



Richard's first haircut. "Watch that ear, buddy!"

stored in a basement somewhere in Sacramento while this skills upgrading goes on. And of course it's lost. As is the replacement package we sent upon receipt of this news. So we send a third package. And by now—in theory—the newly trained and inspired clerks and bureaucrats in Sacramento are working hard to clear away 6 months' backlog of cases. We're considering shifting our application to Guam.

SEPTEMBER

• Still in California, Richard turns one. His first birthday with friends Bond, Chris, Joe, and Grace. Within days of this event, Richard decides to switch permanently from quadrupedal to bipedal locomotion, declaring "I'll never crawl again!" (At least we THINK that's what he said.) Upon return to Hong Kong, Bill disappears into Bechtel's offices, trying to catch up after nearly a month away.

OCTOBER

• Back in Hong Kong, Gwendy starts going to Small World, a Christian, Montessori oriente place Sarah has evaluated as the best available. The Girl is only 3 and a half, so this is sort of like pre kindergarten, but she has a ball regardless (along with a few moments of separation anxiety when she realizes Mom is not just a squall away).
• Richard also has a personal curriculum, including such essentials as "Playgroup" and "Tumble Tots."
• For Halloween, both Gwendy and Richard are dressed as clowns. This is

NOT an editorial comment. Bill sacrifices some formerly favorite neckties to make Gwendy's clown suit lovingly sewn together by Sarah. He wonders if this IS an editorial comment.

• Gwendy's favorite activity is "Music Together," an award winning American program for moms and children that she attends with her friend Aimee (and the requisite moms).

NOVEMBER

• OH NO!! (take one) The American Community Theatre starts up its season again. Bill has promised to cut back, so he's only acting in one show, producing another, and designing all the graphics. The reduced workload is quite a relief.

• OH NO!! (take two) Sarah bravely puts together a traditional Thanksgiving dinner for 12 using Hong Kong ingredients.

In actual fact, you can get pretty much everything you want for such entertaining here in town (with the exception of canned pumpkin, not to be had even for ready money) — you just can't get it all in one place, so there's a lot of running around to do.

DECEMBER

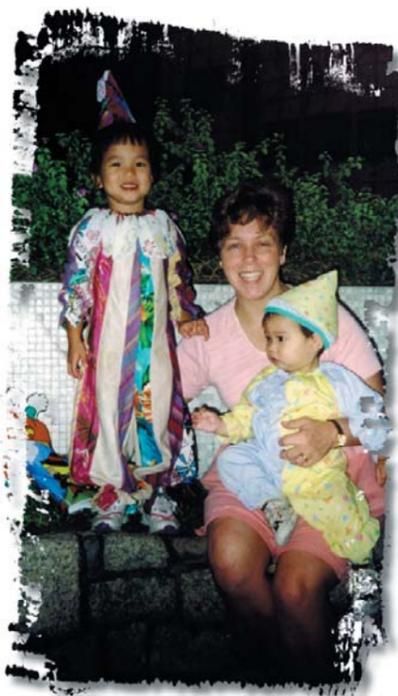
• OH NO!! (take 3) December is here and we haven't done ANYTHING to get ready. How will we ever get cards and presents and everything ready in time? Aieeahh!!!

• Gwendy's cast as an angel in the Christmas Concert at Small World. We wonder about the casting.

• Seems as if there's an awful lot of Christmas parties in Hong Kong, Gwendy's school, her music class, Bechtel's annual affair, Richard's playgroup, our apartment complex — and HK is not what you'd call a "religious" town. As one of the local columnists says, "You'd better get your Christmas shopping done by December 1, because afterwards, there's no time.

So, that's what we've been up to this last year. Hope your year has been at least as interesting. Until next time!

Sarah Bill
Gwendy
RICHARD



A YEAR IN HONG KONG

with the Kritzbergs

Happy holidays to all friends and family. Hope you had a good year. In our house, 1997 is regarded as a banner year. The following chronicle explains why:



DECEMBER

• First vacation visit to Singapore for Sarah, Bill, & Gwendy. Stay at the resort island of Sentosa, previously used by British as a military base from which they could exercise some control over the pirates of the Malacca Strait (and an upstart sultan or two); also site of some fearsome battles during the fall of Singapore to the Japanese in 1941—ever since, Singapore has been known as "The Pregnable Fortress." Gwendy, being no fool, is less impressed by history but very interested in the ride through aquarium, the insect museum, and the giant dragon walk. Sentosa is sort of like DisneyWorld — except with bigger bugs.
• After a relatively short wait since we submitted our final papers, RICHARD WAI HEI KRITZBERG comes home to us. At age 3 months, Richard seems eager to fill the role of achronistic alarm clock, nappy soaker, and all around little boy.

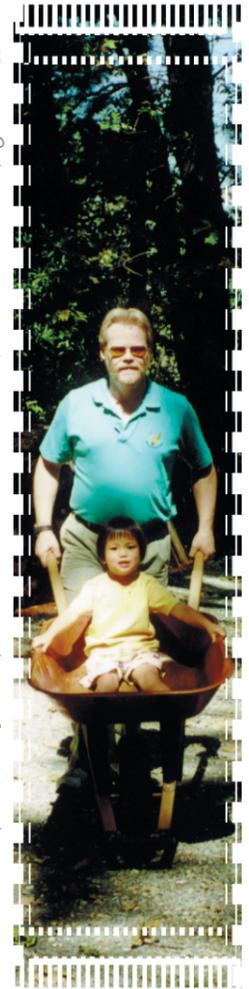
JANUARY

• Ohmigod, we have TWO KIDS!! What are we going to do now? (Alright, those of you who've been through this can laugh—and we've done our share of laughing too—but two children aren't just twice as tough, or twice squared, but 2x2x2x2 . . . and counting). We figure our only alternative is to just love every minute of it (except for the blood curdling screams at 3 a.m.; I could easily pass on those). Gwendy has her first school concert, and I guess we've got a few more of those to look forward to.

• Sarah's Birthday comes and we actually go out to dinner! Hey, small victories matter.

FEBRUARY

• Ever the glutton for punishment, Bill goes into auditions for his next play, called "Agnes of God." Not exactly a laugh riot, it's the story of a deranged nun who gives birth in a convent and then strangles the



newborn child. Her psychiatrist and mother superior spend the rest of the play wrestling with each other for her "soul"—as they respectively conceive it to be. A bit controversial for HK audiences, who tend to squirm when exposed to such raw emotions. Meanwhile, Bill also serves as president of the theatre's board of governors.

• We also have Chinese New Year (The greeting is "Gung Hay Fat Choi," followed by the cheerful response "Lai see do lai," which translates roughly to mean "I'm from Hong Kong, give me money." — and you do! An interesting custom.) One gweilo tradition for Chinese New Year is the family walk, which this year takes us to the Hong Kong Trail (or at least part of it) with our friends the Brisbins. Richard doesn't actually do much walking, per se, and Bill discovers how heavy a 5 month old can get after an hour or so.

• Gwendy has her first real birthday party with invited guests, etc. Watching five 3 year olds at a party is like looking into the face of a number 10 typhoon (except





Bill's recent theatrical ventures include acting in "Love Letters" and "The Fantasticks" and directing "Agnes of God"

that the kids are louder): a primal force of nature.

MARCH

• Totally in rehearsal mode with "Agnes." This one is turning out to be a toughie: only 3 actors to carry a 2 hour show, and the emotional demands are intense. Bill's cast rises to the occasion, however.



Hong Kong's 1997 Star Performer: RICHARD WAI-HEI KRITZBERG (here seen on his first birthday, demonstrating the only proper way to eat chocolate cake)

• Easter comes as well. The weather breaks for the occasion. Very pretty.

APRIL

• Pam and Bob Smith breeze through Hong Kong with new daughter Elizabeth, who became theirs on April 15 in Hunan, China. Adoptive parents from all over the Territory gather at the American Restaurant (no, it doesn't serve American

food) to ooh and ah and otherwise compare notes.

• "Agnes of God" opens to good reviews but so so houses. I don't understand it. You mean mad nuns won't get people into the theatre any more? Heigh ho.

MAY

• Jim & Joanne & Ryan & Samantha Austin visit from the States and do all the touristy stuff: visit the temples and the night market, eat some dim sum, ride on a ferry, buy some EXTREMELY reasonably priced software from a computer arcade, and our personal favorite, visit the Hungry Ghost festival on Cheung Chau (a nearby island). The theory of the hungry ghosts is that they hang around for years and years after their conversion from people to, well, ghosts, and the only way the living can avoid a plague of bad luck is to assuage the spirits of the dead with offerings of food, money, and material goods (not a lot different from how you assuage the spirits of the living,



when you get right down to it). The event has become very big business for the inhabitants of Cheung Chau, and features Taoist exorcisms, Chinese opera (hard to describe, even harder to listen to), 'bout ninety 'leven dragon and unicorn dancers, all capped by a parade of children on miniature floats, wearing ornate costumes from all eras of history and apparently levitating above the street (by means of cleverly concealed iron frames). There's also buns. I mean LOTS of buns — enough to make three towers over 80 feet high. This is the food for the ghosts, and I guess they feast their ectoplasmic hearts out for weeks after the festival.



• May means dragon boats, and no letting the team down. This year Bill gets to captain and has a good time until he throws his shoulder out applying a bit of the cat o' nine tails somewhat too enthusiastically to one slacking navy. Bill's shoulder gets better — we keelhaul the navy.

• The Tsing Ma Bridge, built to serve the new airport and incidentally the subject of Bill's forthcoming book "The Tsing Ma Bridge" (catchy title, no?) opens to traffic.

As author of the gov



John, Gail, Andrea and Bill laugh maniacally as Sarah photographs them with her new toy, an advanced format camera

official history (hence the exciting title) Bill gets to attend an exclusive ceremony with only 1,000 other people. Oh, well. For the record, the Tsing Ma bridge is the largest dual purpose bridge in the world, (meaning it carries both road and rail traffic). And it IS a big hummer, I can tell you, having climbed all over the damned thing while they were building it.

JUNE

• Amazingly, all our dragon boat effort pays off as we actually WIN OUR FIRST HEAT, beating out 6 other boats for the honor of moving on to the "cup competition." We stink the place out on our second heat, and are allowed to retire gracefully to our party boat to drown our sorrows.

• We pass our probationary period with Richard and he is ours and we are his. A wonderful day at the Supreme Court. Richard is the last baby adopted under British rule (we cut that one a little close).

JUNE 31—JULY 1 1997

• Yep, they handed it over all right. We live in communist China now. Or more precisely, the capitalist part of communist China. A bit of cognitive dissonance? See reference to Chinese opera, above. Features back to back fireworks shows (going and coming) and the cheery sight of thousands of PLA troops pouring over the former border in trucks. It's OK, however—they went straight to their barracks and they've hardly been allowed out since.

JULY

• Bechtel 4th of July party (scheduled for 5th of the month) is cancelled, rained out because, as the newspaper characterized it, "the heavens opened." Question is — was

heaven weeping with sadness to see the British depart, or crying with joy at the chance to wash away the last trace of the hated colonials?

AUGUST

• HOME LEAVE!! We finally get to visit going the other way. Most of a month visiting all over California. Quite a change from



The Tsing Ma Bridge, NOT under attack by rogue PLA sappers, but lit up during a celebratory fireworks show as part of the opening ceremonies

frenetic Honkers. Bill begins to get pre-homesickness even before we leave. Family reunion, where we see a lot of Sarah's friends and family. Visit with lots of folks in Berkeley, and sister Gail Burroughs has a birthday that we get to share.

• Major disappointment stems from classic SNAFU at Immigration and Natural



Richard and Sarah looking pretty smug as the Supreme Court of Hong Kong formally records his adoption — the last one under British administration

ization Service. Richard is supposed to complete the process in August, but the Catch 22 effect (Catch 22 squared) hits us hard. We're expecting to complete naturalization in San Francisco, but without telling anyone the INS transfers the "expedited naturalization" function to their Sacramento office. That's OK, but at the same time, the Sacramento office undergoes a procedural audit. And the result of the audit? On a scale of 1 to 10, they score a 2. Even by government standards this is considered a bit low, so the auditors shut the office down until they can bring in new managers and trainers

to teach the INS employees how to brush crumbs off themselves in the morning. The objective is to get the efficiency and accuracy of their processes up to their usual, depressingly mediocre levels (let's say a "6"). Our application (and hundreds of others, we expect) is crated up and

