

## Greetings One and All:

As usual, it's time again for the yearly snapshot of the lives of Dave and Nancy Wing (among others).

Let's get the big stuff out of the way. In May our house was invaded by a little eight pound mammal that screeches late at night, makes a terrible smell, and gums on everything within reach. Mitchell John Wing has worked his way into our lives and hearts like a hungry tick on a dog's belly, although he appears to be swelling up a little faster. We are constantly comparing the differences between him and Jaclyn, and I've come to the realization that it's because he is pretty much 100% boy. Now I can buy all of the Tonka trucks and remote control tanks that I never had as a kid.

Jaclyn is making her way in the world as well. She started kindergarten this year. The school is just a couple of blocks down the street so she doesn't even have to be bused. It's kind of scary when we see her with the Barbie backpack and pink lunchbox with some kind of cat on it going to try to get a little education. It's just another way reality has of making people feel as old as they are. But the age gap between the two does allow her to appreciate the Little Man's infant years as much we do.

It has been a year of camping, and the driest (hence nicest) summer we've seen in our nine years up in this little corner of Rain Central. We logged just over a dozen trips out in the 1500 pound Jayco that is still technically referred to as a tent; five of them with Mitch. He loves the big blue sky and warm wind wafting thru the trees. We are hoping he forms a life-long affinity for the outdoors before he gets that first accidental mouthful of pine needles and becomes a chess player. To add to the camping mystique, I have started to get into Dutch oven cooking. I figure there is enough cast iron and fire involved to make the activity about as manly as it can get. Plus, it's simple and the food comes out good.

We attempted a family vacation of sorts this year. Since we were in search of sunshine (like everyone else) and didn't make plans until three weeks out, we went up to my old stomping grounds in Chewelah and visited my parents for a week. After all, a vacation is more of a frame of mind than a physical location (or so I keep telling Nancy). It gave the grandparents some time with the kids and we were able to enjoy a slower pace and tear up someone else's house for a change.



*Season's Greetings*

An eight-day backpack in the Wind Rivers was the substitute for the planned six weeks in Europe, which I hyped thoroughly to everyone who knows me the past couple of years. The Cirque of the Towers I'm sure would rival anything worth seeing in Switzerland (on hold, but not forgotten). The trip was a solid week above ten thousand feet, through some of the most rugged country I've seen. Although this was pretty much the crown jewel of the summer, I did sneak in one climb up Mt St Helens and a sojourn to an old fire lookout on Desolation Peak (for all of you Jack Kerouac fans out there) in the North Cascades. Of course, the normal men-only theme camps went off without a hitch (Fish Camp, Snow Camp, Build-a-Big-Fire-and-Drink-Lots-of-Beer Camp).

After eight years I think the house is now a home. New windows, exterior paint, gas fireplace, and I personally stripped every square foot of popcorn texture off 2300' of ceiling. Needless to say, we better be comfortable now because we can't afford to go anywhere. The only thing left is to start adding on rooms.

I'm still at Safeco doing quality assurance work in the IT department. Coming up on nine years now. Nancy is with Royal & SunAlliance doing premium audits and traveling. Two working parents, a couple of kids, an aging chocolate lab, and a '74 Dodge Powerwagon. Pretty much the American dream, except that Nancy hates that five thousand pound rolling piece of good old USA iron. Sometimes it seems like we never sleep. We still have the rental house in Spokane, and one of these days we might even get there to live in it. It seems like once the first kid starts school, it's suddenly graduation time and you are left wondering where twenty years went. Regardless of where the time goes, the first one out the door gets an early inheritance starting with the Dodge.

Happy Holidays and best wishes for you and yours for the New Year.

*Dave, Nancy, Jaclyn, and Mitchell*