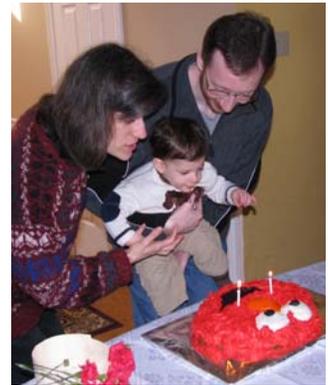


December, 2010



*Dear Cherished Letter Recipient,*

*We hope this letter finds you happy, healthy, and enjoying a restful and restorative holiday season with loved ones. Last year's holiday letter brought you news of Max's arrival plus an array of **disappointingly small, yet oddly arranged**, weekly pictures. This year we present fewer pictures and more "**fun facts.**" FUN FACT #1: Mosquitoes are attracted to people who just ate bananas. OK, that one is actually a retired Snapple "**Real Fact,**" but the rest are our own, we promise. Now let's review the year!*



*Like many of you, our year began in **January.** We celebrated **Max's first birthday** on January 31<sup>st</sup> (see right). FUN FACT #2: Elmo seems just as "**real**" in **cake form** as in any other form.*

*In **February, March, and April,** Max continued to develop. He graduated from crawling, cruising, and babbling to walking, sprinting, and the **recitation of our tribe's oral history.** FUN FACT #3: When the list of info that your wife suggests including in the holiday letter doesn't give you much to work with for some months, it's*



*OK to group those together and say something only marginally relevant.*

*In **May,** John and Ayelet each traveled to Boston **for professional reasons.** Max stayed at home with one of us during each trip, also for professional reasons. His **busy schedule** includes the kids' gym (see left), story-time at the library and bookstore, playgrounds, crafts, play-dates, **play-marriages,** and play-parenting.*

*In **June,** Max began **wearing shoes** (see right) and made further progress toward becoming the counting, ABC-singing, happy little boy he is today. His mother and his nanny have been reading and applying the lessons in the book "**How to Raise a Little Gentleman,**" and they've been so successful that they're itching to use some of the techniques on this letter-writer.*



*In **July,** John officially received **tenure** at The College of New Jersey. FUN FACT #4: Even though Max is learning new vocabulary much more rapidly than his father, the college decided to offer lifetime employment to the one whose total vocabulary is currently larger. (Also, **John can count higher than 16.**)*



*In **August,** we celebrated one year with Max's nanny, **Janet** (left). She is like a member of our family, loves Max like he's her own child, and according to thousands of hours of footage taken on dozens of **nanny-cams hidden all over the house,** she's impeccably well-behaved.*

*Right: Max eagerly anticipates a strong performance by the **New England Patriots** in the 2010 season.*



In **September**, Max continued to work on **proper straw use** (see right), puzzles, pretend play with puppets and stuffed animals, drawing, and reading. He has a remarkable memory for all things Boynton and Seuss, can fill in any blanks and “read” along from memory. FUN FACT #5: Mr. Brown can “moo.” Can you?



In **October**, Ayelet submitted a big **grant application** to NIMH. If you happen to know what that stands for, you probably also appreciate how much effort was involved—and how much time Max and daddy got to spend together in September! After the grant was submitted, mommy took Max to **Sesame Place**, a theme park about 3 miles from here. Max loves those fuzzy Sesame characters, even “This is the Song” Elmo. FUN FACT #6: You have not lived until you’ve seen an **8-foot Snuffleupagus balloon held aloft by dancing puppets**.



In **November**, we took a week-long vacation to the **Outer Banks** in North Carolina (see left, 3 pics) to celebrate Max’s grandma **Tova’s 60<sup>th</sup> birthday**. We were joined by Ayelet’s siblings, their spouses, their kids, a lot of beach-birds, and a delightful number of dolphins. FUN FACT #7: Sand is fun.

In **December**, we celebrated **Hannukah** (see right). Soon after, while Max napped, his father wrote **this holiday letter**. And now you’re completely up-to-date!

\* \* \*

We hope that you and your loved ones have a joyful holiday season and a wonderful new year. This is most likely to happen if you check out one of the following:

**1. Our holiday letter archives:**

<http://www.tcnj.edu/~ruscio/holidays.html>

**2. One-a-week pics of Max:**

<http://www.tcnj.edu/~ruscio/max.html>

**3. Even more pics, plus videos:**

Email us for details—or follow Max around, taking your own pics and videos



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**Max:** Play phone and toy laptop not yet connected to actual networks