

## *Christmas 2007 in 2009???*

Well, it is today! I bet you were wondering what happened to us, saying to yourself, "Well, we usually get a card and picture from Soni and Greg, boring us to tears with stories about Cal Football, their kids and their jobs, etc." Well, this past year I just didn't get around to it. A thousand reasons why...but really, no good excuses. Now for the rest of the story....

Wow, 2007 was a whirlwind. I can hardly remember what happened. Oh yeah, this year, I turned 40 and lost my memory, or at least what seems like most of it. Snippets of memory return sometimes: most of it is useless jeopardy trivia, phone numbers, or other numbers, like how much I paid for shoes in Italy in 2001; AND it comes back to me at the most inopportune times, like in a Board meeting when I am trying to remember how much revenue we had for the year ended in March. I find myself unable to remember the revenue # but I can clearly recall how much the down payment was on the house we bought in March, which actually felt like our revenue # when I pushed the button to do the wire transfer! Ouch!

What??? Well, it's true; we bought another house so that we could move out of our house of 13 years for a much needed remodel. After a failed offer on a different house a few weeks earlier, we made an offer on this "new" house at 9 pm on a Thursday in late February. Eight days later, on March 2<sup>nd</sup>, we closed. So, don't let bankers, mortgage officers, or lenders tell you it can't be done in less than 45 days...it can be, and was, done. Not that I would recommend a one-week close; especially not with a business trip to Phoenix in the middle of that week. So, we closed the house on a Friday, moved in on Saturday and Sunday, and on Monday the construction crew demolished most of the top story of our "old" house and I flew to New York, leaving Greg to unpack....

Back to turning 40. Greg and my mom planned a fabulous 40<sup>th</sup> birthday party for me that included friends from all parts of my life: from high school, college, law school, each of my jobs, and more recently acquired friends, from school and sports. We had a friend's band come play great surfer tunes while we drank cocktails from the daiquiri machine and ate really spicy Thai food. It was truly a wonderful evening...until the cops came and made the band stop playing. At least we didn't have to stop the embarrassing stories or get out of the hot tub! Oh wait, we never made it into the hot tub.

The kids used the hot tub as a swimming pool. They loved the "new" house because it was right next to a park, which was flat and where they could ride their bikes without having a heart attack or rolling back downhill. They loved being next to the same park where Jasper had baseball practice and games. They made many new friends. One of the best parts was that we could walk to Starbuck's and the train station. We had a fun time at that house. Then, suddenly, we moved again, in October: back to the newly remodeled home. Oh yeah – that's where 2007 went: picking out tile, paint colors, counter tops, appliances, bath tubs, toilets, going by the house each day, checking on the construction, blah, blah, blah.... Now I remember, it's coming back to me, slowly, painfully.

One small tidbit about our big travel trip and one brief note about Cal Football, then I'll let you get back to summer life: In August, we (me and the kids) drove across country to bring my grandmother Edith's car to California from Pittsburgh (and we moved her here after my grandfather's death earlier in the year) and on our trip we saw many family members, the boys' cousins, 20 states, 25 National Parks, and all in all, we drove 5002 miles over a three-week period, which was, obviously, not in a very straight line. We mistakenly left our shoes at Lake Michigan, but while there we found the perfect exterior color for our house, which happened to be the color of the clay/mud at the bottom of Lake Michigan. We camped through the western half of the US without a tent and saw billions and billions of stars. We also saw Old Faithful, the Badlands, Mt. Rushmore, a missile silo, a million motorcycles headed to the Sturgis motorcycle rally, mountain goats (which can be likened to some of the motorcyclists), buffalo, prairie dogs, deer, and license plates from all 50 states. It is definitely a road trip I would do again! I know, I know, now you really should be positive that I have no memory left.

Cal Football was incredible right up until the mid-point of the season when they were going to be #1 after "beating" USC, but in true Cal Football fashion of the late 70's and early 80's, they lost the game on the last play and our season slid very, very far down the hill until it ended, thankfully, with, believe it or not, a bowl game in Dallas, Texas; but unfortunately, or fortunately, we did not go back to Texas given the moves, a prior trip to Texas for Spring Break in April, and the let down of the Cal football season in general, so we spent a lovely, quiet Christmas and New Year in our wonderful, beautiful, finally remodeled house; which, in the end, was completely and totally worth it!

Love, Sonya, Greg, and the, not so little, boys

PS – The included picture was taken at 9 am the day after we moved back into the remodeled house. At 8 pm the night before we took a break from unpacking and we went to dinner and then did a little power shopping to find something "nice" the boys could wear because the boxes that contained their clothes weren't labeled before the movers moved them! I am so glad 2007 is in the rearview mirror. I was going to send this in July but that didn't happen!

## Happy New Year, 2009!

Well, 2008 seemed to zoom by like a rocket ship in orbit. We started the year in our remodeled house, which still feels wonderful and new! They boys weren't too sure whether they liked the remodeled house, but after a year in it they have forgotten how it used to be and they also seemed to have forgotten how great it was at the other house.

Jasper, now in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade, is playing trumpet in zero-period band, which means he has to be there at 7:05 am – this has been quite an adjustment and just means that Sonya gets into work really early. He seems to have an interest in moving to French Horn so we'll see how that goes. Jasper played AAA baseball this year and learned how to pitch. He was the slugger on the team, and it was gratifying to see everyone back up when he came up to bat! After years of asking (begging and pleading), Jasper finally wore us down enough to let him play football. He started the year playing flag football and then spent a good deal of time doing his school ROPES project on football. In the Fall, he played regular football on the Bayside Broncos pee wee team (which seems funny for kids who weigh 90-120 pounds to be called "pee wee"! ). Jasper spent the whole month of August training and getting into shape. Unfortunately he broke his finger in practice and couldn't play in his first game but quickly healed and played the rest of the season. He tried out offense and defense positions and the coaches finally settled him into playing left guard. He thoroughly enjoyed it and can tell you all about the different formations and the rules. Jasper's feet are officially bigger than Sonya's, but he still has a few inches to go until he is taller than her!

Bryce is in 4<sup>th</sup> grade and is studying California Missions. His particular one to study and draw is the Sonoma Mission; at Thanksgiving, he went up to visit it and check it out in person. I think he was impressed that they had brochures and information ready for him when he arrived. His class went on a field trip to Mission San Juan Batista and he was awed by their beautiful rose garden. Bryce loves to draw and his favorite camp this summer (besides the archery at cub scout camp) was the week he spent doing art. Bryce played AA baseball and loved the pitching machine (because it was more consistent than the coaches or player pitchers). His team won 16 games in a row, which made other teams call them the "Mighty Gators." Bryce played soccer this fall, after his broken wrist healed, and his team didn't win any regular season games, but in the San Carlos tournament his team had the highest point total and seeded position. They ended up coming in second and getting a trophy, so he was thrilled. He will be looking to play on a competitive team rather than AYSO next year. Bryce is completely into rocks and minerals and is working his way through my grandfather's collection of rocks.

McKinley is in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade and finally reading books on his own. He loves math and science. He played Farm league baseball, despite a broken arm at the end of the first practice, and helped out on Jasper & Bryce summer baseball team. He played soccer on a team this Fall, called the "Blue Zipping Gazelles, faster than a speeding Cannonball". That is exactly how his team played. I think he scored a goal in each game and in one game he scored a whopping 4 goals. I think he will be looking for a competitive team to play on as well. He has said he wants to play Football (now that Jasper has broken the moratorium on playing football). We'll see about that....

Greg left GridNet in July this year and is enjoying his sabbatical. He made a tennis ball launcher with the kids and we can almost launch a tennis ball to home plate in the park below us. He even bought a stronger air compressor to use with it, so we'll see if that makes a difference. He built a playhouse with the boys out of a giant shipping crate and they have secret lookout windows and a roof on it. He's also been doing more practical things like fixing up our rental property, repairing computers and the network at the kids' school. Sonya is still at Cataphora (over 6 years now), writing and speaking a little more this year and traveling a lot. She didn't run for any offices this year but will figure out what else to do in the way of civic duty. For now, She is concentrating on fundraising for the kids' school and the Chickens' Ball, which raises money for all seven schools in the district.

We didn't take any big trip this August because Jasper had to be here every day for football practice, but we did have the chance to go back to Indiana for my grandmother's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration at the end of June. We were really lucky and got to see almost all of my Indiana family and a few friends as well. We went to Michigan to see my friend Kim and the boys caught fish in their pond; and then we went to Ohio to go back to the Great Wolf Lodge (which is a water-park hotel) and King's Island, which has the best (and oldest and longest) wooden roller coasters in the world. We got to see fireworks each night while we were there. 4<sup>th</sup> of July in the Midwest is really nice; the boys even got to chase fireflies. Cal football was fun this year and they played in the Emerald Bowl, which is played at the AT&T Ballpark in San Francisco; so, we didn't drive any long distances to follow the football team!

