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President's Day Edition

FAMILY / TRAVEL / BUSINESS / POLITICS / SELF-ABSORBED MUSINGS

Letter from the Editors

Dear Gentle Reader,
Once again the Swart/Grossman Holiday Chronicle is coming to you when the light of the menorah is nothing but a dim memory. It has been months since the Christmas tree was shoved in the back of the car, looking for a recycling center. And plenty of time has passed since the ugly headache from too many glasses of champagne at New Years wore off.

Ahh January...or is it February?...or March? New beginnings. As I look out my window into the back gardens of our neighbors on our closely packed street in London, I hear the sound of a circular saw and see that the folks behind us are building a gazebo. It is 40 degrees and raining. It gets dark at 3:30. Clearly they remember that there will come a time when there are more than just 8 hours of sun a day. I can also see the back of the crematorium where others are beginning an entirely different sort of journey...

And here we are in London beginning another journey for our family and wishing you happy travels, good thoughts, well-behaved children, more patience and regular exercise in 2004.

Much love,

Wendy, Evan, Josh, Simon and
The Queen

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London Calling...

Who would have thought that Wendy's international film career would have taken off so quickly as to warrant a move to London? While she still needs to travel to Bollywood where she has found a niche starring in a variety of low budget Indian docu-dramas, London is a nice half way point.

Who would have expected that there would be such demand to see a 40 (+), white, mother of two wearing a sari and speaking poor Hindi on the silver screen...but it sure sounds more exciting than the truth. And as many a politician before us would say, "Why let the truth stand in the way of a good story".

Wendy's Take

All right, the truth. As you may remember we moved to Georgia in 2002. We lived in a huge mother of a house in a subdivision in Roswell and nobody wanted to visit us. We moved there because Evan took a great job at Radiant Systems, based in Alpharetta, and loved/loves it.

I was getting beyond the bitter point. I had taken a position as an adjunct faculty member at Kennesaw State University in their non-profit management department and was learning how to play Bonko and make sweet tea.

Then in March 2003 Evan calls me up and says, "What do you think of London?" I says to the guy, I says, "Time off for good behavior! Whoopee." If you know Evan Grossman, you know you better be careful what you ask for.

Next thing I know we are in London checking out schools and neighborhoods. Hadn't we just done this the year before? We sold our Georgia house in June, we traveled over the summer to France and Ireland with my family, and we moved into our rental house in London in August. And here we are.

Our new place is remarkably similar to our Somerville house only with more bathrooms. As a friend of mine said who



visited us in Atlanta last spring, upon hearing we were in London, "Wendy, you are a good friend and I really didn't want to make that 45 minute drive to Roswell from Decatur, but now I am thinking of making a special trip just to see you in London."

My head is still spinning. When you are raising small children does it really matter where you are? So much of my time is sucked up with the mundane trips to the grocery store to buy the same things every week, the library, the doctor's office, the homework issues, and playgrounds but when we do have time for adventures they are just outside our door – or at most a tube stop away.

Simon and I ride the double deckers all the time to pick up Josh at his school near Regents Park; we muck about on the Hampstead Heath running into distant shadows of John Keats; we smell the spices from the curry shops, and we hear many accents and languages everyday. This is a truly international city with a vitality that shoots new energy into your soul everyday.

How long are we here for? Where will we live next? Will Wendy ever

work again? What is it like being an American abroad where Americans are anything but loved? Will Josh and Simon have British accents? Oh man, who knows. Come visit us and we can discuss it over a couple of pints at our local pub, "The Old Bull and Bush".

Evan's Take

Work has been extremely busy over the past year. After a long and arduous strategic planning process, we decided to spin-off the company division I've been working for into a private company. So, I'm now the Managing Director of EMEA (Europe, Middle East & Africa) for BlueCube Software, a start-up back-office software company focusing on Retail and Hospitality industries.

Unlike other start-ups, however, we have \$20 million in annual revenue and 200 employees so things are a little different from the last start-up I did (see Chapter 11, 2001). I now split my time between my home office, an office at one of my clients in Watford, and various airports. Although I agreed to move to London with delusions of building a large software empire, I've decided to focus instead on profitability and am working having everyone understand my cost-cutting mantra: "Travel at night, live off the land, eat what you kill."

I'm also having a great time in London, and my main hope is that we'll be able to take advantage of all the city's cultural resources while we're here. We've been to the theatre several times, the museums, even the London eye (world's biggest Ferris wheel). And, with all the discount airfares available we've started exploring Europe as well.

We've Got Kids

Josh is cranking along in first grade at The American School in London. It was a tough transition because he really loved our easy life in Roswell and the school and friends he had to leave behind. But, with 5 months under his belt, he now gets on the bus (with relatively few incidents) at 7:30 (in the dark) and gets home around 3:30 PM. He has a more active social life than the rest of us and is really enjoying his school and new classmates.

Many of his friends are coming from similar situations so there is some comfort there.

He is a questioning kid and often we will talk for hours – days even – about topics such as why there are only four elements (Earth, Air, Fire & Water). "Why isn't love one of the elements? People can't live without love." Needless to say, contact Josh to petition the Academy of Sciences re: increasing the number of elements.

Simon is two and boy does he know it. "By self Mommy," is his battle cry. He, like his brother, is a red-headed, chatty boy who wakes up smiling and talking. He loves to go shopping, give raspberry kisses and when he is tired he takes his favorite dinosaur blanket and tells me he is a "Tired Pup". A chubby, cuddly, love muffin with a dirty face and goofy expressions -- gotta love that boy.

Josh's Ckristmis

By Joshua Grossman, Staff Writer

Helow mi name is josh I live in London. On Christmas morning when I was six I woke up in my mom and dad's bed. It was something like six in the morning. I was incredibly excited. I was more excited than anything not for my cousins but just for my presents. 2003 was the best Christmas ever.

This is what I remember:

We had to wait before we went into the present room. Adam, Elliot, Uncle Garret, Aunt Lalitha, Mom, Dad, Simon, Mama Jo, Uncle Rick, Dow and Aunt Bonnie were all with us at Christmas. In my opinion I was the most excited. Because I was the one who likes presents the most I think out of Adam, Ellie, Dow and Simon. Adam and Elliot are 12 year old kids and also they are my cousins. Dow is my baby cousin, she lives in Niger, West Africa and is 19 months old.

PS Adam and Elliot live in Cork, Ireland.

I got more presents than every single Christmas. I really liked my bionicles. I enjoyed giving presents as well. Simon really liked the lion that I picked out for

him at Kew Gardens. My Mommy was another one who liked the gift I picked out for her which was a candle that my dad and I found at the Somerset House. We were really sneaky about buying it because we were there ice skating and dad and I disappeared to go on our secret mission.

I also painted teddy bears for Adam and Elliot.

But the most special gift was a coin from Windsor Castle that said it was plated is with real gold – so it says.

The most special gift I gave was the gift that I made for Mama Jo – it was a bright orange starfish that I painted with a smiley face. Mom and I painted it for her at Art For Fun on a Wild and Wacky Wednesday. Mama Jo likes things from the ocean because she lives in San Diego on the beach.

It was really fun dancing on the tables Christmas morning with all my family in a big circle. We took turns dancing in the middle of the circle. By the way, not everybody was dancing on the table – it was just me, cousin Dow and my little brother.

We made special Christmas cookies. They looked like all sorts of Christmas items such as holly leaves, wreaths and Christmas trees. I liked eating all of them the best.

After Christmas I got sick but took pink medicine and was fine for our trip to Morocco. Morocco was very fun. And Morocco uses a littler currency than the United States and also London. Their money is called durhams and there are 15 durhams to a British pound. My favorite souvenir that I got was my little mallocite stone turtle that is made of stone and memories. While we were in Morocco my Aunt Bonnie and I decided to start a Little Animal Club.

The end.