

December 16, 1999

This year, we're breaking from tradition and eliminating our mugs from the family portrait. Rest assured that we look about the same. Luke and Thomas, on the other hand, are growing like Kudzu (an Asian ground cover that has run amuck in this area). As you can see from the photo (Luke on the left, Thomas on the right), they are perfectly groomed, neatly dressed, and well behaved—at least for their grandparents, who commandeered the Wal-Mart photo studio exhibition and even supplied the matching outfits.

Were you to call on us on a more typical day (please do), you would likely find our dynamic duo sporting jeans, truck shirts, and "sticky-up hair." And you'd be hard-pressed to find them sitting still. More than likely they'd be stretched out on the floor, arranging traffic jams with their Matchbox cars. They would eagerly engage you in a game of hide-and-seek. The rules: they hide in the closet, and you try to find them. Or they might lure you into reading the books that their nanny, Melinda Smith (who's been taking care of them since they were babies), helped them pick out at the library. Current favorite: "Waiting For Mom" (ouch!).

Although Luke and Thomas have a great deal in common, they have distinct personalities and interests. Thomas has dubbed himself a "bug boy." This morning, he dallied with a ladybug in the bathroom, reporting proudly, "Bugs climb on me because they like me." He has reached the "whine"—I mean, "why?" stage, asking questions ranging from, "Why does the sun set?" to "Why can't I have dessert?" An avid reader, he recently called one of my colleagues a "dim-witted noodlehead," a phrase he'd picked up from a book. Fortunately, she was able to silence him with the devastating retort, "I know you are, but what am I?" Not limited to such witty repartee, Thomas likes to be tickled, tossed, tumbled, and teased.

Luke is more outgoing than his brother and generally takes care of introductions ("We're Wook and Thomas."). He's friendly, assertive ("my turn to talk!"), and happy-go-lucky. He was captivated by the baby chimps at the Ashboro zoo, who, sensing a kindred spirit, high-fived him through the glass. Luke likes to clown around, has an impressive throwing arm, and continues to be enthralled by music. He's a big fan of ballet, but unfortunately rarely attempts dainty pirouettes at home. Instead, he organizes frequent parades around the house, specializing in cymbals and drums.

Matt and I continue to work at a Charlotte law firm and at Davidson College, respectively. In a happy coincidence, he made partner on Monday and I passed my fourth-year review on Wednesday. I can now look forward to Sabbatical next year. Settling into our jobs and home, we are feeling more comfortable in Davidson, where we're fortunate to have good friends and great neighbors, as well as a vital and much-appreciated supply of visits from family and friends from afar.

We hope to see you soon and wish you joy and peace in 2000.

Suzanne, Matt, Thomas, and Luke Churchill