

The year 2000 got a lot of hype in the later stages of the last millennium. Or is this still the last millennium? Well, whatever. At our house, 2000 was destined to be one of the most memorable years we've had. Mostly, it was good news.

It got off to a rocky start when Rachel's pacemaker battery started to fail. It was a day we had been dreading because it meant more surgery. Surgery means anesthesia. And anesthesia had always been a problem. But not this time. Thank God for the advancement of medical technology. Within a day after the surgery, we noticed Rachel's feet and hands no longer had that grayish-blue color. And she had more energy than usual. It was a very happy day.



But shortly after the pacemaker surgery, Rachel stopped eating. We were forcing food into her mouth, and at times she nearly choked on it. After 7 weeks, Rachel's weight dropped from 55 to 41 pounds and she was severely dehydrated. Needless to say, she was in real trouble. After a very stressful series of very invasive tests and discussions, we reluctantly decided Rachel needed a

gastrostomy tube (G-tube). This is a tube that punches through the outside her abdomen right into her stomach and allows us to feed her liquids. Initially, she was fed regular "meals" through the tube. But over time, as she gained her strength back, she started eating again. Her weight eventually increased, and her energy level with it. It was finally the end of yet another emergency. She'll probably keep the tube for a while because she still has days when she just won't eat.

In late spring, Rachel's neurologist had prescribed a new medication for her seizures. This was before the pacemaker and G-tube surgeries, and through all of that the consensus was that Rachel needed her strength to handle the transition to the new drug. So we waited all summer to start it. After a month or so using the G-tube we felt it was safe to start the transition, which would take several months while we simultaneously transitioned her off her current anticonvulsant. Slowly, Rachel's personality began to return. And once she reached the full dose we had the old Rachel back. Not only that, but her seizures are at an all-time low of only about 1-2 per day! 2001 is going to be a banner year for Rachel. We can just feel it.

David transitioned to Langston Hughes middle school this year, which in our day was called junior high school. He's still in the GT program and on the honor roll. His violin playing is progressing incredibly well and he is in the advanced orchestra. His math skills continue to astonish us and he continues to enjoy math puzzles recreationally. David's braces got an upgrade this year to correct his overbite. I believe he's got about the equivalent of front-loader hydraulics in his mouth. But he's tolerating it quite well. He knows the results will be worth the torture.



David's bar mitzvah will occur August 18, 2001. So MARK YOUR CALENDARS! The preparations for this enormous event have been in the works since last year, but are in full swing now. Expect to see a formal announcement next spring. Half of David's friends are having their b'nai mitzvahs in 2000, so David is getting an idea of what to expect.



Andrew...let's see, what can we say about him? Well, he's in 2nd grade this year and doing very well. He is anxiously awaiting two new front teeth. He tried soccer in the spring, and we think he liked it until the heat got to be too much. The big fascination this year was (and still is) Pokemon, GameBoy, and now the boys' new PlayStation2!

Because of the situation with Rachel, Eileen took an extended leave of absence from her afternoon job at NCA/CMA. She hopes to return soon, and the boys hope so too. Their Halloween candy is running out! Eileen is still counseling with EurAupair to stay busy. She's starting to use the Internet more to help keep in touch with her host families. She's also an active member of two PTAs now.

Bruce is still working at Orbital. The BSAT-2 spacecraft is scheduled to launch in late February. And while continuing to support that effort Bruce has been working on the next generation spacecraft in the Starbus lineage, NSTARc. Orbital plans to move the Space Systems Group from Germantown, MD, to Dulles, VA, in 2001.



Bruce has had the luxury of working at home on occasion when he has to attend meetings at the Dulles facility. It will not be hard to get used to the 15-minute commute at all.

In addition to his full-time job, Bruce is also the email manager and webmaster for Hunter Mill Estates (our neighborhood). He also started a new website for his friend Gary's BabyGrand racing team. Check this out at <http://mikebymaxter.com>.

When Bruce took the boys to Six Flags America in the late summer, David discovered how much fun roller coasters are. Among others, he rode on Superman, Ride of Steel, which has an 80-degree, 200ft first drop! Andrew seemed to like the rides that made him dizzy (and Dad nauseous). It was a nice way to end the summer.

One foggy autumn evening, Bruce, Eileen, and the boys went on a long-awaited hot air balloon ride. This was something we had wanted to do for years, but just never got around to. It was fantastic!



The house got some upgrades in 2000. The big project was finishing our basement. At last, we have a guest room (complete with a queen-size bed and two large cedar

closets). The bedroom currently also serves as our exercise room (as if...). The basement sports a double-entry full bath with walk-in shower, a huge extended pantry (for Eileen's food collection), a kitchenette with refrigerator, sink, and microwave, a pool table, a Sony 1080i HDTV-ready theater system, a new office and workshop for Bruce, a nice 9-ft bar, and tons of shelved storage space!

In addition to the basement, we finally had some landscaping done and stained our deck. Now all we need are some window treatments and new furniture. Jeez! It never ends with a new place.

Our au pair for 2000 was Minna Lackman, from Finland. She leaves us around January 20th, and we'll miss her.

We look forward to hearing from you during 2001. It's easy to find us. We're all over the Internet. Take your pick from the following:

Email:
 (Bruce) bruce@scherzinger.net
 (Eileen) eileen@scherzinger.net
 (David) david@scherzinger.net

AOL Instant Messenger and Yahoo Messenger:
 (Bruce) [bascherz](#)
 (Eileen) [egscherz](#)

Photos:
<http://geocities.com/bascherz/family.html>
<http://photos.yahoo.com/bascherz>

This newsletter:
<http://geocities.com/bascherz/MillenniumEdition.pdf>

HAVE A WONDERFUL YEAR!!



Eileen, Rachel, Andrew, David, Bruce, & Minna