

KARIM LOVES HIS YAYA



- **PILING** joins Marnie and Salman
- **Ullahs** go to LONDON
- **Marnie Mingles** with URDU POETESS

BELLEVUE, WA - This was the year to settle into our home, our jobs, and our family. Last December, our second son, Karim was born. He is a happy, easy child, dark and handsome. He can stand, and may walk soon. He likes to play under the table and negotiate his way under the chairs. He likes to open kitchen cupboards and empty them. He is too restless to put in a highchair and he often stands rather than sits in his stroller. We were shocked to find him at the top of the stairs recently; he had climbed there unsupervised when the gate was left open. He clearly understands a lot and he is very expressive with his noises and his body. He adores his big brother, Rahim, and he loves his yaya, Piling. She carries him a lot even as he gets heavier and heavier.

Piling also joined us last December. For those of you who may not have met her, she was Olivia's beloved yaya for eight years. Now she takes care of Karim and all of us during the week. On weekends, she stays with her aunt in Seattle, goes to family get-togethers and speaks Ilocano to her heart's content. She's a very good cook and Salman has learned about *patis* and *pinakbet*, *lumpia* and *escabeche*. We are very thankful to have her with us.

Rahim is three and a half. He likes to pretend he's Luke Skywalker or a superhero. He has been going to preschool/daycare three days a week, staying home with Piling and Karim other days, but he has so much energy that we are going to extend him to four days of school. He likes to play with gear such as belts, flashlights, tools, measuring tapes, ropes, and helmets. He loves seeing his cousins. He watches a lot of TV. He loves walking down to the lake at the

end of the road and looking for treasures in the sand, or wading there in summer-time. He is articulate and clever but his energy can be hard to manage. In desperation, we have even taken a course called Raising Your Spirited Child. However, he usually follows Piling.

Salman has been happy with working at Microsoft. He works with corporate strategy, negotiating deals. He took a business trip to Singapore but otherwise has not been travelling much this year. We did go to Vancouver as a family with Mom and Dad and Malia, and then to London to see Salman's parents. The highlight of London for Rahim was the London Transport Museum in Covent Garden with all the different models of double-decker buses from years past. The highlight for me was an

Karim




invitation to dinner at someone's home, which turned out to be a sort of Pakistani Literary Society meeting, complete with an Urdu poetess. We did not have much to do with the meeting - we sat in the back room near the kitchen and just ate a lot of spectacular home-cooked Pakistani food. I have a great job helping run HIV vaccine safety trials - regular hours, low stress, an important cause, but I miss clinical infectious disease, so I will be restructuring this position to get more clinical exposure and to help me decide what to do next.

We like living in Bellevue. Seattle is just across the floating bridge. We live a few blocks from the lake, in a wooded area. There are several small beach parks in the neighborhood. A major mall is a few minutes away, so we see Grandma Nini or Kathleen and Gumby when they are shopping sometimes. We enjoyed discovering

our garden in springtime, when flowers and trees planted by the previous owners bloomed in turn. Salman built a treehouse in the pear tree, and planted little red chilies which are so hot we can't use them for anything; only now and then he tastes one to prove his manhood. We also had a bumper crop of apples, which would drop on the deck at night with loud thuds. Our favorite weekend outing is to the Pike Place Market in Seattle, to have coffee and to buy freshly baked bread, fruit, and vegetables. We actually do drink a lot of coffee and eat a lot of salmon here. So in Washington, we are experiencing nature's bounty, and the company of family.

Our wishes for a happy and healthy New Year to you all.

- Marnie L. Elizaga 

Rahim and Karim

