

Grandkids are like buses, you wait for ages for one and then a bunch turn up at once. The big difference of course is that buses drive you to your destination and kids drive you to drink. We now have two more little monkeys demanding attention. Andrew and Erin plopped out Kieran in January. Gregory and Kelly took this as a challenge and countered with baby Calvin in September. Stephen, I hope you're seeing the trend here! Stephen claims that a grand-dog is all that I can hope for but once he's seen his new nephews and realizes how his life of sleeping all night, going to parties, sports events, vacations, and having disposable income is waaay overrated. The only cure is lots of whiney little brats for me to spoil.



Kieran is a cute little thing but a bit shy (obviously he gets that from Christine). Every time he sees me his bottom lip trembles and he looks like he's about to burst into tears. This is not an unusual reaction to me but it's typically hot women that I have this effect on. I have no doubt he'll improve with age and skip the wobbly lip stage and go straight to howling.

Before Calvin appeared, Gregory was asking me about the life changes due to impending fatherhood. It's just be another person in the house, what's the big deal? It's hard to articulate the impact of the first kid and I didn't do the argument much justice. Once Calvin was born he was like, yeah I get it now, all my old problems now seem inconsequential. That's what I said but I guess you just have to experience some things first hand to fully grasp them.



This is the league table so far:

Ellie (38) tops the table with Lyanna (6), Audrey (4) and Jimbo (2)  
Andrew (39) second edging out Gregory on goal difference with Kieran (10 months)  
Gregory (34) coming on strong with Calvin (2 months)  
Stephen (35) propping up the table with Gus (14 in dog years)

There are some big changes happening in Stephen's life. Lauren and Stephen got engaged to be engaged and then got engaged. Apparently the wedding is sometime in the next few years somewhere in Mexico. Or something. I told him I was busy around that time and he said I was being presumptuous assuming I was invited. Oooh, I can see this conversation getting fun. Stephen is one of the few people on earth who can out-asshole me. I've no idea where he get's it from.

The biggest news affecting us is the second invasion of the Ellie clan. Overwhelming superior numbers of the Ellie horde outmaneuvered the beleaguered defenders and complete assimilation has been achieved. Apparently Putin has taken note of the tactics so Ukraine is about to be overrun with millions of toddlers brandishing Dr Seuss books and potties. The whole of Ukraine will be speaking Russian in no time and spending their days commenting on kid's potty filling exploits (“Oooh nice poop, it's huge comrade!”).

Ellie and Bob decided to bail from NYC but couldn't figure out what they want to do with the rest of their lives (join the club!). They are taking a year off and Christine and I are taking a year on. Ellie is working remotely in the basement and Bob is mister mom, which typically involves telling the kids to go read a book with Papi. It works for me, I like books and hate diapers and potty training (“Can



someone wipe my bottom?") so we have firm delineations of responsibility.

When Ellie asked if they could stay with us for the year (what, we are going to say no!) I said only if she gets pregnant. If we could somehow manage to distill that icy stare we could cure global warming overnight. Although I caught Bob smiling at the thought. He must enjoy diapers and potty training ("look how long mine is daddy") more than I thought.

This year we got into a new hobby – house swapping. It's like wife swapping only much more fun. Not that I've tried wife swapping, the problem is that someone else's wife would end up with me and that's a definite deal breaker. You can imagine the trembling bottom lip already. People can be sooo picky.

House swapping on the other hand is great, especially when I can swap my dirty little hovel for a luxurious penthouse on the ocean. Or even for someone else's dirty little hovel. Whatever you've got as long as it's not snowing at your place. It turns out that most of the people involved are dodderly old duffers just like us. Most of them leave the place spotless which means I don't have to clean the place. Not that my cleaning is effective, it mostly relies on avoiding everything until Christine can't stand it anymore and does it herself. Then when she's nearly finished I give it the old "do you need a hand?". Decades of practice have got the timing down to a fine art.

What about Christine you ask. What about her indeed. She's still fighting the good fight with her bladder. A typical Tuesdays involves a day trip to Boston to sample the city's best traffic, coffee, bagels and chemo. The treatment improves the condition but doesn't actually cure it. At least not so far and we're six years into it at this point. It's not life threatening but it seems to be never ending. On the plus side Christine has made loads of good friends at Mass. General Hospital. They all know the loud Englishwoman.

We're planning on a trip to England in April for a family wedding (bladder permitting). Hopefully we can catch up with some long lost family, friends and pubs. If you have any hot women friends over there who are in need of a lip wobble, just let me know.

Wishing everyone a merry Christmas and a great 2023.

