

Dear mom + Dad,

It's the end of December . . . and time for another annual letter from the Holtz clan. Every year I vow to write individual letters to everyone, but after repeating myself for the tenth time I give in to the urge to write just one letter. It's the best I can do at this stage of my life, with such a large family to care for.

Where does the time go? We're busy all the time but never seem to get ahead. My days are spent laundering, preparing meals, carpooling, playing with preschoolers, volunteering in classrooms, and helping with homework. We're also preparing for Eva's upcoming Bat Mitzvah (June 26), so I'm trying to get the house in shape for the occasion. I've replaced wallpaper in three rooms since summer, and now I want to paint some interior walls and try my hand at stencilling in the family room. One of the high points of my year was winning a week's vacation for two to Hawaii from a local radio station. We went to Puerto Vallarta instead (Jim's idea, since we had been to Hawaii before). Mexico was hot and humid in October, so we spent much of the week indoors in air-conditioned comfort (which was fine with me; I read three books and watched two presidential debates *uninterrupted!*).

Jim has recently completed three years of consulting with Hoya and is now working on a new business in the laser area. It's too soon to say how well this will work out, so stay tuned . . . hopefully, by this time next year we'll be reporting great success! On the home front, Jim spent many weekends creating a new patio and lawn area in our back yard. (The original plan included a pool, but I vetoed it because I knew who would end up maintaining it.) The project involved many yards of concrete and considerable stonework, resulting in an area that Jim describes as "beautiful to look at, but seldom used . . . at least it keeps Karen off my back." Jim gets plenty of exercise, playing racquetball 2-3 times per week and "come and catch me" (with Arthur and Rebekah) on a daily basis.

Eva (12) is becoming a lovely young lady. She continues to pursue her interest in art, taking two classes each week for her own enjoyment and also teaching art to several young children. Last spring, she participated in her school's Academic Olympics, winning medals for all three events in which she competed. Eva played soccer again this fall. Her team, Trouble, Inc., was undefeated for the season. The high point for Eva was the city tournament, in which she scored three goals in a single game!

Emily (10) is a busy fifth grader whose interest is gymnastics. After a two-year break from formal instruction, she enrolled this fall in two classes per week. As often as she can, she also likes to attend "open gym" on Saturdays for three hours. Emily is a third-year Hebrew student and an inactive Girl Scout (due to scheduling conflicts). Emily spent two weeks at summer camp and another week visiting with her cousin, Bethany Walls, at Grandma and Grandpa Wenzinger's in New York state in August.

Abby (7) is a first grader who is now reading on her own and loving it! She played soccer for the first time this fall. She had many shots on goal but is still looking forward to scoring her first goal. Abby is a real social butterfly, entertaining friends at home as often as mom will allow (every day, if she had her way!). Abby spent a long weekend with cousins in Los Angeles last summer, flying by herself for the first time. Abby likes to cook and sew, and is currently working on a cross-stitch embroidery project.

Rebekah and Arthur (3-1/2) attend preschool two mornings a week for 2-1/2 hours, giving Karen a much-welcome break (and a little quiet time!). Arthur is very inquisitive and wants to know how everything works. One of his favorite activities is watching inside the toilet tank while it flushes and refills. He loves to "read" books and wants to know how to spell every word he can think of. Rebekah seems to be following in Eva's footsteps, showing a keen interest in art. She's a little daredevil who's full of mischief and has to be watched closely so she doesn't hurt herself. Arthur, on the other hand, is extremely cautious and chooses not to engage in activities that might cause bodily harm.

I was hoping to enclose a snapshot of the kids, but it's not easy getting everyone together for a picture. We'll try to do better next year. Until then, we wish you and your loved ones a happy, healthy, and peaceful 1993.

Love,
Karen + family