Family News

December 14th, 2020



I ended last year's family newsletter by saying: "We are looking forward to a better year in 2020!" Well, I have to admit, I do not think there could be another year as hard as 2019 because of losing Kathy and my mom, but 2020 was not one of my favorite years, What an … insane year this has been!!!

The family cruise we had been planning for almost 3 years was cancelled because of Covid along with all of my other travel plans for the year. But that was just the tip of the 2020 iceberg. I will not even mention all of the hurricanes that hit the northern Gulf of Mexico. So, I will repeat what I said last year and say - we are looking forward to a better year in 2021!!!

Last year at Christmas, Marc and Leo gave me and all eight of the grandchildren a very special and unique gift - a teddy bear made from some of Kathy's clothes. It made my heart smile. Earlier this year they got two kayaks and began taking regular kayaking trips on Lafayette Creek which borders the subdivision they live in. Last June I was kayaking with them and Marc found two turtles on a tree limb above his kayak. When he stopped to look at them one of them dropped into the seat of his kayak and it was a … snapping turtle. Marc looked a little awkward holding his butt up in the air to avoid the turtle and not flipping the kayak. But he never flipped.





Justinn and Cory have their hands full managing and raising 4 children. The new subdivision they live in continues to grow. They are next door to the pool and clubhouse, which allows them to meet all of their neighbors. Justinn is teaching the second grade again this year and Cory is working hard on getting his four year degree while working at a local bank. They celebrated their anniversary this year by flying to Nashville and enjoying a long weekend without the kids. Last Spring their whole family went camping on Anastasia Island in St Augustine.

For three years Kathy made corn hole boards as Christmas gifts for each of the kids and their spouses. When we exchanged names for Christmas last year the only one of our kids that did not have corn hole boards was TJ and Angela. Perry stepped up to the plate last Christmas and hit a home run. He drew their names and made the exact corn hole boards that his mom was planning to make - one for Notre Dame and one for Kansas State (TJ and Angela's favorite college teams). Well done Perry!!

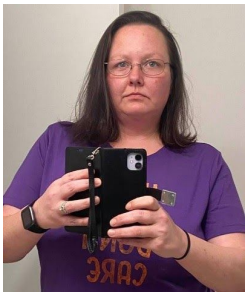




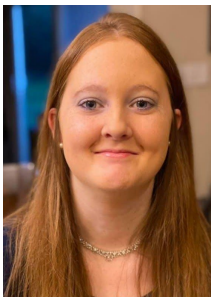
Speaking of Perry - he and Sammy and their family have been getting a lot of use out of the new camper they bought in 2019. Plus he was able to trade in two of his smaller boats to get a bigger and better boat (and I will not mention the fantastic deal he and Sammy got on her new Cadillac, but I will say - Perry is one of the best horse traders ever).

TJ and Angela are learning what it is like to be home owners. After replacing their back deck in 2019, this past year they replaced the windows in their house. But they take it all in stride and are enjoying their house, especially when they can look at the woods in the back and often see deer coming up to their backyard. Angela is able to work from home, but TJ often has to work out of town. That has made it hard on her this year with covid, but she is managing it well.



Even though our family cruise was canceled we were still able to pull off our annual family camping trip in spite of the wind and rain from Hurricane Delta. We had a wonderful time! My sisters Terri and Tammy were able to come join us for one afternoon. And I have to give a big shout out to Caitlynn for doing SO WELL in playing corn hole. She is only 14 and I think next year I will have to team up with her instead of her teaming up with Marc.



Taylor began her senior year in high school. She is doing the best she has ever done so far. She is a school spirited girl with a love for life and has a beautiful class ring she wears proudly. She is working on getting a job soon. For her 18th birthday I took her out to eat. We had a great time. Her red hair and blue eyes make her one of the prettiest girls in the county.

Kacey received her driver's permit in January on her 15th birthday. She missed school to get it. She had knee surgery and came back to play volleyball, but her season ended with a back Injury. She had her first real job over the summer.

Caitlynn began her first year of High School this past fall. She absolutely loves it. She has a couple of honors classes. She is gearing up to get her permit In January on her 15th birthday. She caught up in height with her siblings and she still has more to go.

Angel is finishing up her last year of middle school this year. She is a great big sister and a huge help to her mom and dad. She will be 15 in March. She lets her dog Tank visit me and Max now and then which is always fun. And she is very creative with her phone apps.

Ryan played on the Varsity Basketball team and Baseball Team as a 7th grader. He also decided to give Football one more shot this fall and has enjoyed it as he plays offense, defense, and special teams. He's a straight A student with 2 honors classes. He did extra classes over the summer to gain his Boaters and Hunters licenses. He also held his first job this summer at age 13 doing landscaping for a local company.

Abigail turned 10 in October. She got a pro skateboard for her birthday and loves trying new tricks. She is on the Lego robotics team at school this year and is in her last year of elementary school. And her energy levels are as high as ever. I gave up on trying to keep up with her.

Captain James turned 5 this year and started kindergarten. He is doing really well and is at the top of his class despite being the youngest.

Acadia "Cadie" is a typical two year old. She loves playing with her brother and sisters and making a mess. She is starting to talk really well. Her favorite person to talk to is Captain. Cadie tied my record of taking 15 months before she started walking last March.

I continue to ride my bike 5 miles each day, kayak (bought new kayaks this year), and take Max on weekly hiking trips, usually some place on the Florida Trail near DeFuniak. Max often goes with me kayaking. If only he would learn to paddle. In September I went camping with Perry and his family. I was planning to go with Justinn and her family last March, but Covid got in the way. We built our house in 1985, so this year marks 35 years in the same house. To the right is a photo from our house warming party.











I am loving retirement. I highly recommend it as early as possible. Our clan is doing well in spite of 2020. We hope you have a very **MERRY CHRISTMAS!!**

Mother and daughter at St Augustine and father and daughter on the porch.



Favorite Quotes:

"Adopt the pace of nature. Her secret is patience." *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

"I took a walk in the woods and came out taller than the trees." *Henry David Thoreau*