

## Happy Holidays from the Ware household 2007

The photo below was taken under protest. I explained to the nice photographer that even in my 20's my body did not bend into the shape he requested. The smile on my face is 100% artificial. I was in pain. (If you look very closely at my eyes, you'll see that they are tearing.)

One month later I am able to walk without crutches. Next year I'll be seated in a regular chair, thank you. If I am pictured in the full lotus position you'll know that my face was pasted on someone else's body.



Here's another thing about photographers: kids always cooperate with them. The kids can fight the entire time in the car ride, but once they arrive in the studio, they are all sunshine and smiles. Note the picture of Nikki and Alexandra (top right)...it has never been recreated in real life. I rest my case.



The closest I've ever gotten is the photo shown below which does not appeal to anyone except their dentist, Dr. Kacel.



As I reported in last year's letter, the smart money was on Jane continuing her career at Baxter. The smart money won, though Janey did take a 4 month hiatus this summer to hang with the girls. Jane is happily back in the corporate saddle, just returned from Belgium and heading to China in 08.

In 07, we were blessed with no major traumas. Phew. One of the biggest crises occurred when Jane noticed two favorite rings missing from her jewelry

Janey Ware  
Jim Ware

[janeyware@comcast.net](mailto:janeyware@comcast.net)  
[jware@focusgroup.com](mailto:jware@focusgroup.com)

847-383-5060  
847-373-8853

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box. Both had high sentimental value. We searched and searched with no luck. We concluded that Nikki (age 5), who loves to play hide and seek with small objects, had hidden them and forgotten about it. Nikki vehemently denied the accusation, but given her history, we were pretty sure she was the culprit.

Several weeks later, Janey emerged from our bedroom beaming. "I found the rings, I found the rings!" she cried.

"Where were they?" I asked.

The response: "I'd put them away in a drawer for safekeeping."

Poor Nikki had been taking one for the team all this time and was fully exonerated when the lost articles were found in Mom's hiding place. (That should be worth a few years on the therapist's couch...)

But there was a good lesson from this experience, one that I can apply in our work with financial firms.

In our work we teach that blame is bad. It has a corrosive effect in organizations. We recommend eliminating it. The problem is that blame runs so deep in our culture and our individual psyches that it's hard to eliminate. It takes a lot of conscious work.

This incident with Nikki gave me a whole new perspective: don't labor endlessly trying to eliminate blame. That's too hard. Rather find one person and blame everything on them! Brilliant, eh? And much easier.

I have yet to bounce this off my colleagues, but I'm sure they'll be enthusiastic supporters of this new approach. Well, all of them except the person we choose to be the scapegoat. They may resist a little.

Speaking of my team, I am blessed to work with a team that is so

gifted that they overcome my array of shortcomings. Here we are celebrating Xmas in Jim Dethmer's new home in downtown Chicago.



(Jamie, Me, Jim D., Fran. Jack is not pictured, but if you really want to see him he's shown on our website...)

Last year I wrote about my skin rash and I'm sure many of you are wondering how that's coming. Well, it's still there, but my doctor assures me that in another 10 or 20 years I won't care about it. He says, "if that's the worst thing you got, you'll be thrilled." I pay for him for this advice.

In summary, then, I am walking a bit better now with hopes of full recovery and scratching a bit less.

Please accept our sincere wishes for a wonderful New Year. Know that if you are receiving this card, it is because you are in our hearts and thoughts. And we so appreciate you being in our lives.

Cheers,

Jim, Jane, Alexandra, and Nicole  
4137 RFD Long Grove, IL 60047



Janey Ware  
Jim Ware

[janeyware@comcast.net](mailto:janeyware@comcast.net)  
[jware@focusgroup.com](mailto:jware@focusgroup.com)

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