Family News

December 15, 2007

Greetings from the Panhandle of Florida! We published our first newsletter in 1992 ... 15 years ago! A couple of years ago we went from 4 pages to 2 pages. Since this is something like an anniversary edition we are doing 4 pages this year. Marc was 6 years old when we started this and is this past year he turned 21. TJ was 15 and he has now reached the ripe old age of 30!!





A photo of Kathy I had never seen

In some ways the past year has been full, yet as I reflect back I am struck with how quiet and settled life has been. Last May Marc moved out and Kathy and I have been doing the "empty nest" thing for the first time in our lives.



Justinn made the cake



In April Kathy turned 50 and we surprised her with a birthday party at the civic center. Dozens and dozens of friends and family gathered for an evening of celebration. One of her gifts was a special notebook filled with memories and letters and photos about a life filled with love, joy, and rich blessings (thanks to MANY of you who contributed to it!).

Last Valentine's Day Kathy and I celebrated a milestone: 25 WONDERFUL years of marriage. In March I experienced another milestone, I became a member of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). Kathy went with me to a Quaker meeting in NC in late April. After the meeting we celebrated our 25th wedding anniversary by spending a week on the Outer Banks of NC and then another week in a hotel by the Atlantic Ocean at Myrtle Beach, SC.



We took our time exploring the Outer Banks and were able to visit all four



At the top of Cape Hatteras Lighthouse



light houses. We climbed to the top of the Cape Hatteras Light House and camped out in a tent on the beach a couple of miles away. The weather was great and we were treated to several sunrises over the Atlantic Ocean.

This past year I simplified my eating habits. Since I became a vegetarian in 2006 I found myself eating a lot of simple whole foods, so I began buying organic oats, brown rice, beans, wheat, ... in 6 gallon buckets. It reduces trips to the store. I have a hand mill that I use to grind my own flour and have also begun cooking some meals using a solar cooker.



Perry's Girls

I bought a new bicycle last May. This is my sixth bike since I began riding in 1994. I have gone from the single speed I have used the past couple of years to a three speed and love it. I have been asked how long I plan to keep riding my bike to work and my answer is simple - as long as I have the health to do it, which I hope will be for many, many more years.



Grandpa keeps an eye on the girls

In October we remodeled our bathroom, including replacing the old fiberglass tub/shower with a metal one.

Kathy and I continue to spend most of our Saturday's working on Habitat for Humanity houses. We are currently working on the 7th house we have helped build. I'll gladly put in a plug here for habitat - if you ever have the opportunity (even if its just once) to help at habitat, you'll be glad you did.



Crib Kathy Made

Kathy is in her second year of retirement. She has a "shop" in our shed where she has a table saw, dill press, router table, band saw, ... and LOTS of hand tools. This past year one of her projects was a new crib for my niece Michelle's new baby (Collin). She still finds time for quilts and other projects too.



Exploring a cave at the reunion

TJ and Angela have been living in Crestview for almost a year now. It is closer to both of their jobs. With gas so expensive, that saves them on gas expenses. TJ is now a department manager. He is in charge of the photo lab at Walmart and is enjoying it. And he has some stories he can tell about some of the photos people bring in. Its hard to believe he is 30 years old.

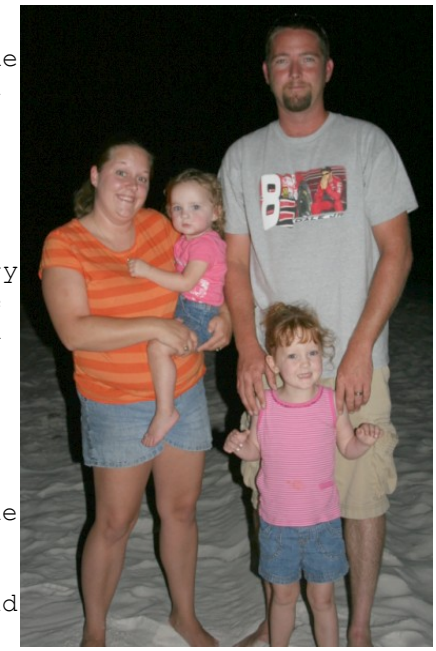


Taylor, Angela, & TJ

Angela has also had a promotion in her job, so congratulations to both of them. Angela has a second full time job taking care of Amethyst (a cross between a Yorkie & a Shelty).

Perry and Michelle have been doing some work on their house. They replaced the carpet with a beautiful wood floor this past year. Kathy showed Perry how to install it. She must have taught him well because he helped us when we did my mom's floor with a hallway that had lots of angles and he knew what he was doing.

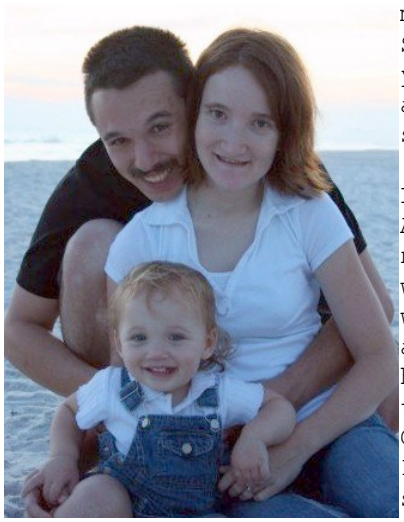
Michelle has her hands full now that she is working and Taylor is going to school. Trying to manage that along with getting Caitlynn to the baby sitter and her regular chores, leaves her little time for herself.



Michelle, Caitlynn, Perry, & Taylor

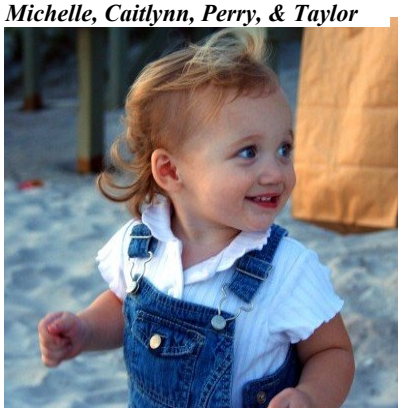
Taylor turned five this year and is now in school. She called us to tell us her grades when she got her first report card. She made 3 A's and 2 B's. I told her that was much better than her Dad's first report card because he did not even make one A (they used S's and N's when Perry was that age).

Caitlynn reminds me of Perry in many ways. She is very adventurous! She has little fear and will go down the slide head first if you don't watch her. She has been walking for almost a year. She is saying dozens of words and is now trying to make her own sentences. Sometimes she is in the back yard when I ride my bike home and I stop and push her in the swing. She calls me Paw Paw.



Cory, Justinn, & Angel

Last Spring Justinn, Cory, and Angel moved into an apartment near the beach. They both work in that area which means we do not see as much of them as we used to. Cory completed his two year college degree this past year. CONGRATULATIONS Cory!!! I told them they are doing something I have always wanted to do ... live near the beach. They are within easy biking distance of the world's most beautiful beaches. Justinn is working at Starbuck's and going to school at Gulf Coast in Panama City.



Last September We had a family night at their place. After a fantastic meal prepared by my nephew Korey King (he not only cooked everything from scratch, he also paid for it!) we all went to the beach and Korey took the family photo at the

end of this newsletter.



Heath & Marc

Angel will turn two years old in March. She took her first steps on Mother's Day. She is a happy child and loves to sit at the piano with grandpa. Together we play and sing and have a good time. She is very curious about many things and reminds me of Marc because she smiles so much.





Tommie, Kathy, TJ, Perry, Justinn, & Marc (1988)

Last May Marc moved in with Heath. Panama City is closer to his job at Starbuck's, but an hour and a half from our house. Since he moved out we have not seen very much of him. I miss not playing tennis with him. Last month they moved into a bigger place. It is closer to Marc's job and has twice the space as the old place. Although we have not seen it yet, I hear it even has tennis courts. Marc is a supervisor at Starbuck's and from what I hear, he has impressed several customers with his skills and big smile.

Heath has fit right in with our family. He sings, plays piano and guitar and also writes his own songs (which are VERY good). Earlier this year we took the tv out of the living room and replaced it with Kathy's piano. When Marc and Heath come over I love to sit and listen to him play ... anything.



When Marc was six, it was hard for me to imagine him "grown up". I remember thinking how strange it seemed thinking of him driving or some day growing a beard. Now that he is driving and has grown a beard (sometimes he has one and sometimes he doesn't), its almost just as hard to think of him as a six year old. Thats when lots of photos and videos come in handy. :)



Just imagine ... in 15 more years all three of our granddaughters could be driving!



<u>Favorite Quote:</u>

"A man should look for what is, and not for what he thinks should be." Albert Eistein

Merry Christmas Everyone!