

December '94

Ho_ from Family Gookin, living nice and warm in the snow-blanketed hills of God's Country. Started snowing October 30 and hasn't stopped since. Makes everything nice and purty. And it's fun watching the former Californians (which doesn't mean us, by the way) drive on the ice. (We're from Washington state. Yeah. Uh-huh.)

On the whole, it's been an action-packed year. How could it be otherwise with two baby boys under 2? Still, we can't tell you everything. Instead, you can order the *Gookin Family Video*, Vol. I through IX.¹ Write to the address on this letter, and be sure to enclose \$19.95 per video (\$29.95 Canada). Specify VHS or Laser Disc. Due to the huge volume of orders, operators are standing by. Offer valid in 49 states. Sorry, Tennessee.

Big Event Dept. As is becoming a family tradition, the first big event of the year was the birth of our latest baby boy. Formerly known as "Shuster," Jonah Daniel Gookin (aka *Gopple-Bup*) was born about noon after a desperately-induced labor on the morning of January 20, 1994. Sandy was great with child. Very great. We thought Jonah past due. Heck, we thought he was twins. But he was right on time. Just big. How big? Try 11 pounds. That's 3,055.5 shekels!

Jonah has spent the first 11 months of his existence wondering if life is all about getting hit in the head with various objects by your 22-month-old brother. He survives because he's very cute, huggable and lovable. Walking since he was 10 months also helps. Aside from fending off Simon, Jonah spends his day wanting to be picked up, trying to catch the cat, wanting to be picked up, trying to eat anything but food (paper, bugs, the balls off the Christmas tree, etc.) and wanting to be picked up. He's our first, truly fussy eater.

Simon Dept. Simon (aka *Boo-Boo*), our middle child and source of boundless entertainment and heaps o' grief, is 22 months, yet acting very much the two-year-old he longs to be. When he's not terrorizing (we call it "Simonizing") he can be quite entertaining. He loves to warn us "Don't" (as in "Don't tell me no") just before he does something forbidden.

Simon's favorite toys are Batman, building blocks and any manner of weapon. His favorite targets are Jordan and Jonah, and also anyone's butt since he happens to be about 38 inches tall — the size of a small four-year-old according to the doctor. Simon loves Nintendo, taking a bath, sweeping, moping and washing, throwing any object, watching Disney videos over and over (and over), and he likes to "go car Dada."

Jordan Dept. Jordan (no nickname) is 7 years old and enjoying the second grade. He's become quite a philosopher and at times we fear he takes life a wee bit too seriously. Still, Jordan has his moments. Witness the following exchange:

DAN: Jordan, does Santa make all the Christmas presents?

JORDAN: Yes, he makes them all.

DAN: What about when Santa gets you a Nintendo. Does he make that?

JORDAN: No. He buys that at the store.

DAN: Where does he get the money?

JORDAN: He makes it.

DAN: Isn't that illegal?

JORDAN: Oh. I guess so.

DAN: So where does he get the money?

JORDAN: Well, I suppose he gets it from the government.

Jordan has no girlfriend at present, though there are lots of young ladies eager for his affection, including the pulchritudinous Heather V. Presently his hobbies include reading, writing and playing on his computer. "*Commander Keen* is fun, though nothing beats blowing up an unarmed rebel convoy in *TIE Fighter* before breakfast."

¹ By the way, Volume VIII, "Simon: Bigger Than Life and Twice as Dangerous," is currently out of stock. Sorry.

Pet Dept. Lydia has survived 22 months of Simon and 11 months of Jonah. She may not have various clumps of hair, but she's okay.

Sandy Dept. The mother of three (aka *Mama*) is now getting a chance to tell the rest of the world how she raises such wonderful kids (with the exception of Simon, of course). Sandy's contracted to do her first book, *Parenting for Dummies*, due out from IDG Books in June (lots of things are "due" in June). Sez Sanny: "I'm very happy — *Jordan! Jordan! Can you see I'm talking?* — to be able to share my thoughts — *Jonah? What do you want? I can't pick you up now* — and ideas on parenting with the mothers — *Simon! You put that down right now. Simon! Put that, put that, put that . . .* — of the world."

Dan Dept. Finally, after years of depriving himself of proper transportation (Jordan refers to both cars as "Mom's car") Dan (aka *Dadada*) bought himself something red and sporty. Known as *the Viper*, the car is very nice. Too bad Idaho lacks the proper places to drive it, especially in the winter. (They don't make 15-inch wide snow tires, you know.)

Other than yearning to drive his toy (actually, it's Sandy's too, since, well, that's a long story), Dan works pretty much 18 hours a day, writing and futzing on and about various computers. He was fortunate to be on TV only once last year, and that was a fluke because he accidentally walked in front of the camera on Patty Duke's new TV series (which is filmed right here in Coeur d'Alene).

New Business Dept. If we were to tell you to guess what the big news was, you probably could. So rather than tempt you, let's just say that baby number *four* is on the way.

They're breeding like rabbits up here!

Yes, like Jonah this is another "surprise." We actually think we know what causes it this time, and we're sworn to prevent it in the future, thanks to a little re-plumbing after the blessed event, sometime in June '95.

Again, I must stress that we're not Catholic, Mormon, Irish or Chinese. Just fertile. You'll have to wait until next year's letter to get more info. And we promise no more surprises after this one. Promise.

Merry Happy to everyone! And remember, during this festive holiday season, when massive consumption is permitted and those thoughts of Susan Powter are out of your head, remember that weight cannot be destroyed; it merely changes bodies. Enjoy the Yule, whatever your religious orientation. God bless.

Dan, Sandy, Jordan, Simon, Jonah and Baby Gookin_