

YEAR-END FAMILY LETTER B.C.

By Fred Hobbs

Some folks still enjoy sending and receiving the annual Christmas-time family letter. These are mostly upbeat, detailing the pleasant trips, the kids good report cards, family awards and employment advances. (Given the current economic picture, that last item may have been deleted this year.)

While this tradition appears to be relatively new, scientists and historians have now uncovered evidence of the existence of such communications going back as far as 1,000 B.C. Professor Roscoe Crutchley is curator of the Stone Age Communication Museum at Frampton College in Dismal Seepage, Alabama. His research team, exploring a cave on the remote island of Tannatuva in the South Pacific, made a startling discovery. A stone tablet with Sanskrit markings. Translated it reads:

A Year End Message to All Family and Friends:

We are carving this on our new I-Stone hand-held tablet. The old rocks we previously used have been recycled into sand for the kids' stone-ball games.

We had a fabulous year. Dad has a new job heading up the Tannatuva Chamber of Commerce. He is helping to promote a new method of preparing meals. It is called "fire" and it is supposed to make the fish we catch from shore taste better. The man who discovered it, Anu Gogg, says it can also produce heat and may be useful in keeping the cave warmer.

Mom has been busy with the local sewing circle. She and the other ladies have been making holiday baskets out of old brontosaurus bones and selling them at the Hunters and Gatherers Mall.

At school, the kids are working on their Sanskrit comprehensive vocabulary so they can pass the test of the Tannatuva Education Department and receive funds from the Tribal Congress. So far, they are kind of "atyasyatid" (Note: Professor Crutchley says that means "overwhelmed".) But, they are studying hard. Mateyka, our youngest, is on the wrestling team. His coach says he's very good on the Ka Ta (mat.) And Tondaleio finished first in the Sanskrit spell down and she is learning a new subject called mathematics.

Early in the year, we joined neighbors and good friends, Fred Flintstone and Barney Rubble and their families in a dug out canoe trip to a neighboring island, where the native girls taught us a new dance, the hula and treated us to a festival they call a luau. Fred and Barney were introduced to a new game involving a stick and a round stone that you hit as far as you can and then try to get into a series of holes in the ground. While we enjoyed being with our friends, we all agreed that was the silliest game we've ever heard of.

Looking forward to next year, we have plans to move into a new and bigger cave. The kids have run out of space on the wall for their writings and drawings. The local Cave Dwellers Association has put in new regulations prohibiting signs out front promoting Mom's basket

weaving business. And, they are worried about this new “fire” thing and a new idea that it can be used to light up a certain weed that is said to do funny things to people who smoke it.

We hope you get our yearly message even quicker next year. The new I-Stone is great, and we hear that a couple of guys are working on the possibility of one day flying words and even pictures through the air. But, who thinks that will ever happen? Well, that’s it for now. Meantime, Happy Stone Age to all and to all a good night!