

January 7, 1988

Dear Elizabeth, Jessie, and especially Jay and Rebecca!

Thank you very much for thinking about us at Christmas. us has, as you know by now, become three, which is more than two, and could never be just one like he or she. I'm sorry that gossipy Christmas letters aren't so popular - I'd love to get one from you guys and hear all about Rebecca's school friends and about the spiders and moles that Jay has been capturing out by the electric fence. And about the good and bad days in the ER and the rotten commute. And how the cattle business has its ups and downs. Send us a picture! Write us a letter!

We had a very rough few months this fall, and I am chagrined that I did not have time or drive to do the fantastic thing that Jessie (and crew?) did. Twelve pieces of pine are precisely beveled and glued under pressure. The bottom is cut out with a saber saw or jig and fit into rabbeted grooves. Holes are drilled. The fingerprints and glue drips are sanded away. It gets a coat of oil and a neat rope. Its Fabulous! Thank you.

Working at Apple now as a consultant/programmer in a new Macintosh language/application called HyperCard. Lots of graphics capability and a verbose Pascal-like language. In fact, landed a contract with Que to write a definitive text on the language and corralled about a dozen collaborators to help as we need 700 pages by mid February, and we only started in December! Good advance, though, and high (as usual) royalty expectations. Karen's back to work at SeaLand, but the 4 months off really helped her attitude. We have a Mexican girl named Aracelli (does not rhyme with vermacelli) living with us so our Elizabeth gets 24hrs of hugs and diaper changing -- and none of the day care center crumminess.

Elizabeth Hunter Vaughan was declared fully ok and normal this week. Went through hell in October when her stool became chalky white acolic. We lived through a week of a biliary atresia diagnosis, but some excellent sonographic work visualized that all parts were indeed present (hope); then surgery for which we signed consent for things like the Kasai Procedure and other modern medicine heroics (just in case). They were able to purge the distal part of the bile duct with saline from the gall bladder down (I've done the same procedure on the fuel line in my '63 Ford pickup, applying air pressure from the tank towards the carburetor, but it was a 5/16" diam. line, not 3mm). Stool turned green then brown, and she's been fine since. They got her appendix while they were at it, and left a 6-inch scar that looks like it was sutured by a cosmetic surgeon. A belly hairline which is quickly disappearing. In fact, she's turning into a really wonderful kid. Declared 100% ok now, the cause of the inspissated bile episode will, it seems, remain forever unknown. Bile salts normal, sweat tests, blood workups, you name it, we looked. All normal. Samples to Mayo for spectrography. Normal. Vic has a theory about blood type incompatibility (she had a little Coombs at birth and is B- while Karen is O- and I'm B+). Takes the wind out of your sails and leaves you certain that reaching adulthood is a miracle (remember when you almost got killed on your bicycle?) Anyway, we wouldn't wish that experience on anybody we know, friend or foe. We had her baptized by the Archdeacon of the California Diocese of the Episcopal Church the night before surgery. We think it helped, though there were more tears on the floor than in the chalice.

Best wishes and luck to all of your for 1988. Let's stay in touch!

Tay, Karen, and Elizabeth