

April 15, 1997

The first snow of April is always a good reminder that tax day is right around the corner (and, we hope, spring will follow in time). And with tax day '97 comes the second annual Tax Day letter from David.



The only news of import from the past year is the arrival of Aaron Michael Williams in Boone last October. This tilts the family scales back towards the male side from the precarious balance that Sally brought. He seemed to enjoy both his first Halloween and Christmas (although I think he missed out on a lot of the Halloween candy). Aaron's arrival was a great excuse for the whole family to get together and invade Steve and Helen's home:



On other, much less significant fronts:

I avoided the Grayson Highlands hunters this year (instead visiting in Boone) but many of the decisions I felt a need to make while camping there the year before (and ended up successfully putting off) have been made. While I haven't renewed my lease (so running away to school is still an option), and am still employed by AARP, I'm no longer in the Broadcast Department. I accepted a position in the Research Division where my primary duties have been related to development of Internet and Intranet sites. While I used to think the two were very similar, after the *growth opportunities* posed by the "official" computer group at AARP, I've come to see the difference between bureaucracy that is impossible to navigate and bureaucracy that is merely nigh on impossible to navigate.

That's one reason I currently have an overpowered Windows NT server taking up space in my house. It belongs to the SMaRT (Statistics, Methods and Research Technologies) department but the computer gurus don't want it in AARP's headquarters.

So I managed to change careers without changing employers or going back to school. All in all I'd have to say I'm very happy about it. I do hesitate a little as the Research Division is going through a massive reorganization at the moment (and I never really figured out the old organization).

Also on the computer front I did finally replace (well not really replace, it's right here next to me) my aging 386 with a new computer to go with the new printer I bought last year. And to go with the new computer I've added three new operating systems: Windows 95 — my default, Linux — for playing UNIX-like games, and Windows NT, which takes my nice, new, fast PC and makes it seem almost as slow as my old 386 with Window 3.1.

Another highlight from the last year was the chance to visit in Atlanta during the Olympics and see all three days of the whitewater competition. Which also helped to push along plans for this summer's 20th anniversary trip on the Salmon. I was even able to use some of the programs I've developed for AARP on one of SMaRT's shadow web servers to help the decision making process. We didn't get any of the permits we applied for and some of the original members of the group were not as interested in going out to Idaho as getting everyone together closer to home; so we had an electronic discussion and vote, deciding on a trip on the Lower Salmon, which doesn't require permits.



And the final news: 33&1/3 has lost cachet in the age of CDs But I passed that milestone and hope this is merely the first of several thirds of a century I enjoy with my friends and family.