Family News

December 14th, 2022



I began doing the Family News in 1992. This marks 30 years of newsletters. I've decided 30 years is long enough. This will be the **last edition**. All things change over time and all things come to an end.

This past February my father died at the age of 86. He was a man of many talents and loved by most people who knew him. Rest in peace dad.

Several people have died since I began doing this in 1992. When I look at past newsletters and think of the many people that have touched our lives, I cannot help but to feel grateful. I will never forget those who have left us. I know death is part of life, but it is still sad to lose the ones we love. Maybe 30 years of newsletters will keep some of the memories alive.

Looking at the photos over the years, tells a story. I glance over past newsletters and the memories put a smile on my face. I give thanks for the "*many blessings that have been ours.*"







Marc and Leo have had a busy year. They took a vacation in south FL in February. They hiked from the southern terminus of the FL trail, rode bikes on a section near the Everglades, had an airboat tour, kayaked and camped before going to Key West. They went to the bouy ten years after Kathy and I were there for the first time (in 2012). It was appropriate that Marc spread some of Kathy's ashes there. In June Marc took a work promotion and they moved to the east side of Birmingham. Deb and I paid a visit in September and hiked to Kings Chair on Oak Mt with them. They camped in KY in Oct at Mammoth Cave. Marc was only five when I began this. He has had a wonderful smile the whole time. Keep smiling! I am blessed to be called your dad.

Justinn and Cory were brave enough to take all of the kids to Maine in the summer to see his dad. They flew into Boston and took a car to Maine allowing them to do a lot of sightseeing, including spending a night with my nephew Jason and his family in Boston. Justinn still teaches the second grade and Cory is loving his new tech job. The two of them make a great couple. They have a wonderful family and I have to say - I am very thankful for my creative, hard working, fun loving, free spirited, "little girl"!





Perry and Sammy stay busy with work and three teenagers in highschool. This year Perry built Sammy a new office (with some help from Ryan) that looks amazing! Perry got a new truck this year. He and Sammy have done a wonderful job raising four great kids. When I started the Family News in 1992, I had my doubts about Perry, but he has become one of the best young men I know! He is strong rock for our clan. I am proud of you son!



TJ and Angela are doing well. They had a great time on the cruise to Mexico with Marc and Leo. They still live in DeFuniak on the south side of town. Angela got a new ride this year. TJ was with Kathy even longer than I was. We all miss her. I know Kathy was VERY proud of him. As the oldest of our kids, he often had to help out the most and he always did it without complaining. Hard to believe he is 45 this month. Thank you for all you do TJ!! He has touched many lives and all for the good.



Taylor is 20 and working at McDonalds. She is living with AJ (Aunt Justinn) because she can walk to work. I am very proud of my red headed, blue eyed granddaughter. She is a gentle soul and has a lot of patience and a kind heart. The Family News has featured Taylor for the past 20 years. She can see her whole life in these photos over the years.

Kacey turned 17 last January and is a senior in highschool. I remember all of the grandkids camping in our backyard ten years ago and I wonder how can that sweet little girl now be a senior in highschool? Fly high and far Kacey!! You have an amazing future ahead of you.



Caitlynn is 16 and has her drivers license. She is a junior in highschool. For the past few years she has gotten very good at cornhole and has always been one of my favorite cornhole partners. I predict great things are waiting for this young lady.



Angel is also 16 and has her drivers license. She drove me around in the golf cart on our family camping trip and I can certify she is a safe driver. She is a sophomore in highschool and is kind, polite, intelligent, and beautiful. She has my blue eyes and she will always be my angel.

Ryan is a sophomore in highschool. He is 15 and has his learners permit and loves fishing and sports, especially playing baseball. He is a hard working, polite young man and I am very proud of him, so is his mom and dad.

Abigail turned 12 in October. She found a geocaching stash at family camping faster than the older kids and that includes the adults!! Abigail is taking advanced science at the middle school and she is one of the smartest 12 year olds I have ever known (and that includes me)! I look forward to all of the creative, energetic, and amazing things she will do.

Captain James T Kurtz is seven and is in the second grade. He wears glasses and this year he lost his two front teeth. He smiled when I showed him a picture of his mom without her front teeth. He played soccer this year and is very good on his scooters and hoverboard. He does a good job being the only boy with three sisters. I know Kathy would be proud of him (I am)!

Acadia (better known as Cadie) just turned four this past November. I promised Kathy I would not let the grandchildren forget their Memaw. Cadie is probably the most photogenic of all the kids. She always has a smile! So Cadie, this picture is for you. I hope you remember the smiles on both of these faces in the years to come.



Deb and I met at the highest point on the FL Trail last year. We decided to hike to the highest points in different states this year (AL, SC, FL, MS, AK, & LA). We also hiked some of the Foothills trail in SC along with more miles on the FL Trail. We have now hiked **300 miles of the FL trail** so far. Deb joined us at our annual family camping trip and we had a blast. We returned to St Andrews state park for the first time since Hurricane Michael in 2018. We had a wonderful time, but the park does not look the same with most of the trees gone. I should mention that did not hurt our corn hole skills (at least not mine and Perry's since we went **<u>undefeated</u>** this year). There's nothing like sitting around a campfire at night, especially once the fireball comes out (thanks to Perry). The adult e-scooters I bought were a big hit! We enjoyed sunsets on the beach and had great weather for camping.



I continue my daily bike rides, kayak often, and take Max for a walk each day (he also loves to go kayaking and hiking with me). Max has been a true blessing to me. He is loved by Deb along with friends and neighbors Dan and Janet (who spoil him)! It is safe to say, Max is loved by many and is living the good life.



The above photo was taken at our annual family camping trip at St Andrews State Park in 2022.



Kathy and I had an amazing life together. I cherish all the photos of her and the newsletters that told much of our story for 30 years. I have grouped past newsletters into two separate volumes of 15 years each. Click the link below if you want to go down memory lane. Note: it may take time to download the pdf files (*especially the first volume*). I am looking forward to more hikes and adventures in the coming years with Deb. She and her son Rollin (who will soon be an officer in the Army) are a big part of my life. My life has been better since meeting Deb! I am grateful for my siblings, as well as my wonderful family! **I love you all!** The time has come to end the Family News. I hope you have had a wonderful 2022 and I hope that 2023 and the years after are great years! From the editor (aka Tommie). **In Peace!**

Merry Christmas!

Favorite Quotes:

"I found things in the woods that I didn't know I was looking for." Jennifer Pharr Davis

"*Two roads diverged in a wood and I - I took the one less traveled*" Robert Frost

View past family newsletters at: http://hosttg.com/fn/