

DOWN HOME: Top Christmas gift to arrive later

January 1, 2010

Our family's greatest news of the Christmas season provided a harbinger of one of our grandest events of 2010: Lindsay is expecting a baby.

Our oldest daughter and her husband, Aaron, arrived on Christmas and gave us our present before we even had a chance to sit down beside the tree. They said Joanna and I will become grandparents by around—and this is poetically appropriate—Labor Day.

So, next summer, Molly and her fiancé, David, will get married, and Lindsay and Aaron will deliver a baby. Our little family is just booming.

Lindsay and Aaron's announcement was simultaneously not surprising yet shocking. They got married four years ago and graduated from [Hardin-Simmons University](#) three and a half years ago. Aaron graduated from seminary last spring, and Forest Glade Baptist Church in Mexia called him as their pastor this fall. They're busy settling into their first house, a cute parsonage right beside the church. So, it's time for them to start a family.

But it's hard to conceive of the notion that your children are old enough to be parents. And it's even harder to get the ol' noggin around the idea that you're old enough to be a grandparent.

For one reason, Jo isn't old enough to be a grandmother. I look at her, and she's still as cute and cuddly as that Hardin-Simmons coed I met and fell in love with. Oh, yeah, that was three decades ago. So, maybe she is old enough.

But I can't be. Shoot, when I finish writing this, I'm going to get up and

run. And I'm going to get up and work hard tomorrow. Not only that, but my waist is only one inch bigger than when Jo met and fell in love with me ... 33 years ago. OK, so I guess I am old enough, too.

Fortunately, I had some good role models for being a grandfather. Pop was Daddy's father, and Popo was Mother's father. And they were great.

When I was a boy, Pop had the downtown mail route in Borger. In the summer when I stayed with Pop and Mom, I'd get to walk the morning mail route with him. What a hoot. He knew everybody in town. Plus, he had a cool uniform with a funky hat. And he was one of the pillars of Calvary Baptist Church, where I always felt right at home on Sundays and Wednesday nights.

Back then, Popo ran the Reading Room for the Sante Fe Railway in Waynoka, Okla. The Reading Room was a company-owned hotel for the railroad crews, and Grammar and Popo lived in the building. When I stayed with them, as soon as breakfast was over, I spent every moment of the day with Popo. He let me hang out, talk baseball and play dominoes with the engineers, conductors, firemen and brakemen. When we wanted to go fishing, Grammar minded the Reading Room, and we took off for the stock tanks.

Pop and Popo helped provide me with a charmed childhood. Now, I get to pay them back by loving my oldest daughter's first child.