Family News

December 14th, 2018

Well, 2018 turned out to be a full year for our clan with several life changes. What a great year it's been!! I'll begin with the announcement of the birth of our 8th grandchild - Acadia Blakely Kurtz on 11/27/18. Welcome to the family Cadie!! We now have 18 in our clan.





We are very, very proud of Justinn for getting her BA in education!! At the beginning of the year Justinn began teaching 1st grade at Freeport Elementary School. Now she is teaching 2nd grade and from what I hear she is an excellent teacher.

Justinn and Cory now have 3 girls and 1 boy (the reverse of Kathy's kids). Their family has gotten so big, they are moving into a bigger house. The house is still under construction and should be finished around March.

Speaking of new houses, this past January TJ and Angela bought a new house here in DeFuniak Springs. They are just on the other side of town from us. They hosted one of our family nights at their new house back in June and had a ton of room for our big clan.

Kathy and I also experienced a major life change this year. After 31 years at the electric cooperative, I decided to retire. My first day of retirement was on March 28, 2018 (Angel's 12th birthday) at the age of 59. And I have to say - it has absolutely been the best year of my life!!





We celebrated by taking a cruise to Mexico on Kathy's birthday in April. In June we rented a house on the Withlacoochee River north of Tampa with our friend Sinder for a week. We were 3 miles from the Gulf. We were able to kayak every day and loved seeing manatees directly below our kayaks (close enough to touch them). What a fun, relaxing time in Yankeetown.

During the first weekend in August our entire clan gathered at the St Andrews State park on the Gulf of Mexico. What a wonderful time. We rented a pontoon boat for the day and all of the grandchildren were able to go to Shell Island. It was a big hit! Relaxing days and enjoying campfires each night - what a lot of fun! The only downside this year was … Cory and I lost our 3 year winning streak playing corn hole. Yes, I know it is hard to believe and I could go on and on about how close it was, but all I will say is TJ and Perry earned bragging rights by beating us. They are the current reigning family corn hole champs.

In September Kathy and I drove to Atlanta to visit my sister Tonja and see her new house. It was a fun trip. Tonja and I rode bicycles on a great bike path. We did 25 miles one day and 42 miles the next day. Even though I am retired, I still take the bike out for a 5 mile ride every morning. I also spend an hour kayaking on the lake. I spend many days in my sandbag resort down by the lake (I call it Harmony). I am still making flutes and I may have gotten a few naps in the hammock down by the lake. I am very happy with retiring early and highly recommend it!





Our bunch is doing well. The grandchildren will not stop growing. Taylor turned 16 last June! Yes, that means she is old enough for Homecoming dances. Current ages: Kacey 13, Caitlynn

12, Angel 12, Ryan 11, Abigail 8, Captain 3, and Cadie less than a month old. Taylor is loving her second year of high school.











Kacey played softball, won the Miss Firecracker title, and is very good on her volleyball team. Caitlynn made the cheerleading team and is growing up fast. Ryan stays active and somehow found time to play football and basketball this year. Speaking of basketball, Angel was selected for the Seaside basketball team and is still going to the charter school near the beach. Miss Abigail is one of the top readers in the second grade. And Captain has some adjustments to make now that he is no longer the youngest child. Kathy and I celebrated our 36th anniversary with dinner and a movie followed by a walk on the beach. Sometimes the best anniversaries are the ones were we stay in our own area rather than traveling somewhere, especially when you live near the world's most beautiful beaches. In the photo of us and the kids (below right) there is 30 years between the top and bottom photos! I am 30 years old in the top photo and 60 in the bottom. Since retiring, Marc and I have gone kayaking a few times and I had time to write a book. It's 240 pages and titled "Life In Harmony" and is available on Amazon. We celebrated Thanksgiving in Orlando with Kathy's family this year - what a wonderful time!! Now that I am retired, we hope to make more trips to Orlando (so consider this fair warning). :)











Whew - that was a lot to cover for just one year. I'll end with a family photo from our campout. We hope everyone is healthy and happy. We wish you all a very **Merry Christmas**!

Favorite Quote:
"Life moves pretty fast. If you don't stop and look around once in a while, you could miss it." — **Ferris Bueller**

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