

Summers Scrapbook 2006

Christmas music is softly playing in the background. The kids have gathered in the living room as Trina opens the boxes of Christmas ornaments. The tree stands in the front window, its lights glistening against the backdrop of the setting sun. There is a warm glow that comes from knowing that the holiday season is once again upon us. While the kids are busy reminiscing about each ornament in their collection, Trina takes a moment to quietly watch as they finish decorating the tree. I am off in my own little corner surrounded by a computer and my journal. It is time once again to write the annual newsletter that will be placed in our Christmas cards. Trina already has the cards addressed and everyone has signed them making me the last step in the process once again. This would not be such an arduous task if our family was small and we would learn to just stay home but that never is the case. Instead I am challenged to whittle away twelve months of memories into a few brief pages. I invite you to follow along as I try to recount all that has happened in our lives during 2006.

January

The New Year began with both joy and sorrow for the family. On the positive side, Whitney had her twelfth birthday and she celebrated with a Whitney Wonka party. Jeff created golden tickets that were placed inside of giant candy bars which were delivered to Whitney's friends as invitations. The party was a big hit, especially with Dakota dressed as an Oompa-Loompa. The day before the party Mallorie left for Idaho to return to school at BYI-Idaho. She was definitely not looking forward to returning to the cold weather. In mid-January Jeff went in for his third shoulder surgery on his pitching arm. The surgery went well but the doctor warned this would not be the last time Jeff would have to go through this procedure. That was depressing news that none of the family wanted to hear. With Jeff laid up, Trina felt this was the perfect time to remodel the house and scheduled all kinds of workers to keep Jeff company. Dakota had decided that he wanted to try his hand at baseball and tried out for Chandler American Little League. He made the minor league team for the Giants which is hard for Jeff to take since the Giants are such a rival of the Diamondbacks.

February

Jeff would be in a brace and sling for eight weeks making him relatively worthless around the house. Trina attempted to make him feel better by telling him it was not much

different than any other time so not to worry. Somehow that didn't help. With painters and floor covering contractors scheduled, Trina received tragic news that her brother Lonny passed away. She would fly to Idaho to attend his services. Since Jeff still could not travel nor drive, his mom and dad came to stay at the house and help him during Trina's absence. They were a tremendous help and the family could not have survived without them being there. February also meant the beginning of track season for Tiffany. She is once again triple jumping and high jumping. With her first meet she lettered in both events and solidified her spot on the varsity squad. Towards the end of the month Trina's aunt Helen and uncle Clyde came to visit from Idaho. It was wonderful to see them. Helen reminded Trina that every time she comes to visit that the house is being upgraded somehow. Last time it was new tile and this time it was paint and carpet. Trina tried to assure them that the house is not always in this level of disarray.

March

March was a month filled with baseball. It began with little league opening day for Dakota. He is playing the outfield and loves every minute of it. For Jeff's birthday the family went to see the World Baseball Classic that was being held at Chase Field in Phoenix. They had a ball even if Jeff was still in a brace. For his birthday, Trina got Jeff season tickets for the Diamondbacks. Jeff was not sure whether she was feeling sorry for him or just wanted him out of the house 83 days from April to October. Tiffany was again invited to the Chandler Invitational track meet and jumped a personal best in both the high jump and triple jump. As the month ended, Jeff finally got his brace off and to celebrate he traded in the Suburban for a newer model so he could go to the games more comfortably. Trina didn't necessarily agree with that arrangement and has confiscated the keys keeping the new car for herself.

April

April marked the beginning of baseball season with Jeff and Trina attending opening day which has become an annual tradition. Jeff's parents came to visit to see how Jeff was healing. He has physical therapy three times a week but it seems to be getting better. Whitney came home from school with an announcement that she had been selected to join the National Junior Honor Society. She is very excited and Jeff and Trina are very proud of her. Jeff wanted to celebrate the event by taking Whitney to a baseball game but Whitney didn't think that was much of a reward. Jeff took

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Trina instead and caught a foul ball during the game. The kids were home watching the game on television and immediately called to let their parents know that they were on television. The month ended with the family traveling to Utah to attend Ashley's graduation from BYU. It was a wonderful event and Jeff and Trina were very proud of her accomplishments. Graduation landed on Dakota's birthday so he celebrated in Provo Utah playing miniature golf. In nine years he has been home for his birthday just once. He thinks that is normal to always stay in a hotel for his birthday. Mallorie finished school but missed Ashley's graduation by a day. She returned to Arizona with the family taking the summer semester off due to family plans.

May

May began with Jeff's Camaro having problems with the air conditioning acting strange. Rather than try and deal with it and still smarting from the fact that Trina was driving the new car, he and Mallorie hatched a plan that would get both of them a car. He ended up selling his beloved Camaro and replacing it with two Honda Accord coupes. Mallorie would take one back to school while Jeff would drive one to the games. Mallorie insisted that each of the cars be named. She named her Accord Oliver because she drives it all over. Jeff was in charge of naming the other two. He named the Suburban Phillip because that is what he has to do every time he passes a gas station. His Accord he named Chase because that is where it goes nearly every night. May is also birthday month with both Ashley and Mallorie's birthdays occurring two days apart. For Mallorie's birthday Jeff took her to the Diamondbacks game. She somehow talked him into leaving early (that never happens) when the Diamondbacks were down by 9 runs. As they got half way home Jeff turned on the radio just in time to hear that the Diamondbacks had tied the game. He may never forgive her for that. As the month ended so did school for the kids. Dakota also had his final baseball game of the season. He had not gotten a hit all season and Jeff wanted to give him an incentive. Dakota said he really wanted an army game for the Xbox and his mom would not let him have one. Jeff promised if he got a hit that he would talk Trina into it. In the final game they faced the best pitcher in the league and when Dakota got up it was still a no hitter. The batter in front of Dakota walked and was on first. Dakota strode to the plate and stroked a double into the gap scoring the runner. He seemed so nonchalant about it. Jeff and Trina

were ecstatic even if it did mean they owed Dakota a new video game.

June

For graduation from college, Jeff and Trina bought Ashley a plane ticket to Arizona to visit the family. She would also go with them on the family vacation to Walt Disney World to celebrate Jeff and Trina's twenty-fifth wedding anniversary. Everyone wanted Eli to go as well but he could not get the time off from work. Jeff also took Ashley to the Diamondbacks game since she had not been able to attend a game since going to college. They had a blast and Ashley even got one of the players to throw her a ball. The family traveled to Disney World staying at the Dolphin resort. Jeff got the family a three bedroom suite and the kids made the most of the accommodations. Ashley commented that it was larger than her apartment in Provo. The family was in Orlando for Father's Day, Jeff & Trina's anniversary, and Tiffany's 16th birthday. It was a trip filled with memories. The anniversary was especially memorable when Jeff surprised Trina with a new diamond ring to replace the one she lost shortly after moving to Arizona 12 years ago. The kids made their father a set of scrapbooks documenting their life with him especially at the baseball games. It was a wonderful trip that will be talked about for the rest of their lives. The only downside was that Jeff missed three Diamondbacks games which everyone heard about every day. Not wanting to let the team down, he did find replacement fans to cheer from his seats during his absence.

July

With the arrival of July, Ashley went back to Utah after her extended vacation. It was wonderful having her back home. She and Trina spent a lot of time together scrapbooking and working on school things. Whitney also got into the act creating games and laminating for Ashley so she had things for school. While Ashley was in Arizona she got a call from one of the schools in Provo and was offered a teaching position. She can hardly wait to begin her career as a teacher. Trina also caught the teaching bug and applied for a job at the Kyrene school district as a Title 1 tutor similar to the work she did in Idaho. Tiffany came home from vacation and interviewed for a job with Mountainside Fitness. She was hired on the spot and began her summer job working in child care and as a rock wall instructor. Jeff was traveling this month making two trips to San Francisco to attend meetings with senior management of Wells Fargo. He has been put in charge of architecting their online

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payment strategies which means lots of conference calls and presentations. He seems ok with that until it interferes with baseball. As the month ended, Whitney received her class schedule. She seems more excited about that than she was about the Disney World trip. Jeff keeps teasing her that she has her priorities messed up but deep down he is very proud of her and her dedication to her education.

August

Each year it seems as though school starts earlier and earlier. This year the kids returned to school on August 7. Tiffany is now a junior at Corona del Sol high school. Whitney is in seventh grade at Aprende Middle School and Dakota is in fourth grade at Kyrene de las Brisas Elementary School. Trina had an exciting August as well. Jeff has been pestering her to go back to school and finally she relented and applied to Arizona State University. She received a letter in the mail that she was accepted for the winter semester and now she is stressed that Jeff may actually make her go back to class. Trina also received a call from the Kyrene school district and was offered a job as a Title One Tutor. She accepted and began work at the Kyrene Sureño elementary school. She is extremely excited about the job but like anything that ever changes she is completely stressed out. Dakota earned his wolf badge in Cub Scouts and on the day that he was to be awarded his patch the church was hit by lightning. Trina happened to be in the car driving towards the church just as it happened. Jeff thinks the two events (Dakota earning a badge and the church being hit by lightning) are related. Tiffany had her first date this month and it did not go anything like she wanted. The boy asked her out and she accepted before realizing that it was bobblehead night at the Diamondbacks game. She begged the boy to take her to the game but he wanted to go ice skating. He was not a baseball fan. Tiffany went on the date but missing the bobblehead and learning that her date was not interested in baseball pretty much sealed that boy's fate and this was the last date Tiffany would go on with him.

September

In September Mallorie was working at Johnny Carinos restaurant where she had been employed since July. She really enjoys being a server but during the first week this month she broke a wine bottle cutting her arm badly. The bartender gave her a lot of grief as he had never seen anyone pop the entire top of the bottle off before. Dakota again wanted to play soccer and signed up to play AYSO fall season on the U10 boys' team. He was placed on the

Strikers and immediately hit it off with his new teammates. Their first game was this month and Dakota scored the first goal of the season. Ashley called this month and was having a very tough time with events that had occurred. Trina and Mallorie felt that they should be there for her and drove to Provo to help Ashley and Eli. While they were gone Jeff played Mr. Mom driving the kids around and taking care of things. Dakota scored another goal during their absence and dedicated the goal and the game to Ashley. He was disappointed that his second goal opportunity was blocked as he wanted to dedicate that one to his mother who he missed. Whitney came home with news that she had been accepted into honor band meaning more practices but the reward is a trip to perform at Disneyland in February. Jeff received a call from the Arizona Diamondbacks inviting him to be their guest in the owner's suite at Chase Field. Jeff accepted the tickets but gave them to Trina and Whitney as a thank you for all that they had done. Jeff and Dakota took their normal seats while the girls went to the suite. Before the game began Trina called to say the Diamondbacks were interested in talking to him and gave them two more tickets so they could be in the suite too. The first pitch of the game came directly at the owner's box. Jeff reached down to catch it but at the last moment decided against it. The ball hit with such force that it dented the scoreboard. If he had not moved his hand it probably would have taken off a finger. The fans in the box gave him grief until they saw the dent then congratulated him on a smart move. The Diamondbacks were interested in Jeff's baseball blog (DiaryDiehard.com) and he spent a lot of time talking to them about web design and content.

October

Girl's camp is usually during summer vacation but this year it was scheduled for fall break. This was Whitney's first year at camp. Tiffany was a YCL and would be busy as well. Trina was invited to be at camp in the craft cabin and she could not pass that up. That left Jeff and Dakota at home along with Mallorie. Mallorie has three jobs so she is barely home making this basically a week of guy stuff. When Trina came home she commented that the dishes were all clean and the house was in great shape. Neither Jeff nor Dakota wanted to tell her that they didn't use dishes and that the house was clean because Mallorie yelled at them to take care of things before mom got home. Mallorie's job at Johnny Carinos ended when the restaurant declared bankruptcy and closed the doors without any prior notification. It was not a

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good situation but Mallorie learned a valuable lesson. Mallorie is still working at Game On and was in charge of the haunted house for Halloween. She and Tiffany both worked it and had an awesome time. Dakota's soccer coach approached Jeff and Trina and asked if Dakota could try out for the tournament soccer team. The coach explained how talented Dakota was and that he deserved an opportunity to try out. Trina was leery about putting that much pressure on him at nine but in the end they left it up to Dakota to decide. It was something he wanted to do so Jeff and Trina took him to try-outs but also set his expectations that he may not make the team since there were 30 boys try out for 10 positions.

November

November began with Whitney doing volunteer work with her National Junior Honor Society friends sorting clothing for the homeless. This event had a great impact on Whitney who is by nature a very caring person. Dakota continued to play soccer and the fall season ended this month. His team went undefeated in the season with a record of 7-0-2. At the final party his coach described Dakota as the most versatile player on the team. Afterwards the coach told us that Dakota had made the traveling tournament team and that practices would begin in December with play beginning after the first of the year. Jeff and Trina were both shocked. They knew he was good, they just did not realize how special he really was. Ashley and Eli came for Thanksgiving. This marked the first time since before they were married that both of them were in Arizona for the holiday. Jeff and Trina were thrilled to have the entire family together. Ashley and Eli even volunteered to go Christmas shopping the day after Thanksgiving with Jeff and Trina. They probably had not anticipated that would mean getting up at 4:30 AM but they did. Jeff and Dakota took Eli to the Hot Wheels Collectors day and Dakota taught Eli all about Hot Wheels cars. Dakota really looks up to Eli as the big brother he never had. They have a very special bond.

December

Trina has not been feeling well for the past month. Jeff finally got her to agree to see a doctor to try and find out what is causing the pains in her back and abdomen. The doctor ran a bunch of tests and scheduled an upper endoscopy as well as a colonoscopy to try and identify the source of the pain. They have ruled out stomach and colon cancer but it is still unclear what exactly is happening. Jeff is a nervous wreck worrying about Trina and Trina is a

nervous wreck worrying about Jeff. His shoulder is not doing well and the pain is increasing. Mallorie attributes these problems to the fact that her parents are getting really old. Trina especially doesn't appreciate that assessment. Mallorie flew to Idaho while Trina was having these tests done to attend the wedding of her cousin Natalie. Mallorie had a great time but came home complaining how cold it was in Idaho and that she was not sure she wanted to go back. Jeff said that was not an option after the comments on his age. She is scheduled to drive to Idaho shortly after Christmas with school starting right after new years. Dakota has begun tournament soccer practice getting ready for his first game in January. Whitney was recognized for good citizenship in school and rewarded at a Character Counts breakfast. Tiffany is working as often as she can while maintaining her grades so that she is eligible for track. She can hardly wait for the season to start and has already begun working out to get ready.

So as the year ends, we find ourselves as busy as we were when it began. I don't know about you but I am exhausted just thinking about all that has occurred this year. It's funny, when all of these things are happening it just seems like a normal flow of events but when it comes time to recount them for the newsletter they become overwhelming. While this year has been filled with many trials and tribulations, we are still grateful to have experienced each one of them. It has given us a better appreciation for what we have been given and makes us all the more grateful for what we have. I begin each December with excitement as I have the opportunity to review our lives and document our accomplishments. Like any journey it is great fun to see where you have been. It also gives you a point in time where you can look forward to what lies ahead. The future does indeed seem bright and we can hardly wait to see what adventures are just over the horizon. We hope that you will take time to travel along with us and share the experiences that will unfold. In the mean time I hope that you will write and share with us all that has happened in your lives as well.

*Jeff, Trina
Mallorie, Tiffany, Whitney & Dakota*