

Greetings from catalog central! If you are missing your Lands End catalog, or your Lillian Vernon catalog, or Today's Kids, or Holiday Pleasures or Cheese Log Plus or Fruitcake Forever... Don't worry. Call now and we can set you up. We have reached the breaking point. I told Chris we could each keep one catalog, but the rest we are sending back. I'm keeping Bass Pro Shops. Meanwhile, I suggested she keep Victoria's Secret. As of now, we are in week two of our project. Sadly, it appears that in whatever language they speak where these things come from, the phrase 'Return to Sender, Remove From Mailing List' translates into 'Please send us three more and follow-up with a telephone call—dinner or bedtime would be best'. So if our phone is busy when you call with holiday greetings, you'll know why.

If my writing doesn't seem clear this year, it's because I'm writing while in a state of perpetual light-headedness that is the result of constantly blowing on allegedly 'hot' food. According to our in-house 'Children's Council on Food', the acceptable temperature range is roughly between 74.92 and 74.97°F. When asked what I want for Christmas, I said an iron lung.

Speaking of wanting, we recently asked the kids what they want to be when they grow up. We were surprised by the way they want to explore the endless possibilities before them. Hannah has decided she wants to be an artist and has been practicing extensively. Just today in fact, she asked, "Now that I'm an artist, can I draw on the walls?" Yikes. Meanwhile, Jefferson says he's going to be a screwdriver. Go for it son.

Well, once again we have taken a number of long trips—largely because we have realized that the car is the only place where we can legally strap our kids in a seat for hours at a time. Occasionally, we'll actually see someone during one of these excursions, like my family, my good friend Tom Cornillie (who got to see first-hand how effective our parenting methods are) and the Corcorans (during our first, but certainly not last, visit to the Petoskey/Charlevoix area in Michigan—absolutely one of the most beautiful and best-kept secrets anywhere in America).

Last year Hannah was our two year-old. This year it's Jefferson (or Taz—short for Tasmanian Devil—as my sister Pam likes to call him). His favorite word is "alright" - which is an amazing thing for someone who is supposed to be in the heart of the 'terrible two's.' Unfortunately, it usually follows sentences like "Jefferson, please stop whacking mommy's car with daddy's golf club." "Alright", or "Jefferson, please stop peeling the wallpaper off the wall." "Alright", or "Jefferson, please get your blanket out of the toilet." "Alright". Hey, Jefferson—whatever you do, always stay the happy, cheerful guy you are right now. I'll take 'alright' for an answer.

Hannah—well Hannah provides me with my sincere thought for this holiday season. She's still three (until New Year's Eve) and a few months back, while watching TV she noticed there was a girl with darker skin than us. She mentioned it to Chris and me, then asked, "What if we all had dark skin?" Before either of us could reply, she answered her own question. "You know what? We would all still be people!" Oh, you are so right my little sweetheart. If only we could all see with the unclouded vision of innocent eyes, perhaps there really would be Peace on Earth, Goodwill Toward Men...

Merry Christmas, Everyone