

Merry Christmas!

from

Dennis, Bert, Tommy, Stephen, Aaron & Andrew Griffin

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It's 8:30 am on Saturday and I (Bert) am waking up for the third time. At 5:00, I was wide awake. On my way to let the dogs out, I found Aaron, sound asleep, sitting upright on the couch. After rearranging him into a prone position, I afforded myself the first luxury of the day. I kissed him and his body didn't go stiff and he didn't pull away. He may be only ten, but he's a full-fledged adolescent who needs his space. I crawled on the other couch, hoping I had about two hours before Tommy and Stephen would be calling for a ride home from the "all-nighter" at the church. Just as I dozed off, the phone rang. On the ride home, they filled me in on the happenings of the night. It was only 6:15 and I was chalking up



Bert

sons who w h a t Andrew conscious-hovered that no whole s a m e counted We still boy and everything.

These

luxury number two - teenage actually want me to know they've been doing. was up when I gained n e s s again. He over me. "Is it true two people in the wide world have the fingerprints?" I luxury number three. have one prepubescent he thinks that I know

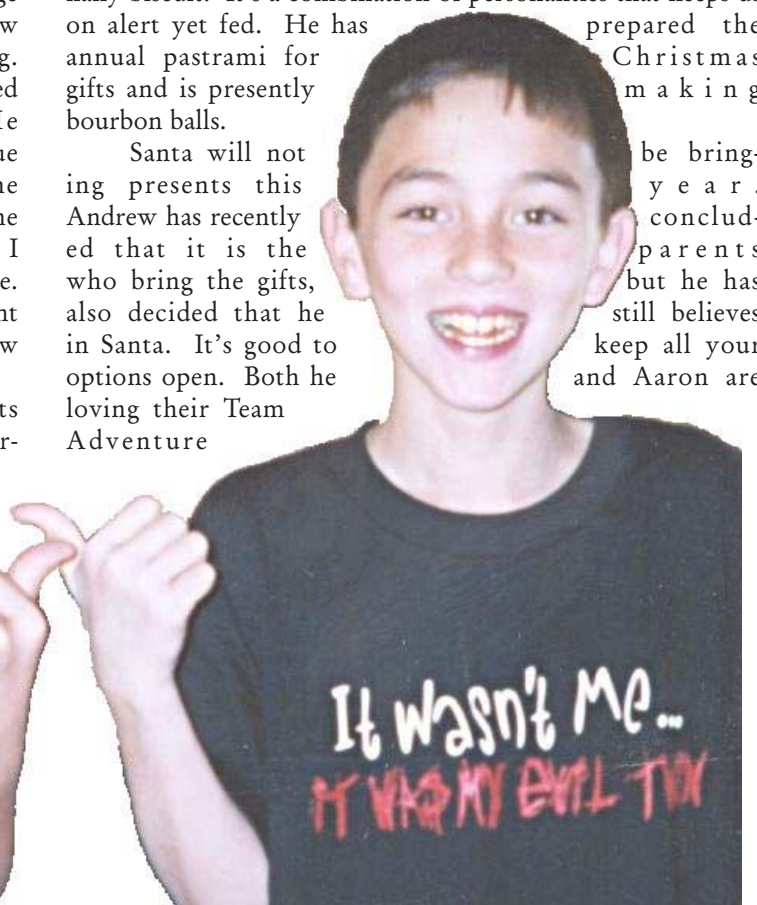
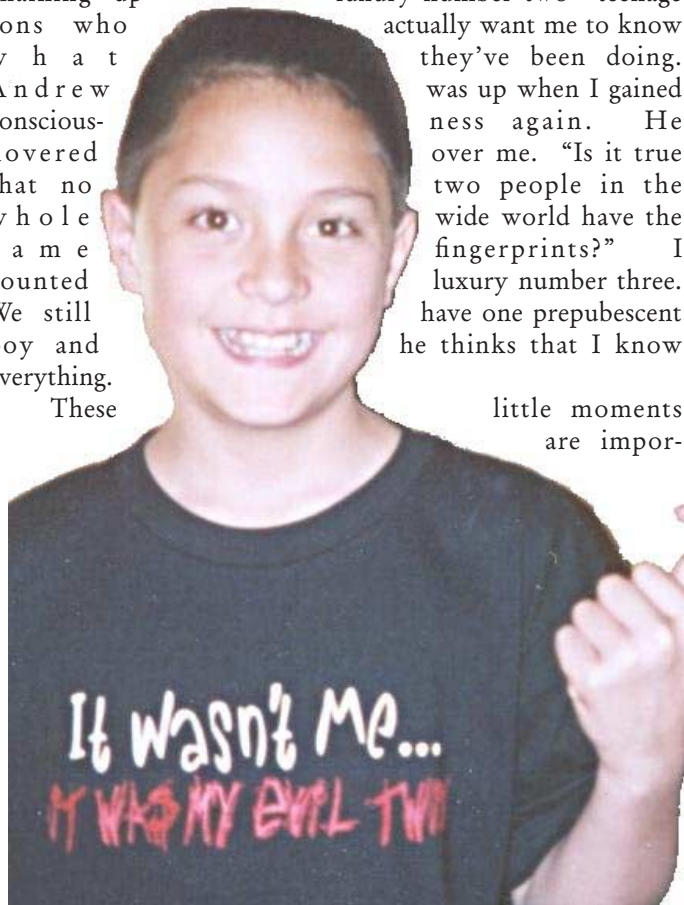
little moments are impor-

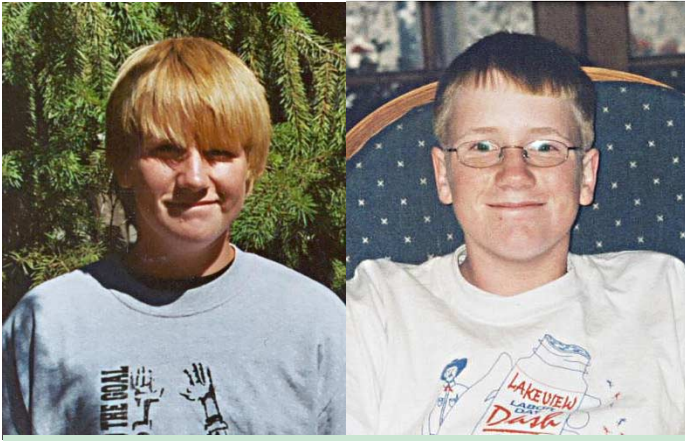
tant because, as my friends will attest, most of the time, I seem to be living on Panic's Edge. There's just so much to worry about and to get done. Will we survive the fifth grade with homework, piano and puberty? Both older boys are talking about driving permits in the spring. Why is Aaron's asthma hanging on and just why IS he in puberty at the age of ten? Luckily, nothing seems to rile Dennis except children in his kitchen when he's cooking or children standing between him and the TV when Alton Brown is explaining the science behind a flaky biscuit. It's a combination of personalities that keeps us on alert yet fed. He has prepared the annual pastrami for gifts and is presently bourbon balls.

Santa will not be bringing presents this year. Andrew has recently concluded that it is the parents who bring the gifts, but he has also decided that he still believes in Santa. It's good to keep all your options open. Both he and Aaron are loving their Team Adventure



Daisy & Domino





Stephen Before & After

club where they learn leadership skills while cooperating on cool projects and visiting exciting places.

Stephen is embracing high school and he appreciates the support his youth group friends give each other. He joined Tommy on the cross-country team this fall and all that running was great conditioning for freshman basketball. After cutting his hair, slimming down, growing taller and wearing his new glasses, people who haven't seen him in a couple of months don't recognize him. He's still playing cornet although his fell out of the bus on the way to the band's recording session last spring and was never found.

Stephen says Tommy is his hero because Tommy has started a "revolution" at the high school. Through his manner and his dress, Tommy has set an example that it is OK to be yourself. After bright red, jet black and pale blonde, his hair is now back to its original color. He's frequently up until the wee hours writing and drawing or designing and sewing some new article of clothing. The wonderful Sarah is still his girlfriend. They both are in the choir and study art and biology together. They were dance partners last spring, but, alas, Linda has closed the studio. We sure had fun while it lasted!

My past has come back to haunt me. It seems that speech therapists are very hard to find...so hard in fact that ones who graduated thirty years ago and never pursued their



Aaron & Andrew



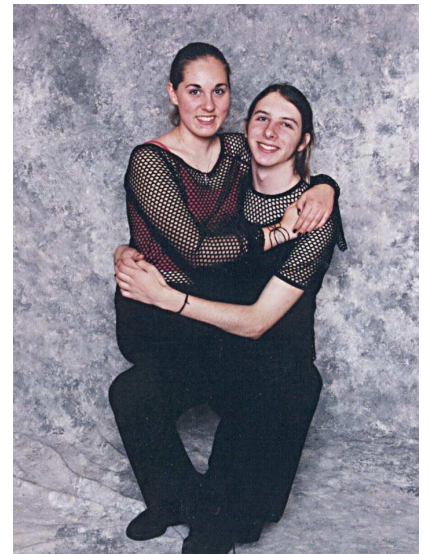
No Aaron, You Can't Drive the Cable Car!

field are in hot demand. I'm now working three days a week and getting encouragement to return to school for a master's degree. That will not happen for a variety of excellent reasons (e.g. from buying groceries for six, we have earned enough air miles for two of us to fly to Europe. When will Dennis and I fit THAT in?). In the meanwhile, I'm truly enjoying the school kids and my colleagues.

I would like to be able to say that my housekeeping skills suffered once I started working, but in reality they had requested and received euthanasia about 1995. Just have five guys with size 9, 10, 11, and 13 feet take off their shoes, get Daisy a "brother" dog (Domino) and no one

can see the floor anyway. Stephen asks, "Can I have some friends over?" I say, "Oh, the house is a mess." He replies, "Mom, they're guys. They won't even notice." That pretty much sums up the root of the problem.

We'll continue to enjoy more luxuries. We're wishing Grandma Maxine (Griffin) a happy 80th birthday on the 29th of this month and we'll be doing the same for Grandma Uh-Oh (Bastian) in June. We should all live so long and well. We're also looking forward to seeing family here as Annie and Casey tie the knot in July. And, once again, we have the luxury of counting you among our many blessings!



Tommy & Sarah