

STEVENS FAMILY 2004 NEWSLETTER

Greetings Good Friends and Family. We're still in California despite the continued high unemployment, terrible traffic jams, record-high home prices and unusually heavy rains at the end of the year. We've experienced the usual highs and lows of 2004 (as everyone)---getting another year older comes to mind as a low point as well as losing more family and friends. Two of my aunts and another of Sandy's brothers passed away in 2004. We cherish the good times we've shared.

Our family visited the San Diego Zoo and stayed with Scott in Carlsbad, California. I camped and sailed at Huntington Lake in July which has become an annual event that is always exciting. While walking a dark narrow trail, I noticed a large brown bear almost within arms reach and walking parallel with me. My loud shouting didn't faze the bear and I continued shaking from fright for the rest of the evening.

The entire family enjoyed an October trip to Indiana for the wedding of niece Bree Trammell and Heath Wechter. I drove my camper van eastbound 3,500 miles for eleven days then met my family at the Indianapolis airport. In addition to the wedding, we visited the 4-story Children's Museum and the famous Indy 500 race track. Following the wedding, Scott and Sandy joined me for the seven-day, 2,500 mile return trip when we experienced very bad weather and dangerous driving conditions. A new global positioning system (GPS), laptop computer and many free Wi-Fi "hot-spots" across the country made the trip more interesting but days were long and evenings too short to spend much time corresponding via the Internet. The treasured sunrises and sunsets were as beautiful as ever although frequent cloudy skies limited the good viewing to only four days of the eighteen day trip.

My traditional tight schedule permitted only short visits during the many stops along the way and, unfortunately, several planned visits didn't occur. Many thanks to those friends and relatives who were available and hosted my visits including son Scott in Carlsbad, CA, sister-in-law

Karen Kelter in Tucson, high school classmate Ted Truske and wife Sharon in Albuquerque, NM, cousin Gladys (Lynch) and husband Jim Snedeker in Columbia, MO, lifelong friends Herb and Donna Rush and their large family in Springfield, IL, cousin Jim Coffman in Catlin, IL, the good folks at Benton County Historical Society in Fowler, IN, cousin Carol Vanderbilt Brown in Bloomington, IN, niece Bree (Trammell) and new husband Heath Wechter in Indianapolis, IN, cousin Ruth (Lynch) Garner in Pinkneyville, IL, niece Leslie (Edmonds) Love and daughter Naomi in Carbondale, IL, Sandy's brothers

Robert (Rusty) Trammell and Tom Trammell and wife Jan (newlywed Bree's parents) and Sandy's aunt Mildred Gay and uncle Robert Gay in Marion, Illinois. The Dairy Queen in Marion is a traditional stop for lunch with Mildred and Robert.

One of several genealogy stops was at the Locust Grove cemetery near Boswell, Indiana where my dad's mother, Emma Melvina Hanawalt Stevens (1870-1935) is buried along with her sister Lula Hanawalt Jones (1874-1964) and other Hanawalt family members.

Emma died a year after I was born and my search has been to find information about her and other close



family members, especially those participating in my father's young life while growing up in Salem, Illinois. The parents of sisters Gladys (Columbia, MO) and Ruth (Pinkneyville, IL) helped raise my father and I remember visiting the Lynch family in Salem during the 1940's. Carol (Bloomington, IN) is the daughter of Elizabeth Hanawalt Vanderbilt, a first cousin of my father. Elizabeth mentioned my dad in her book "My Story" and Carol inscribed it during my visit. I also visited St. Charles Memorial Gardens near St Louis, MO and found the grave site of Sandy's oldest brother, Phillip Trammell (9/33-10/03). Time and tornado warning conditions cancelled a planned visit to the Bolton-Trammell Cemetery in Stonefort, IL to visit Jarl Tremail's burial site (11/36-3/04), Sandy's second oldest brother. The October 16th wedding of niece Bree Trammell was beautiful and everyone enjoyed the gala event and celebrating with the charming bride and groom. Her dad, Tom Trammell didn't look at all nervous and he did his famous James Brown dance routine at the reception.



Bree & Heath
Oct. 16, 2004

I slept in the van only four nights during the eastbound trip and accepted a condition to have Sandy join me for the westbound trip providing we would stay at motels rather than sleep in the small van. It turned out best because we drove extra long days that reduced the trip by a full day.

The westbound trip with Sandy and Scott was concentrated on driving safely in the continuously bad weather. Tornado warnings in southern Illinois, high temperature in Tennessee, blowing dust storms in Oklahoma, snow in Flagstaff, Arizona and heavy rain in California made much of the trip a bit scary and "white knuckle" driving. *It was an interesting adventure trip and the long driving hours created a special "family bonding" experience with lots of good conversation.*

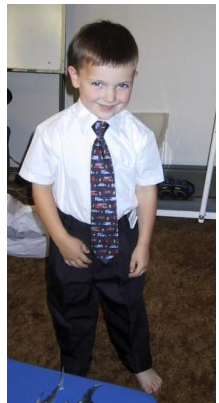
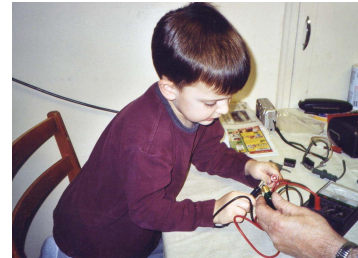
SCOTT-His job at PreventSys was terminated in early 2004. Fortunately, he soon started working for another software development company called Web Side Story (www.websidestory.com). The daily commute is farther and he works too many hours but he's fortunate to have a job when many other high tech persons are still searching. His nice home in beautiful Carlsbad, California includes a new sunroom complete with hot tub that provides relaxing evenings when he has the time. He enjoys visiting us in San Jose for special occasions such as Zachary's birthday, Thanksgiving, and Christmas.

KELLE & ZACHARY- She still has her job with Quantum as HR Manager but has stopped teaching tap and jazz dancing. It was an interesting and fun-filled twenty four years and perhaps she will return to it someday. Her big event was the October announcement of her wedding to Brian Behrendt that will occur some time in early 2005. They both sold their homes and quickly found a new home in an excellent area of San Jose. Zachary will soon be making new friends at a fine school only minutes from their house. During the 3-4 months after selling their homes and waiting to have their new home remodeled, they lived in the second floor of our home. It was nice to have them at home, but they were



very cramped for space and living out of boxes. Zachary is getting bigger and has a rapidly increasing vocabulary. His interests are varied but with the NHL not functioning, we've had fewer hockey games in the garage. He enjoyed the stage production of Dora and Peter Pan. He does well using my new laptop computer and has learned how to check Christmas lights with my voltmeter.

SANDY - She's decided that after 33 years, it's time to get new hip joints and that big event is planned for early 2005. Zachary remains her primary interest during each day of the year and she enjoys every moment with him. Her "Clementine" plant produced a record *twelve* tangerines and her "Early Girl" tomatoes did very well as in previous years. She enjoys monthly lunches with friends and theater productions (Lion King, Producers and Dream Girls). When possible, she attends Kelle's scrapbook class and has given Scott the same scrapbook for the third year in a row but always with a few more pages. Kelle made a special scrapbook titled "The Stevens Family" that will surely be an on-going project similar to Scott's scrapbook. She has many photos and items from when Sandy and I met, married and started the family.



Best wishes, peace and good health.

The Stevens/Strauss Family---Ralph, Sandy, Scott, Kelle and Zachary.