



GOSH, THIS IS SURE A FINE NEWSLETTER! MY ADVICE IS, BE SURE TO READ EVERY WORD OF IT! I DID, AND I'M GLAD I DID! OH, YEAH: HO, HO, HO etc., etc., and so on...

THE WITTE TIMES



END OF THE MILLENIUM[®] EDITION¹

December 1999

Somewhere deep in the dark recesses of DeWitt, Michigan

CAITLIN WINS TROPHY FOR CUTEST TWO YEAR OLD OF CLINTON COUNTY

Okay, well, I made up that part about the trophy. But she *could* win if they held a contest.

Our little red-head turned two in July of this year. Knowing (as she must) that because she's number four, she has to try a *lot* harder, her first two years have been real humdingers.

She is talking up a storm; she recently told her mother, "Daddy's tools are really, really cool." She describes her hair color as "strawberry blonde." We are sure her vocabulary benefits from having three loquacious siblings. Nevertheless, we are astounded on a regular ba-



sis by the smarts of this bright-eyed little girl.

Caty's favorite refrain is, "Mommy-hoe-me." (Translation: "Mother, would you kindly hold me in your arms, please?") As a result, Joy has developed much stronger arms than I (we will not be arm wrestling any time soon), and can usually be seen holding our littlest one. Fortunately, Caty is such a little charmer that one

finds it hard *not* to pick her up and hold her. Some evenings she sits and eats dinner on Daddy's lap.

I realize that this is a bit on the personal side, but one big development is that Caty is close to being potty-trained. We are ecstatic that the "Decade of Diapers" may be drawing to a close.

To all those little two-year-old boys out there, a warning. I know she is cute, and by the time she is sixteen, I will own appropriate firearms.

Aliases: Cratelin, Cratey, Caty Lou, Thunder-Puppy.

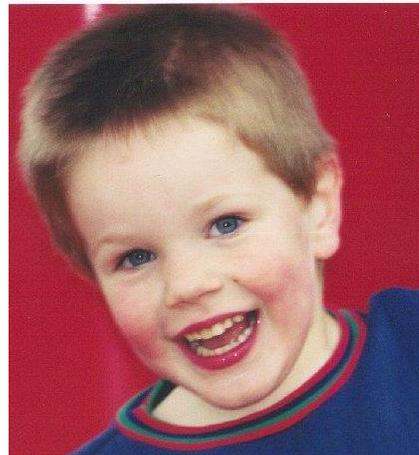
SETH SETS FORTH ON AMBITIOUS EDUCATIONAL CAREER

Our four-year-old prince, Seth Herman Bittinger Witte, started the second year of what he expects to be a long-term plan of self-enrichment. (I must be reading too much Dilbert lately...I am starting to write in Corporate Talk. ®)

We have noticed that he is a great artist and loves to draw automobiles, monster trucks and airplanes. I am surprised to find details like shock absorbers and lug nuts on his monster trucks.

Seth also has a fascination with the computer. He currently is enjoying a borrowed Hot Wheels Stunt Driver game. Seth can play computer games for as long as we will let him. At the same time,

he is pretty good with sharing the computer with his brother and sisters. He is just now getting started singing in the really-little- kids-choir at church and his first performance



¹ Before a bunch of you write letters to the Editor reminding me that 1999 is *not* the end of the Millenium, please recall that it has been five years since the last issue of *The Witte Times* went to press. From our Editorial Perspective, we are close enough.

is coming up soon. Break a leg, Seth.

Seth is now old enough to go with Daddy when Daddy goes racing. His first event was at Gingerman Raceway this fall and he had a great time. He also loves to go camping in Grandma and Grandpa Witte's woods and is thrilled at any chance to ride on the quad-runner.

He is growing up to be such a sweet boy. Like any small child he has his rough moments, but they are few and far between. Gentleness, thy name is Seth.

Aliases: Cha-Chee, Cha-Chee No Guy, Seffer, Hoss.

ALLISON ROCKS AND ROLLS IN FIRST GRADE

Allie has really grown a lot this year, both in terms of altitude and attitude.

She is acting very grown up and we couldn't be prouder of her.

Allison turned seven this year. She is in Mrs. Noble's first grade class at Lansing Christian and is doing excellent work. Her penmanship is neat and she is really starting to read well.



Her teacher says she is doing a wonderful job, and enjoys having her in class.

This is a girl who loves to help her mother in the kitchen. She baked and decorated her own birthday cake this year. But she also loves to give Dad a hand with projects. A week or so ago, I was rebuilding the front porch steps and she was out there helping me screw on the



treads. We have a future service industry professional on our hands, folks.

This summer she mastered riding a two-wheeler. At the beginning of the summer, she was careening all over the place trying to stay up. By fall she was showing Seth how to do it.

Allison Anne sings in church choir, in the living room, in the car, in bed...she is a great little singer. She also is quite the artist. Her drawings and projects are quite creative. While all the kids have an artistic streak, Allison has a real passion for art.

Allie is fortunate to have a friend, Courtney, who lives next door. Although Courtney plays with all of our kids, most often she and Allie can be found with their dolls in Allie's room. It's funny how the house is not that much noisier with

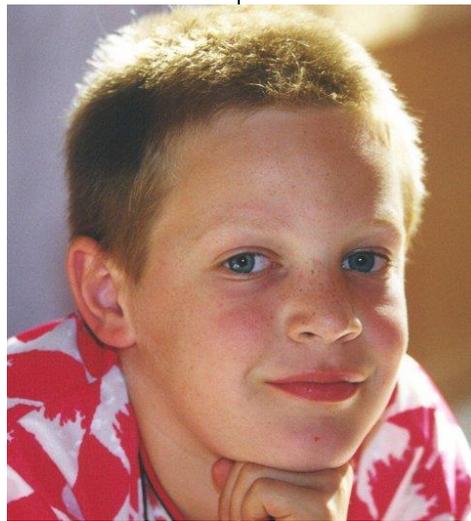
five kids around ... whoops, better not go there!

No matter how much more she grows, she will always be her Daddy's little angel.

Aliases: Allie O'Malley, Al, Big Al, Girly Whirly.

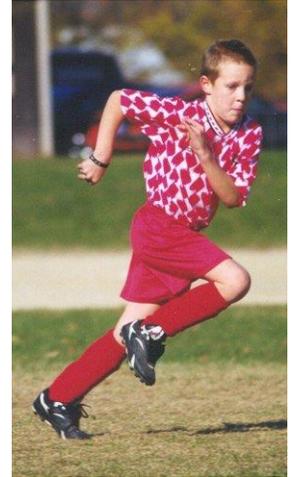
JACOB: A BOY FOR ALL SEASONS

Jacob is a third grader now, and is almost nine. That fact alone leaves me flabbergasted. I have no idea how he slipped that one by me so quickly. Of course, he is such a



good son that time is flying: we are having fun.

Jake's major extracurricular activity is playing soccer. He does a pretty good job of withstanding his father's diatribes about precisely where on the soccer field he should stand, and about how he should be aggressive, blah, blah, blah. He probably doesn't need the advice, because he scored two goals in his last game.



The boy is doing real well in school, too.

His teacher, Mr. Wise,² says he is a good student and a leader in his classroom. I wonder if the leader thing is just Teacher Code for "He-Is-The-First-Kid-I-Send-To-The-Office"? Probably not.

He likes building models with his Dad, and likes cars, airplanes and all manner of military equipment.

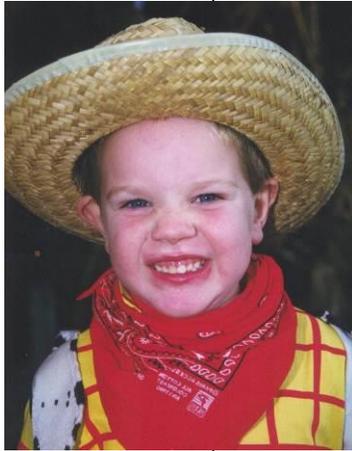
It has been something else to see how Jake is growing up. He can be very enthusiastic when asked to help, which doesn't seem to jive well with his current status as an eight-year-old. The boy is a voracious reader (Jake, if you are reading this, go look up "voracious"). He can do some square

² Isn't it odd that the Witte children's teachers are Noble and Wise? Seth's preschool teacher is Mrs. Rice, so she doesn't quite fit in with the current name motif. The kids love her anyway, though.

roots in his head and generally seems much more adept at math than his old man ever was.

I find Jake fascinating because he reminds me of me when I was a little guy like him. At the same time, I think he will be able to do things I never could.

Aliases: Jaker, Jakester, Jake the Snake, Wild Man.



speaker, she prepares as though it were a military campaign, so the seminar attendees get their money's worth. One of the things I love about her is her thoroughness.

She volunteers frequently in Jake and Allie's classrooms. One of her

jobs at school is to be "Picture Lady" for Jake's class, where every month she comes to the class to lecture about a painting. She exhaustively researches her assignments and is getting to the point where she is pretty knowledgeable about art. She likes the way it balances the law and medicine at

work. I am constantly impressed at the research and effort she puts into her presentations.

When Joy is not employed at the WCAC

or as Director of Domestic Affairs in Residence, she wears the hat of Construction Manager. Yes, our endless remodeling continues, and Joy has directed most of it (quite well, I might add). The kitchen makeover is finished, as is the fireplace and foyer, and we have now moved on to finishing the basement. Where does she find the time?!

Aliases: Hoememommy, Mommmm!, She Who Must Be Obeyed.

A JOY TO BEHOLD

Joy and I celebrated our ten-year anniversary this year, but I still feel like we are newlyweds.

Okay, maybe newlyweds with a lot of company in the house. Anyway, every year, despite the burdens of family and career, my bride grows more lovely.



Joy was reappointed³ by Governor Engler to another four-year term at the Worker's Compensation Appellate Commission. She loves working at the Commission and has been a speaker at two Comp seminars in the past year. When Joy is a



³ My Spell Checker wants to change this word to "repainted." I must resist.



AND ME...EVERYBODY'S SO DIFFERENT, I HAVEN'T CHANGED⁴

1999 marks my fifth year in solo practice, and was mostly more of the same. So let's not talk about work.

Of course I still have the six million hobbies going. Rather than give a detailed report of what is happening in my current areas of interest, I thought I would do it like a stock report. Here goes:

- Astronomy ↑8 ½
- Automobile Racing ↑7 ¼
- Auto Restoration ↓60 7/8⁵
- Camping ↑9 3/4
- Flying unch.
- Photography ↑10 3/8
- Racquetball ↑2 3/8
- Typewriter Collection ↑1

Astronomy is up because last year I incorporated a non-profit observatory that was built last summer. Very interesting, and it dovetails nicely with the major new hobby of the last two years, photography. I have become a big camera buff and I

⁴ I stole that line from Joe Walsh. I hope I don't owe him any money for it.

⁵ Major fiasco this year. There was great wailing and gnashing of teeth. Next year maybe another story.

find that as long as I get good pictures of the kids Joy doesn't mind too much if I spend money on camera gear.

To give credit where credit is due, Joy took the close-up of Jake on page 2, and our friend Elizabeth Curcio took the shot in D.C. on this page. Her husband is a photo geek, too.

Aliases: Norman C. Witte, Attorney and Counselor.

IN OTHER DEVELOPMENTS...

My parents are doing well and enjoying retirement. Last summer they took another trip to Europe. Their maple syrup operations continue to expand in their woods, when they are not cutting down trees or making quilts for the Lutherans.

My brother Rich and his wife Sharon had a baby this summer, a little girl named Baylee Jean. Rich has taken a position here in DeWitt and he and Sharon are now commuting back and forth between Michigan and Tennessee. It sounds tough, but they seem to be doing well at it.

My sister Cate has moved back to Michigan and now has a townhouse



in Jenison. She continues to fly to the four corners of the earth in her consulting business, so we never know from where she is calling.

Joy's father continues to serve as interim pastor at Nordeloos Christian Reformed Church near Hudsonville. While the church is a little closer to finding a permanent pastor, Pastor Jack is not terribly interested in retirement. My mother-in-law is also busy in the quilt industry, keeping the less fortunate warmly tucked in.

Joy's brother Kevin and his wife Marie adopted two Vietnamese children, Daniel and Elizabeth, this year, bringing their horde to a total of five. We cede the lead in the kid race to them. Keith continues to be active in the Young Life Christian program, while Gay Ellen has been

traveling to Scotland a fair amount in her job with Eli Lily. Leann married Chris Johnson in 1998, and Lanae and John are considering building or buying a new home.

Joy and I had a great time visiting Washington, D.C. this summer. Joy had a seminar and had to work, but we also had a wonderful time walking around the city. It is easy to get cynical about our leaders, but we do have a great form of government. It's good



to

be reminded of that once in awhile.

The older kids and I have been doing a fair amount of camping, too. We now have two tents, some air mattresses, a bunch of sleeping bags, and a Coleman lantern, so we are officially campers. The kids get filthy and eat junk food and absolutely love it.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all our family and friends!

—The Wittes

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