

# Summers Scrapbook

## 2016

---

In what can only be described as a Christmas miracle, here we are a full ten days before Christmas and all of the gifts have been bought, wrapped, shipped, or placed under the tree. The decorations have all been tested and hung and all that remains is writing the annual newsletter. So much has happened this year. As I take time to ponder I am filled with gratitude not only for the blessings we have received but also for the trials we have endured. In the end, we are closer as a family and better for the experiences. So I invite you to sit back as we recount the events of 2016.

### January

Whitney has become a grizzled veteran when it comes to traveling back and forth for school. Shortly after her birthday she is back on a plane headed to Idaho to complete her final semester at BYU-Idaho. She is not alone. After surviving his first semester Dakota is eager to see what the remainder of the school year will bring. He is less focused on school and more on what lies ahead. He put in his papers to serve a mission for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. Each day this month he would text, email, and call home to see if his call had arrived. Finally, it did and Jeff and Trina boarded a plane to Idaho to take it to him and see where he would be serving. We eagerly awaited as he opened the envelope and read the letter. He will be serving in the Georgia Atlanta North Mission and will report on May 25, 2016. He is so excited while the reality of him being gone is starting to sink in with Jeff and Trina. Yet another big event to plan.

### February

After returning from Idaho Jeff put all of his energy into the next big household project. Ever since Tiffany had gotten married Jeff had staked claim to the bedroom downstairs to finally get his office. When the family moved to Arizona in 1994 Jeff gave up the office he had built and after patiently waiting he would finally have a place of his own. Not content to just put a fresh coat of paint on the walls he instead tore out all of the flooring, sheetrock, electrical down to the bare studs and began to build his dream office. Little did anyone realize the magnitude of the changes or the length of time it would take. February also marked the beginning of Spring Training so when Jeff wasn't tearing up walls he was at the ballpark. This was definitely not what Trina had expected.

### March

Lily celebrated her sixth birthday on March 2<sup>nd</sup> and Jeff celebrated his birthday a week later. As typical Jeff spent his birthday at the ballpark watching baseball with Trina. The office build-out continued with Jeff designing a custom set of cabinetry and desk unit complete with a granite desktop made from stone mined in Norway. The month ended with the family being together for Easter with an egg hunt for the grandchildren in the backyard. Everyone loved being outside in the amazing weather sharing each other's company.

### April

April started much like it does every year with Jeff and Trina at Chase Field celebrating another Opening Day of baseball. This year though it was one of many activities. Syrell celebrated her third birthday and then the whole family began going north to Rexburg Idaho. Dakota was finishing his first year of college and Whitney was finishing her last. Whitney's graduation exercises were amazing and everyone is very proud of her. She only has student teaching left to complete her degree in secondary education. The month



# Summers Scrapbook

## 2016

ended with Dakota and Whitney going through the Gilbert Temple taking out their endowments. It was a very special time where Jeff and Trina were surrounded by all of their children in the Celestial Room.

### May

May was an emotional rollercoaster for the family. Whitney and Dakota were called as temple workers in the Gilbert temple. Trina was frantically preparing Dakota to leave. There was his farewell to plan and open house afterwards. There was packing to do to try and keep everyone's mind busy. But through it all there was the reality that Dakota was leaving. Dakota was set apart as a fulltime missionary and Jeff was assigned as his first companion until he left. On May 25<sup>th</sup> the family drove to the Phoenix International Airport to say good-bye for two years. There were hugs and kisses and a tremendous number of tears shed as he left for Provo to the Missionary Training Center. The month ended with Teigan celebrating her first birthday. She is growing up so fast and has quickly formed an attachment with Jeff.

### June

This month marked the completion of Jeff's new office in what used to be Tiffany's bedroom. The transformation was incredible. When the final touches were complete Trina immediately began moving Jeff's things into the office. The first to go were Jeff's bobble head collection that once was proudly displayed in the living room. In mid-June, we received a phone call from Elder Summers who was at the Salt Lake City airport waiting for a flight to Atlanta Georgia. It was wonderful to hear his voice but as the phone call ended it was heart breaking knowing that we would not see him or hear his voice again until Christmas. Trina has a countdown that she meticulously tracks the number of days until he returns, his transfers, companions, and any other detail she can find. She may be in Arizona but her heart is clearly in Georgia.

### July

Elder Summers first area was the Ellijay Branch in Jasper Georgia. Most of his mission will be rural from what Trina could gather from the maps she is finding. He seems to love the area his letters and emails home are very positive. Monday has become Jeff and Trina's favorite day of the week because that is the day that they receive email from Elder Summers. This month Jeff and Trina thought it would be a good idea for them to take Syrell and Teigan to a baseball game alone. By the end of the third inning they were exhausted. Jeff and Trina, not Syrell and Teigan; the two little girls still had plenty of energy for more hot dogs, popcorn, soda, cotton candy, and anything else they could find. Everyone had a great time at the game. The month ended with a baby shower for Ashley. She is expecting in August and it will be a little boy. Everyone is excited and cannot wait.

### August

August again means back to school. Mallorie is again teaching middle school English which means Trina will be tending Syrell and Teigan. They love hanging out with grandma and Teigan enjoys escaping from grandma's sight to go down to grandpa's office and hide. She and grandpa are becoming very close and he is the first person she looks for whenever they come over. Besides school, baseball season is still in full swing. The Diamondbacks are struggling this season but Jeff doesn't seem to mind. Even bad baseball is better than no baseball he tells anyone who asks how he can watch so many games when his favorite team is losing. During a Diamondbacks roadtrip Jeff, Trina, and Whitney went to Idaho to visit. It was great seeing family and escaping from the Arizona heat. Cole Emmitt Oplinger was born and welcomed into the



# Summers Scrapbook

## 2016

---

family. He is a very special young man and we love him dearly. As they were prepared to leave the hospital, Cole exhibited breathing problems and he was admitted to the newborn intensive care unit. Ashley and Aaron stayed by his side and the family took turns going up to visit. Thankfully things worked out and soon he was sent home but needed breathing assistance for some time.

### September

September was back to school for Whitney. Although she graduated in April, she had to do student teaching. She was assigned to Mesa High School where she would be teaching Junior and Senior teaching. She is enjoying it and comes home every day with new stories to tell. Elder Summers was transferred to Flowery Branch Georgia and loves it there. He constantly refers to it as the promised land and is extremely grateful for the help of the members. They are doing a lot of service and teaching. Through his emails and letters it is clear that he is really enjoying his mission so far. It may be hard work but he is growing with each day.

### October

With October comes the end of baseball season and Jeff is once again complaining that there are no more games until next spring. Trina has plenty of things to keep him busy. He is tasked with replacing her sprinkler timer that is ending its life. Little did she realize that by assigning that to him she now has lawn sprinklers that are controlled via her cell phone. And Jeff didn't stop there. Suddenly he was controlling lights through the house and ceiling fans with his phone. Halloween came quickly and Tiffany and Whitney dressed as Disney fairies. Syrell was a princess and Teigan was a workout baby. Ashley, Aaron, Lily, and Cole again won best costume as characters from the Disney movie Brave. They looked amazing and had a lot of fun and scored a tremendous amount of candy.

### November

November started with Jeff flying to San Francisco for a conference. He happened to be there over the presidential election and was caught in several demonstrations that occurred after the election. San Francisco is normally odd but in election years they definitely crank it up a notch. Elder Summers was able to go to the Atlanta temple. This is a rare occasion as the temple is outside the mission boundaries so the missionaries only get to go perhaps twice a year. Thanksgiving was another emotional time. With Elder Summers away it seemed incomplete around the table. He was there in spirit and everyone commented on how grateful they are for him and being on a mission.

### December

Jeff went a little overboard this year buying all new Christmas lights for the outside of the house. Of course, they could not be just any lights, he had to have color changing lights that could be controlled with his cell phone. He also bought LED lights to go around the pool fencing and along the brick wall in the backyard and for all of the bushes in the front yard. Santa and his reindeer from Jeff's grandparents are still proudly being displayed on top of the garage. It was all worth it when Trina went outside one evening and a little girl who just moved into the neighborhood stopped to tell her that this was her favorite house in the whole world. Trina is busy making a blanket for Elder Summers and sending off countless boxes to Georgia for Christmas. Whitney is finishing her student teaching. The Mesa district has already told her they would like to hire her so that is exciting news. Everyone is counting down the days until Christmas. Not just for



# Summers Scrapbook 2016

---

Santa to arrive but more importantly Elder Summers will be calling home. Everyone can't wait to hear his voice.

As we stop to reflect on this year it is amazing how many things have happened and how much things have changed. Some changes are for the good while others still feel like trials we are trying to endure. But through it all we have been blessed and continue to be blessed. There is not a day that goes by that one of the family says how grateful they are for what we have been given.

With the year winding down we are looking forward to what lies ahead. The coming year will not be without its pain. It will be the first full year without Dakota but will also mark the midway point of his mission. Soon we will be filled with new activities and opportunities to share experiences with those we love. We hope this newsletter finds you in good health and we encourage you to stay connected and join us for what looks to be an exciting 2017. Until we meet again, may God bless you and those around you. May you have His Spirit to be your constant companion to help you in times of need and bless you with joy and happiness.

*Jeff, Trina, Whitney & Dakota*