

Happy holidays everyone. It seems that yet another year has gone by. They seem to go so fast these days, with the kids taking up so much of the time. Quite a few things have changed around our house this year, but the most important change happened just after the first of the year on January 15. That change, of course, was the birth of our third child, Otylia. She has been an absolute joy all year, and has spoiled us by her mild temper and her beautiful smile. She even started sleeping through the night at just nine weeks old! The other children have of course been at it all year as well, with both Dmitri and Adi in the process of potty training as this letter is being written.

Jessi has had a busy year, as usual. She continues to work at Borders at least occasionally, but spends most of her time at home trying to keep track of the house and three very busy kids—not an easy task by any means. She spent the summer working as a Tupperware consultant, but decided that she couldn't really stand her manager, so she gave that up. She's also been improving her collection of Soft Faced Cabbage Patch Kids, and it has reached quite a respectable level with a bunch of really cute kids! The Ford Explorer she got last December to replace her RAV 4 has treated her well, and we're talking about buying it when the lease runs out.

Matt continues to work for Selectica, and has survived two rounds of job cuts with the company over the last year. Despite all of the cuts, Selectica did take Matt and Jessi on a short trip to the Atlantis Resort in the Bahamas during May as a reward for the hard work during the previous year. Matt's big change for the year has been his car. With all of the car dealers offering incredible deals the last few months, Matt decided to trade in the minivan and get a cute little sporty car. He now drives a purple PT Cruiser and loves every minute of it.

Dmitri turned four this last July, and he makes his Mommy and Daddy work hard keeping him under control every day. His language has blossomed over the last year, and although he has learned some words from his Mommy and Daddy that he really shouldn't say, overall he's a much more well-spoken boy. He also learned how to use the potty this fall (finally!) and has milked that accomplishment for all it is worth to extract toys out of Mommy and Daddy.

Adi has blossomed this year in many ways as well. Her language has really blossomed this year, and in some ways she actually speaks better than her older brother. She doesn't always understand the right thing to say, like one afternoon when she burped, she smiled and said, "Thank You!" Her other major accomplishment for the year has been potty training. After seeing all of the attention Dmitri was getting by using the toilet (plus he got to wear cool underwear), she decided it was time for her to potty train as well. She's still learning as this letter is being written, but has progressed far enough to get to wear her own cool underwear (Scooby Doo underwear for little girls). She has also developed a fondness for stuff animals and dolls, and has been seen on occasion practicing breastfeeding her dolls.

Otylia has come a long way since her birth back in January. She discovered right away that almost no one could pronounce her name, even her brother and sister. Dmitri calls her "Teela" and Adi calls her "Teewa". Mommy and Daddy call her a variety of names, mostly "Peanut" and "Bug" (Don't ask where Bug came from—that was Daddy's idea). She's trying to make her big accomplishment for the year walking. She learned to crawl back in September, but that's not enough for this little girl. She can see the fun her older brother and sister have while running around the house, and she's not about to get left out. As this letter is written, she can already pull herself to a standing position on almost any piece of furniture in the house. She has also learned how to eat big people food, which she enjoys far more than baby food. Just yesterday, she ate almost an entire bowl of macaroni and cheese with Daddy's help. She's also learning how to drink from cups, but is completely confused by how a straw works.

The other big project at the household has been the household itself. The house has been on the market since September 13. Its sale will pay for the new house that is being built in Jordan, MN. The new house is an ordinary two story, but it has four bedrooms on the second floor, which will then give each child their own room. It's been a long and bumpy process so far, but if all goes well, the new house will be habitable by February 14, 2002. They are keeping an online journal of the house building process with pictures; so if you're interested, check it out at <http://www.jessiandmatt.net>.

Happy Holidays!