

Summers Scrapbook

2018

The year has been a whirlwind of activity and it feels as though we have barely had enough time to take a breath before the next event consumed our lives. I sit here exhausted but eternally grateful to my father in Heaven for all the blessings he has given us. As I sit here and try to collect my thoughts, I am overwhelmed with all that has happened. I invite you to make yourself comfortable and follow along as I try to recount all that has happened in 2018.

January

The year began as it does every year celebrating Whitney's birthday. This was better than last year since the family was separated between Idaho and Arizona in 2017, this year they were all together for her special day. January represented a theme of sorts for Jeff. The year began with him visiting the doctor as he does every January for a cough and pneumonia. This time was slightly different as they found other issues while doing x-rays. Jeff was sent to a specialist who referred him to another specialist. His stomach issues from 2013 had gotten worse and tests were requested. The first was an out-patient procedure at the end of the month that would set the tone for the next two.

February

Jeff recovered nicely from the first out-patient procedure and the doctors ordered an endoscopy a week later to begin to assess how they would approach the issues. Jeff was back to the hospital for that one as well. He began joking that perhaps they should just put a spicket on his arm to save them the trouble of stabbing him every week to draw more blood. Many prayers were answered as the second procedure went well too and Jeff was home to recuperate for three weeks.

March

When March arrived, the family celebrated Lily's eighth birthday. Usually that would mean baptism but she has elected to wait until Dakota comes home in May so that he could be there. Jeff celebrated his birthday as he does every year, at a Spring Training game. This year he went with his dad who had come down from Idaho for a bit. Not long after the birthday parties ended, Jeff was back in the hospital for stomach surgery. This one was not quite as small or simple as the other two and he was in the hospital for a few days. He was in a lot of pain and placed on a strict liquid diet for a few weeks. Each day though he got a little bit stronger. He did get the doctor's approval to attend Opening Day of baseball season but could not be there for the whole game since it was still too much for him to take.

April

April began with Easter falling on April 1st. The grandkids all came over and had a huge Easter egg hunt in the backyard. They had a lot of fun finding the eggs that Trina and Whitney had hidden all around the yard. Dakota's birthday was this month as well and it is the last birthday, he will have in the mission field. He is now in his final area with one more transfer before he comes home. Jeff and Trina are already in full blown planning mode for his return and can hardly wait.

May

May was an incredibly busy month for the family. It started with Mother's Day where Dakota called home to talk. This was much different than last year. With him returning just two weeks after his call most of the time was spent making plans and going over things so everyone knew what was happening. The church handles all travel arrangements so there was a lot of back and forth to know exactly when things would take

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place. Dakota finally returned the end of May after being gone for two years to Atlanta Georgia. It was an emotional reunion as everyone celebrated his return. Lily was also baptized this month waiting for Dakota as she promised. It was a tremendous month filled with great joy.

June

June was another busy month. Dakota was asked to speak at several meetings around the stake. Jeff, Trina, and Whitney attended all of them enjoying hearing about his mission and his experiences. Just before Father's Day, the family went to Walt Disney World. The grandkids had been looking forward to this trip since before Dakota left on his mission. They knew when he got home they would get to see Mickey Mouse. It was almost heartbreaking to tell them they weren't going to Orlando when they picked up Dakota from his mission. They figured he would just get off a plane from Georgia and get on a plane to Florida. The Florida trip was a lot of fun. The family spent a week at Disney then five days at Universal where Dakota and Whitney each got a Harry Potter wand and spent their time mastering spells.

July

For the first time in three years the family was all together for Independence Day. They celebrated by swimming and having a BBQ then waited for night to fall so that they could light fireworks. Dakota had saved some fireworks he bought before his mission and lit them off. They didn't age well and kind of fizzled but everyone got a good laugh about it. Towards the end of the month Lily went back to school and Syrell started kindergarten, her first year of being old enough. She is very excited. This means that Trina is only watching Teigan and Ryker now.

August

August again means back to school for Dakota. Kyle from his mission flew to Arizona and rode up with Dakota. Kyle is going to BYU in Provo and Dakota is going to BYU Idaho. It was hard saying goodbye to him when it felt like he had just returned home from his mission. Dakota was good at calling home often to talk and let everyone know how he was doing. He is still somewhat undecided as to what field he wants to study but he still has time before he really has to decide. He seemed to like his roommates and his new apartment is close to campus. Jeff and Trina flew up to get him settled and to help Jeff's dad get wood before winter came. Of course, it rained nearly the whole time they were there. Ryker celebrated his first birthday this month and Cole celebrated his second birthday making for a very festive month.

September

September saw Jeff fly to St. Louis for business for a series of meetings. His group at work is going through a lot of changes and there is quite a lot of uncertainty about what the future may hold. He was able to go to a baseball game while in St. Louis so he can check another stadium off of his list. Baseball season ended for the year for the Diamondbacks. While they had hoped to build upon the success of last season that didn't hold true and they missed the playoffs making for an even longer off season as far as Jeff is concerned.

October

October saw the return of cooler weather so the family spent more time outside enjoying the sunshine and comfortable temperatures. As the month came to a close there were all kinds of Halloween activities for all of the grandkids so Jeff and Trina went to as many as they could. The kid's costumes were so cute. Ashley especially goes above and beyond creating costumes for the whole family. This year they were

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characters from The Greatest Showman which included Aaron dressing up as the bearded lady. He was very brave.

November

November saw changes in Jeff's job as the team he was a part of dissolved. It was a trying time but he looks at this as an opportunity even if there is some uncertainty about the future. Dakota flew home from Rexburg for Thanksgiving. It was the first time in three years that the family was able to be together for that holiday. It gave everyone a chance to be thankful for all that they had been given. Shortly after Thanksgiving Dakota flew back to Idaho to return to school. While that would normally be a sad occasion it wasn't this time since most of the family would be there in another week.

December

December began with Jeff, Trina, Whitney, Mallorie, Tiffany, and Michael all going to Idaho. They were all there to celebrate Trina's mom's 90th birthday. Trina and Jeff had been working on a video celebrating her life which included brief video clips from all of her kids, grandkids, and most of the great grandkids wishing her a Happy Birthday. The party was held at the church and there were a lot of people who showed up to help her celebrate. It was great fun. Jeff and Trina are so grateful to have her in their lives and to be able to share in her experiences.

As you can see, we had an incredible number of things go on in our lives. While we were all extremely busy, we did take time to give thanks and show our gratitude for all the many blessings we have had bestowed upon us. There have been tremendous trials and struggles but we have become closer as a family as a result.

With the year coming to a close we are looking forward to what lies ahead. The new year will bring new hopes and hopefully new beginnings. There will be trials and challenges but those are what make us stronger. 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 incredible 2019. 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