



Let it Snow. In past years here in Oregon, we've rolled our eyes at any Christmas song with snow in the lyrics. Typically, it's more like "I'm dreaming of a wet Christmas..." Well this year, thanks to some winter storms, we got snowed in and finally had our white Christmas after all.



Walkabout! It's been an exciting year with even more exciting opportunities on the horizon. Having wrapped up my 12th year at Tetra Tech, I got the itch to try something new; that led to the pursuit of a position in Melbourne, Australia to help expand our company's international market. So if all the logistics go as planned, our next annual letter will come from down under! We're trying to prepare the kids for the change of scenery and a whole new vocabulary; they're keen as mustard about the prospect (though I probably shouldn't have shown them the YouTube video of an Australian Great Orb spider feasting on a bird caught in its web...Crikey!) In any case it's sure to be a bonza family adventure, and we hope the little rippers pick up a fair dinkum Aussie accent in the process. Stay tuned for more details!

Promises, promises... Though we hit our ten-year anniversary a year ago, we had the chance to let the anniversary celebration last all year long. When we went to Jackson Hole in the middle of winter for our 1997 honeymoon, it wasn't quite what Lindy had in mind; at the time I promised her as consolation that we'd eventually make it to the Caribbean or to Hawaii. Well it took us over ten years, but we finally managed to knock them both off the list this year.

Unsinkable. We started off the year with an unforgettable voyage around the Caribbean Sea. Jaedin's cardiologist nominated him to be granted a wish through the Make-a-Wish foundation; his wish to go on a boat as big as the Titanic (only one that wouldn't sink) was granted in the form of a cruise for the whole family. Jaedin got the royal treatment, from a surprise stretch limo airport ride to steering the biggest cruise ship in the world! That said, steering the ship from the captain's seat was actually a bit nerve-racking for Jaedin, since he wondered who was looking out for icebergs while the captain taught him how to steer (an ongoing concern throughout the trip). He also got to tour the galley with the head chef, tour the engine room with the chief engineer, get spa treatments with mom, ride a pirate ship as a pirate in the ice show, perform tricks as a magician in a magic show, go backstage and meet the performers after every show, eat all the shrimp he could stomach, and the list goes on and on...and that was just on board!



What's up Dock. The shore excursions were packed full of adventure as well, including hiking to the Dragon's Breath cave in Haiti, taking some crazy cab rides for river rating and waterfall climbing in Jamaica, snorkeling and swimming with stingrays in Grand Cayman, climbing ruins and kissing dolphins in Cozumel, Mexico...again, the list goes on and on. After all of that, we asked Jaedin about his favorite part of the cruise. His answer? Unlimited video games at the on-board arcade, of course! (Cam agreed with Jaedin, but Addie voted for the free pool-side self-serve ice cream machine.) In any case it was a week packed full of unforgettable memories for the whole family. It's a bit humbling to be the recipient of charity, but Jaedin certainly had the time of his life and we all felt lucky to be able to come along for the ride. Our thanks go out to the Make-a-Wish Foundation and especially to Jewelers for Children, who sponsored Jaedin's wish.



Hang Loose. I had some work to do in Oahu a few months later...a tough job, but someone had to do it. The solo sunsets did get old after a while, but luckily Lindy was able to join me at the tail end of the trip, giving the kids some grandparent time while we got to explore some of the other islands together. One highlight was renting a Jeep and hitting the back trails of Big Island (aside from Lindy killing off a couple of endangered birds with the windshield in the process...that's off the record, by the way.) Another highlight was seeing the coral reefs in Maui. That experience bore a very deep meaning for me; you see, thirty years ago, an excited six-year old bragged to his big sister that he had taken a ride in a real submarine, flown to Mars, and sat next to real ghosts all on the same day, only to be told that Disneyland's Submarine Voyage, Mission to Mars, and Haunted Mansion were all fake. Well after stewing over it since 1977, I finally brought closure to at least one long-standing resentment by taking a real submarine ride around the coral reefs of Maui (this time without strings or mirrors). Closure on the other two items may take a few more years, but at least we're making progress. Our Hawaiian trip was over all too soon, but we felt lucky to have had the chance to go.

Gas Hogs. Later in the summer we cursed the gas prices all the way to Utah where we had family reunions for both sides of my extended family. We also tacked on some waterpark fun, a dinosaur museum, Lagoon, and visits with great grandma. For the last few years I've been a bit obsessed by historical documents and photos related to my late grandfather's life, particularly those related to Germany in the early 1930's where he served in the same mission area that I served in sixty years later. During our trip I was able to spend some time in the special collections archives at several libraries researching some of his materials. I've found it fascinating, but one library alone has 87 boxes of his materials, so I'm just scratching the tip of the iceberg. We wrapped up our Utah trip and our year-long ten-year anniversary celebration with a stay at Sundance (where we had our wedding reception back in 1997), which gave us some time to reflect on what an amazing adventure we've had so far.

Checking his List. The last few months have involved much less travel but have still been insanely busy as we try to tie up loose ends with the house to get ready for the big move (ask me about the new attic monorail system for access to storage...) We're spending Christmas in Eugene with Lindy's parents, a welcome relief away from our unfinished projects at home. Unfortunately they closed the freeway due to ice while we were enroute; we ended up spending six hours covering just twenty miles and still had two hours to go by the time they reopened the freeway. During the forced family bonding time we had to let the kids dive into their Christmas presents in the car just to maintain everyone's sanity. So now Santa has some scrambling to do unless he comes up with a good excuse for passing us by on Christmas Eve. Here are some individual details Santa's been tracking this year for the whole crew:



Lindy. Lindy and her mom got their mother-daughter road trip around California, visiting her grandparents in Fresno, hitting tourist stops in San Francisco, and tacking on a short trip through Berkeley to pick up a couple of Zachary's pizzas (best pizza on the planet, by the way) to bring home as a surprise for me and the kids. Lindy's effort of carrying pizza boxes through airport security paid off in the form of a week off from making dinner. The kids thought she was the best mom in the world for having pizza for eight days in a row! Lindy keeps busy with the kids, or at least they keep her busy when she's not pursuing her crafty side. She took a professional cake decorating class, but warned me not to mention it since her cakes were apparently a disaster (don't start phoning in your cake orders quite yet...) She did manage to pull off the daunting tasks of decorating for a friend's luau-themed wedding to much avail and turning the kids into rock stars for Halloween. Though she didn't paint the house or knock down any walls in my absence this year, she did manage to surprise me by hanging the Christmas lights on her own in the bitter sleet.

Krey. A few trips to Alaska helped curb the wanderlust a bit this year, with some hiking, backcountry skiing, and other potential ways to make headlines as the dumb tourist who became a snack. I did get to see orcas, humpbacks, bears, caribou, wolves and other critters in the wild. The kids were impressed until I tried to show them

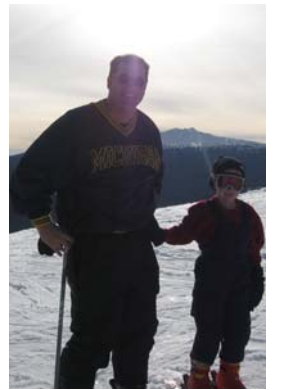
the pictures. "Can't you see that bear? Look closer - it's that little brown spot right there!" Well, continuing the tradition of listing the top embarrassing moments of the year, I'll start with #1: I took down our kitchen cabinets to paint them in the garage, then got a bit ambitious with other projects while the cabinets were drying. Unfortunately the other projects involved lots of work on the table saw, which generated lots of sawdust, which, in turn, generated a very unique finish for our cabinets once the paint dried... #2: Lindy sent me out to get boxes late one night so she could start packing things up around the house. So I went out dumpster diving in the cardboard recycle bins behind a strip mall. After packing a few of them, she asks me, "what's that smell?" Then I noticed the "fresh shrimp" seafood restaurant label on the side of the boxes... #3: I substituted as a teacher for Jaedin's Sunday school class for a few weeks. I thought I had managed to keep things lively for the class, but then Lindy asked Jaedin how it went. "It was totally embarrassing," he replied. "Why?" "Well, he acts so childish!"

Berkeley. The whole world is new and exciting to our little angel (actually, her angel status is gradually diminishing as she explores random methods to try to get her way.) Addie has smothered her with so much mothering that Berkeley has revolted a bit and seems to have turned into a rebellious teenager already. She is learning lots of new things on her own each day; for example, the blanket of snow that appeared in our lawn last week seemed so inviting to her that she dove right in, giving her a freezing surprise. As another example, when the leaves fell, she didn't remember that they actually come back in the spring, so she kept telling us with an alarmed tone that the trees were breaking. We are constantly surprised at all the new words she learns every day. Overall, she is very easy-going kid and loved by all.



Addisen. Addie is the liveliest (loudest) one in the household. We have to laugh when the kids' teachers say how quiet they are at school, especially when it comes from Addie's teacher. Addie loves first grade, especially drawing, coloring, and writing. She is the easiest to please out of the bunch; if there is a pretty color involved, any activity will do. She taught herself how to ride a bike this year. We thought she just liked to go insanely fast and crash-land, but I finally figured out after a few days that she didn't realize you can stop pedaling and coast. She also learned how to conduct music (taught to her by her primary chorister Opa especially for Jaedin and Cam's baptismal service.) She enjoys going to gymnastics class and had a great time doing a reenactment of the Caribbean cruise for her sixth birthday. She loves to be just plain silly; for example, one night I fell asleep reading her a story and woke up to find that she had completely covered me with a whole carton of baby wipes.

Cambren. Cam continues to be the resident comedian and lawyer in the family, an interesting combination because his jokes, while funny, are generally intended to make a case. He takes after his father in many ways. At his parent-teacher conferences, Lindy just sits there and says "yep, that's genetic...it's his dad's fault!" He is our family peacemaker and gets along with everyone. He has really grown this year both in height and emotionally. He is a great student but can't get video games off his mind. He did discover a love for reading - at least when it comes to Calvin and Hobbes comic books. He went to ski school for his birthday and loved the experience. He also started Cub Scouts and really enjoyed a week-long day camp this summer.



Jaedin. Jaedin is our prize-winning young author and artist. He keeps busy writing and illustrating all sorts of books. He became a bit of a local celebrity through Make-a-Wish, appearing in TV and radio spots. He loves doing the things he's good at, and even though he's only ten years old, he has already developed a teenager's attitude when it comes to things he doesn't want to do (eye rolling, grumpy mumbling, etc.). He enjoyed an overnight trip to the zoo with his third-grade class last spring (where Dad won the snoring contest for keeping everyone awake all night). He also got stitches for landing his head on a brick while helping me build a retaining wall in our yard. He celebrated his tenth birthday at an indoor water park. Jaedin was baptized in November and got to share the experience with Cam. It was fun to see them meet with the missionaries for the lessons, especially when they tried teaching the lessons back to the missionaries.

Golddigger. As I was rototilling our back yard to lay some sod a few months ago, I happened to notice a toy ring in the dirt right about to get plowed under. I stopped the tiller, dug out the ring, handed it to Addie and told her to go tell mom we found her long-lost wedding ring. I meant it as a joke, but when Lindy cleaned it off, sure enough, it was the wedding ring that she has been ripping the house apart to find for four years. From what we can figure, it "somehow" must have become part of a jewelry sale Addie held in her backyard playhouse way back when. So just when we thought we had finished our year-long ten-year anniversary celebration, we rounded it out with this special find. I had to admit I didn't recognize the ring because I thought I remembered the diamond being bigger. A lot bigger. Well now after mistaking it for a toy ring, I'm eating my words and I owe Lindy a bigger diamond by our 20th anniversary.

Muchas Gracias. Well, in addition to miraculous finds (as Lindy can attest, I can't find my keys when they're right in front of my face...so spotting a ring in the dirt is nothing short of miraculous), this year we have a whole lot of things to be grateful for. We're especially grateful to the generous jewelers and everyone else who contributed to Jaedin's Caribbean wish: Royal Caribbean, Hyatt Regency, Oregon Limousines, American Airlines, and the random people who donated their frequent flyer miles. We're also thankful for mechanics creepers, bird sanctuaries, swim classes, special collections, Atlantis Submarines, Mad Science, seafood boxes, the Beatles, missionaries, the spirit of Christmas, and especially new opportunities and the audacity of hope in a crazy time. We hope all is well with you this holiday season and hope to maintain and deepen our relationships through whatever the future may bring.

Love, Krey, Lindy, Jaedin, Cambren, Addisen, and Berkeley