and she can do what she wants with it. Peter and Jeanne are currently researching religiously oriented boarding schools. In addition to her ability to push her Mother's buttons, Jessie has other talents. She swims like a mermaid, shares generously, sings sweetly, climbs like a monkey, and she loves to try new and exotic foods. She's a lot of fun--a party girl.

Duncan is enjoying first grade where his favorite subject is story writing. He has been working with his writer's group for several weeks on a story he calls, "The Knight, the Dragon and the Silly, Silly Horse." He's also into Star Wars: Episode I, and airplanes. Duncan has a very logical mind. He has decided that Santa Clause is the guy who drives the brown truck with the gold world painted on the side, and leaves toys on our doorstep.