Family News

December 15th, 2013



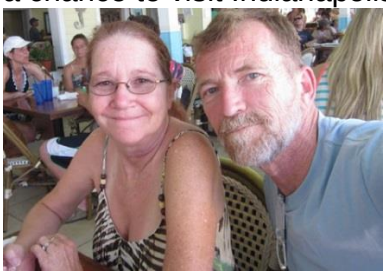
It's time for our annual Christmas Newsletter. Here are some of the things that have happened in 2013. Kathy and I did not travel as much this year as we have the past couple of years. In fact we had no trips from July - December. I think that is a first in many years. Last February we spent a week in New Orleans. One the way over we stopped in MS and ate with a cousin from Nevada we had never met. It was great meeting Toni for the first time and there is no doubt we share some of the same DNA! On the way back from New Orleans, Kathy and I stopped at Fort Gaines on Dauphin Island near Mobile We had the entire fort to ourselves (other than the park staff and museum personnel).

In April we spent a week in downtown Indianapolis and loved it. What a beautiful, clean, entertaining city! Our hotel was next to a big park, a zoo, museums, ball fields, beautiful canals and rivers, and lots of great restaurants. We were able to go to our first minor league baseball game while there.



Perry and Sammy with their kids in the Mountains

It just so happens a long-time friend from before high school works in downtown Indianapolis, so we were able to meet Tim and enjoy a couple of wonderful meals while we were there. Excellent restaurant choices Tim! If you ever have a chance to visit Indianapolis - we highly recommend it.



Kathy and I in Key West

Shortly after getting back from IN, we loaded up our kayaks and my good friend Sinder and headed south. We spent a fantastic week on Sugar Loaf Key (just 10 miles north of Key West). What a wonderful time! I loved taking the kayak out on the water each morning and watching the sunrise. What a great way to begin a day. It would be so easy to live on the water full time in the Keys! Great weather, excellent company, and lots of delicious food. Sinder and Kathy talked me into going to a



Angel's first dance recital





yard sale while we were there. I found (okay, maybe Sinder found) professional $100 scuba flippers for $1. I used them at some local springs when we kayaked on Ecofina back in July and they work great!

After the Keys, Kathy and I spent a week looking out at the Atlantic Ocean in Myrtle Beach, SC. That was a work related trip, but as usual I took some extra time off so we could enjoy the beach. On the way up we stopped at Santee state park. We followed a nature trail and saw sink holes and alligators in SC rather than FL. It is a huge beautiful park that we will definitely go back and explore.



In the summer our local habitat group takes a break from building houses. Kathy and I use that time to do a lot of kayaking. This year we not only saw several new springs on the Ecofina, we also found a river within 45 minutes of our house with crystal clear water. It is on the Eglin military base which also means … no houses. Turkey Creek quickly became one of our favorite places to spend a day kayaking. We returned to again and again until October came. I'm sure we will go back again (several times) next year as well.



Each year Kathy and I treat ourselves to 3 or 4 Broadway plays at the local college. This past spring we saw "Hair" for the first time. Our seats were on the 4th row and my seat was the end seat next to an aisle. That meant I was so close to the stage, I was asked to stand up in the aisle to dance with one of the performers (Sarah from Ohio) as part of the play. It also meant at the end, a dozen audience members (and yes, I was one of them) were asked to join the entire cast on stage to sing - let the sunshine in (Aquarius). So I joined hands with the others on stage and helped



close the show. So now I can honestly say I have sung on stage under the big lights in front of 2,000 people.



Mark 2013 down in the history books - I recently got my very first cell phone! As an IT manager for an electric utility, I decided it would be best for me to learn to use them especially the texting part. That does not mean I will take the phone with me wherever I go! I hate talking on phones and love my quiet time.



A year ago last November I filled up the first of what would become one thousand sandbags to build the lower floor of what I am calling “harmony cave”. It was not easy filling up that many bags (with just a shovel and a wheelbarrow) and still working at a full time job. On top of that we helped build two more habitat houses last year. I’m still not finished with the cave, but it is far enough along where I have been able to spend the night there at least once a month since my birthday this year. I love the peace and quiet in that place. It is a very comfortable space. There are lots of pictures of it on facebook, including several with the grandchildren in and on it.

Speaking of grandkids, we had all six of our grandchildren over this past summer for a campout. Our tents were set up near the lake and we had a good fire to roast marshmallows and hot dogs (veggie dogs for me). We were having a great time, but around 10:30 a nasty thunderstorm hit us. We quickly piled sleeping bags, pillows, and clothes into a wheelbarrow and ran back to the house (the cave was not waterproof at that point. You can imagine Kathy’s surprise when we all came barging into the house (she was expecting a quiet evening at home alone) just as it began pouring down rain. Despite the rain, we still had a good time and will try it again next year.



TJ and Angela are still living in KS. Its been way too long since we have seen them. It’s a good thing they are both on facebook. At least we can check in with them now and then. If they do not come visit soon, Kathy and I may have to take a road trip to KS.



Perry and Sammy spent much of 2013 building a new addition to their house. They added 2 more bedrooms and another bathroom which means all four kids now have their own bedroom. They did a wonderful job! The new addition looks great. In October they took all of the kids to the mountains. After looking at the pictures, I think it is safe to say they all had a lot of fun!



Justinn started a donut shop on the beach in 2013. The owner has a bike shop next door and decided to open the donut shop after talking Justinn into going to work for him. Justinn worked at a donut shop while she was going to college in LA. She talked Marc into leaving Publics to help and then a few months later, she convinced Cory to leave Publics to work at the Donut shop. So all three are working there and they make some delicious donuts. Every time I have stopped by to visit they have always been very busy. Guess word is getting around about the delicious, fresh donuts.



Marc lives just down the road from Justinn. He is within walking distance which makes it easy to carpool to work with Justinn and Cory. He recently wrote a new song and did a video recording of him singing it and playing the guitar on facebook. If you have not seen it, you should.



That about wraps it up for this year. Kathy and I are loving the empty nest thing … a lot! With our grandchildren living 45 minutes away, we do not get to see them as often as we would like. They are all growing SO fast and each of them are very special to us!



Our grandchildren's ages:

Taylor 11	Angel 7
Kacey 8	Ryan 6
Caitlynn 7	Abigail 3

Favorite Quotes:

"Health is the greatest possession. Contentment is the greatest treasure." **Lao Tzu**





For past newsletters go to: **hosttg.com/fn**

Merry

Christmas!



