



# Holiday 2005



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Welcome to the annual Price Family contribution to the proof of the Million Monkeys theory (Put a million monkeys in a room with a million typewriters, and eventually, they will produce the works of William Shakespeare). The year has been as busy as ever. Once again we are bit tardy with our musings, but the editing staff has been busy with all sorts of goings on.

## Ummm—OM?

Nicholas (age 10, 4th grade) has had quite the active year with travel both local and across the nation. The year started with a bang with his Odyssey of the Mind team (The Dream Team) (coached by the Number 1 Mom in the World - Trisch). Every year the team's problem changes and this year they had to act out a dream that included a monster that changed appearances and picked something up, as well as cover a number of requirements in the acting portion of the skit. As always, Trisch had to walk a very fine line between providing general guidance and being too specific, since the monster and skit had to be totally constructed by the team, sans Trisch. Their dedication paid off and they won their Regional competition, which qualified them for State Finals. State Finals were a nail biting affair and in the end the general feeling amongst the parents was that they had made a good show and better luck next year. The Dream Team was in a field of 8 teams and during the ceremony they started with announcing the 3<sup>rd</sup> place winners, which they didn't get. At that point the parents called a huddle to discuss strategies for how to put the pieces back together when the team realized they hadn't even placed. Low and behold, The Dream Team came in 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the Kansas State finals! We were all jumping and cheering and



(See: "World Finals" on page 2)



## The Belle of the Ball

Miss Kiley (age 4) has become quite the Girly Girl in spite of having two older brothers. Of course, she can be seen running through the yard with light saber in hand trailing after the boys as they go through Star Wars battle number 576, but that is generally the exception to the rule. Generally she is all about her hair, her nails, her clothes (she is still way ahead of the boys in the "I can pick out my own outfits, color coordinated with a nice ensemble of accessories" department. The boys aren't aware of that department.) She has become quite enamored with drawing and writing, both artistic and letters and words. We have so many scraps and bits of paper with people, places, and things drawn on them that we've had to start shipping them out of state to Grammy in Virginia. Kiley's big acquisition this year has been Hamster ... #1. I say this, because, Belle (a boy hamster

that doesn't realize Kiley would prefer him to be a girl) is doing just fine, but the moment he set paw in the house, well, two other people jumped up and said they needed a hamster as well (and they weren't Trisch and Ray!). Enter Buddy and Spidey (aka Red X). Now, we have a veritable hamster city upstairs with Hamsters 1, 2, and 3 generally lounging around and running in their wheels every night. The hamsters, are of course out of their cages on occasion, and we have had a few successful escapes with a hamster going "over the wall." This hasn't been a "tie the bedsheets together and shimmy over the wall" affair nor was it a "bury yourself in the bedding and get a free ride out of the cage" affair, no, these Hamsters are super-human in comparison. For the most notorious escape, 4-inch long Spidey dropped two feet from an observation tower to the counter and then 3 feet from the counter to the floor. He then traversed (down) 1 and half flights of stairs and evidently wound up on the main floor. We on the other hand didn't have the benefit of knowing his es-

(See: "On the Lamb" on page 2)

## The Wrong Crowd

Tyler (age 7, 2nd grade) has continued along the "thinking man's" track in life and continues the "Dad, did you know" conversations that I mentioned last year. Now, however, they are chock full of interesting things like which insects have 3-stage vs. 4-stage lifecycles. I know these are all things that he picks up at school, probably from hanging around with the wrong crowd, but what can you do. We can't watch over him 24x7. Cub Scouts has also been a big endeavor for Tyler and he has had a great time with all the activities throughout the year. Day camp over the summer was a blast and in the fall he went to the Council Camporee and had a great time as well. BB guns and watching RC Airplanes were the top of the hit list for him. Over the summer he returned to baseball and had a very



fun year, and is now wintering in the gym with basketball. Of course, Star Wars continues to be a big player. Lastly, after watching his big brother with Odyssey of the Mind all this year, Tyler has decided he can't let Nicholas hog all the action so he is in OM as well this year. His team has two coaches, one of which coached a team to the world finals last year who also happens to be the same person that combs his hair in the morning - Trisch!



*On The Lamb (Continued from page 1)*

cape path and so were searching hither and yon for him all over the house. We've now reached the part of the annual letter where I pay homage to Google. Yes, when all else failed in trying to bring Spidey to justice, Google saved the day with the surefire way to



trap a hamster without damaging his (or our kids) delicate sensibilities (answer: small plastic tub, steps made out of books, and treats, let set over night, wake up to hamster a la tub). Spidey was on the lamb for 3 days.



### Card Shark

Trisch has spent a good deal of time doing a world class job of coaching the OM team earlier this year and now is coaching two teams (Nicholas and Tyler's teams) this school year. Somehow she also finds time to do Girly Girl stuff with Kiley as well and keep Kiley stocked with pencil and paper for her endless drawing binges. On the arts and crafts front, quilting has started to make a comeback. So, you might be sitting there thinking, wow, they must be swimming in quilts, boy are they lucky! Well, in the immortal words of Jon Stewart (Daily Show anchor - The number one source of impartial, hard hitting news), "Ehhh, Not so much". True to the quilter's creed, any bits of cloth that happen to get sewn together into anything that resembles a "quilt" get sealed in envelopes/boxed up and shipped out of state, I've been told that there is a master design for a quilt or two in the house, and dare I say it, "actually on our bed", but proof is in the pudding, as we say in the IT world. Trisch has also taken to running at ungodly hours of the morning with a couple friends. Running during the winter months here in Kansas is not on the "most pleasant things I'd like to do" list, and seeing her take off across the prairie all bundled up with hat/scarf/gloves/sweater/long un-

derwear/snow suit/boots etc. tends to bring back memories of Neil Armstrong "running" across the moon, but such is life. I haven't actually seen her take off in the mornings, but it's so cold out, I imagine that's what it would look like, since I'm still snoozing at O'Dark 30 when she gets up. Somewhere in all this, she still amazingly found time to make Nicholas into a Hokie Bird for Halloween! Lastly, this year, the neighborhood Bunco group sort of fizzled out and that left Trisch and a bunch of her buds with nothing to do. What do a gaggle of desperate housewives do, when their monthly Bunco fix dries up? Well, they move on to the harder stuff - "High Stakes Texas Hold'em." I wish I could provide more details, but when I innocently inquired as to what goes on at their



Yes, my son is a product of ESPN Sport Center!

monthly sojourns; the only response I got was "What happens at Texas Hold'em, stays at Texas Hold'em." Oh well, must be a girl thing.

### Editor's Corner

For me, I've been a bit busy with work, hobbies, and such. On the work front, my new project and team are fantastic, and since the move, I've only been out of town about 3 nights in 8 months! A far cry from the 2-3 nights every week!

This year I've spent a good deal of time further refining my photography hobby. I worked on sports photography during the summer, taking a fair number of pictures of Nicholas and his Sharks baseball team. At the end of season I furthered my Photoshop skills by making sets of player cards for each of the coaches and kids. After that, I've been focusing (ha ha, get it?) on landscape photography. Our summer vacation to the East coast offered some opportunities, but the piece de resistance (Yes! High-School French comes through again!) came when a good friend (also a photography nut) and I took off for a weekend in December and went to Phoenix to "see what we could see." We did our homework and managed to

find a Professional Photographer in Sedona, who had his pictures on the net and offered photo tours. We had a blast meeting him before sunrise and dropping him off after sunset. The whole time he was taking us around Sedona setting up shots and giving us fantastic tips on composition and technique. It was sort of like drinking from a fire hose, but in the end, it was well worth the effort. Of course, taking off the 2<sup>nd</sup> weekend in December and leaving the rest of the family behind probably was not the best time



to go, but now my shots of the family are much better (as long as they can hold that "pose" for a couple minutes while I: setup the tripod; measure distance between them and the camera; consult the Hyperfocal distance chart to choose proper F-stop; set the F-stop; manually focus on something halfway between the camera and them; get out my remote so I can trip the shutter without shaking the camera; review the picture histogram to make sure the exposure is correct; take one more, and voila, done!). When the Sharks hit the field again next year, I'll have to talk with them about holding that slide into 2<sup>nd</sup> so I can get the good shots!

*World Finals (Continued from page 1)*

having a high-ole time when reality came crashing in and we realized that 2<sup>nd</sup> place qualified the team to go on to World Finals in Boulder, CO in approx. 6 weeks! From there it was a maelstrom of activity to arrange hotel rooms, design and order "trading" pins, raise funds for expenses, practice, and figure out how to get all their props, costumes and devices to Boulder in more or less the same number of pieces as when they left Kansas. So, on one fine day in May, they packed up the vans and SUVs and set out cross-country for Boulder. This was basically a mom's and kids affair and as they pulled away, there wasn't a dry eye amongst the dad's as we realized that the Lead Social/Academic coordinator and COO of the family was going to be gone for almost a week, leaving us behind to tend to the REST of the family. You may be reflecting on the phrase "While the Cat's away the mice will play", but reality was probably closer to "Monkey's running the Zoo" - anarchy ensued. World finals were a blast - so I'm told, and the kids had a once in a lifetime experience, until the next time. As far as us Dads - How did we fair being "Acting" Head of the Household for a week? Collectively, we temporarily lost only 10% of the children left in our charge, so, as you can see, we still have a ways to go on the "No Child Left Behind" program.