

THE STEVENS FAMILY 2008 NEWSLETTER

February 2009

Greetings Friends and Family. The past year has been very busy and this annual Newsletter will document some highlights of the Stevens family 2008 activities. Besides the individual stories of



each family member, we traveled as a group for a week and visited new areas and family along the route. We were also honored with special visits from two of our former foreign exchange students.

SCOTT is still a Senior Quality Assurance Engineer at Hewlett Packard in Rancho Bernardo, California, and is watching the economy and his retirement funds dwindle with the rest of the world. After considerable negotiations, Toyota finally replaced his failed (\$4000) Prius battery but on long trips, the power steering still mysteriously fails occasionally. Scott made several trips to San Jose this year, partly because of the economy (including HP's two week shutdown at Xmas) and also to attend special events with Zachary such as soccer games, golf tournaments, and birthdays. Whenever he comes, there's always a list of things for him to help with and most items are regarding dad's computer problems. He continues to keep his body in top shape with rigorous daily workouts and



also rides his motorcycle to work and along the beautiful Pacific coast. He mostly rides solo but dad is figuring out a way to join him in 2009. Scott was a willing participant in the family "bonding" trip to Louisville, Kentucky, Marion, Illinois and Nashville, Tennessee and will gladly do it again. He became more interested in nutrition and attended a cooking class that was followed by a special meal for the family. Due to the poor economy, his long range plans to attend Wimbledon in 2009 may be postponed.

KELLE and her family accomplished more than ever in 2008. She's still a Compensation Manager at Quantum Corp and has also watched the stock value plummet, so much so that Quantum may be delisted by the New York Stock Exchange. Kelle spirited the idea to travel as a family to three Midwestern states to visit cousins, aunts and uncles and tour many places that we've heard about but never visited. She planned all travel and made reservations for plane, car, motels and several attractions with the agreement that she use her credit card for everything, even down to the meals, snacks and parking expenses. Sandy, Scott and I could have left our credit cards and cash at home. (Well, almost) Yep, you guessed it. She gets air travel miles on every dollar charged and with that tidy trip expense, she, Brian and Zachary are flying free to New York City for another vacation in early 2009. Needless to say, her spreadsheet of individual expenses was extensive after we returned to CA. Everyone paid their share and agreed to another family trip, but Kelle commented she and Zachary will have a separate room due to night time snoring (by others) that interfered with their sleeping. Kelle visited Scott in Carlsbad and toured the Flower Gardens of Carlsbad and the Music Museum and accidentally met the entire Sharks hockey team in a hotel lobby where Zachary got lots of autographs and pictures. Kelle enjoys assisting in Zachary's school computer class and other Valley Christian school activities where he is in the third grade.



BRIAN is now working as Senior Design Engineer at a new “start-up” company, Scintera. His home project of building steps on the hill in the back yard was accomplished with some added help of a contractor. Quite a large patch of pumpkins grew from where old pumpkins were left in an unused part of their property last year. Zachary’s new interest in golf has inspired Brian to pick it up again and they play regularly together. Brian’s older children, Connor (15) and Brianna(17) have their individual activities that keep them busy. Besides continuing



with ice and roller hockey and high school, Conner is a member of “Fire Explorer” California Fire organization and participates in many of their fire and safety related events.



Brianna is very busy completing her senior year in high school. She has applied to numerous universities across the country and Canada and hopes to hear back from them all in the spring so she can make a decision on where she’ll be spending her college years.

ZACHARY’S soccer team (Silver Bullets) won first place in the U10 Division (under ten years old) and in practice, he continues to out-score his PaPa by a large margin, even after giving a handicap by having to score goals by using his left foot only. Kelle was the ‘Team Mom’ and made the team banner (w/Brian’s help) as well as a DVD of 106 pictures and soccer music for each player at the end of the season. Zachary acquired a passion for golf from unknown sources, but the exciting accomplishments of Tiger Woods probably had something to do with it. Zachary attended a Jr. golf



camp then became a member of Santa Teresa Jr. Golf Club and the Northern California Golf Association “Youth on Course” program. He plays weekly and won the best costume award (“Vintage Golfer”) at a Halloween tournament. His low score so far is 36 for the par three 9-hole course.

Pars are becoming more routine and he hopes that birdies will creep into the scores occasionally. (He has one in the books so far.) He played Harding Park Golf Course in San Francisco over the Xmas holidays and plans to attend the 2009 President’s Cup tournament there. His piano playing is continuing with excellence and he seems more comfortable when sitting down with any new sheet music. His five recitals can now be reviewed on-line with the most recent being his December 15th recital where he played “Think of Me” from Phantom of the Opera. Another interest that Zachary has is to learn the Chinese language and Kelle enrolled him in the very first class offered by his school. “Guitar Hero” and “NHL09” for Playstation are a couple of his fascinating electronic games. Ping pong is on his extended list of activities and it is played mostly on our dining room table, *just as his grand dad did when he lived with his parents in Springfield, Illinois in the 1940s.*



RALPH will transfer several items from his 2008 activity list to 2009 since the kitchen remodel plans were not accomplished nor were the landscaping and circular drive of the front yard finished. Our “alien lawn” is still a mystery and can be seen in “Google Earth, Street View” of 14838 Sandy Lane, San Jose CA”. Google’s camera truck must have come by very soon after the aliens arrived. Installing a new roof (asphalt shingles instead of wood shakes) and new paint, as well as installing a gas log fireplace and replacing several old windows improved the looks and comfort of our house. Climbing tall ladders was avoided by hiring contractors to perform most of the



work but it was shocking that the cost was almost what we paid for the entire house back in 1964. Line dancing, stretching, sketching and computer classes are still enjoyable events at a Senior Center as well as neighborhood walks of 1-2 miles, but sadly, my 88 year old walking partner Bob Lay passed away near the end of the year. Learning and becoming “friendly” with Microsoft’s Vista Operating System (that came with my new HP computer) is a challenge to learn and will take some time. Completing and publishing the York High School 55th Reunion photo album is also a priority item to complete in 2009. Making movies and converting old VHS tapes into DVDs is fun work as is converting almost 200 of Sandy’s CDs to iTunes (and eventually to iPod) . I enjoyed sailing at Huntington Lake again. The trip included a brief stop in Madera to visit a former contractor who assisted me in my work at FMC Corp.(‘80s-‘90s)

SANDY will forever rank activities with Zachary as her “Number One” desired activity and that means everything and anything at all. He allows “AhMa” to use her cane instead of her foot when playing soccer and the two of them have special names for the dinosaurs they play with during travel in the car. Of course, there are the special treats that Sandy showers on Zachary whenever possible. He can actually tell the difference between Gala, Fuji and Red Delicious apples and another “Apple Taste Test” is due in 2009 when Soyna and Pinata apples will be



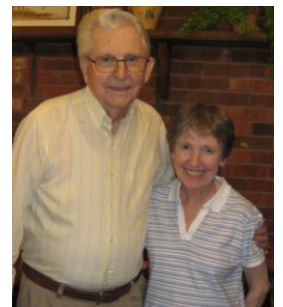
added to the list. Scott and Kelle presented us with an HDTV for Christmas and after getting it connected properly, Sandy now enjoys wide screen and very clear images. TV “soaps” have never looked so good. Book reading and bread and brownie baking are still frequent activities enjoyed by Sandy and “audio books” are becoming more popular. Sandy determined the new house colors. Our selected painter said that only one other person throughout his long career had more sample colors applied before making a decision. Most of all is Sandy’s appreciation that Scott and Kelle arrange their busy schedules to spend time with us and to include us in their lives. Attending birthdays, piano

recitals, school events, soccer games, and holiday gatherings as a family are Sandy’s favorite events.

TRAVEL ACTIVITY was our family bonding week to the Midwest where we began by visiting cousin Bree (Trammell) Wechter, husband Heath



and one year old Bryston in Louisville KY. We also visited nostalgic Churchill Downs and the Louisville Slugger Museum. The drive to Marion Illinois included a stop at Marengo Caves where all but Sandy walked through the fascinating damp and cool underground cave. The “adhesive ceiling” that held tossed coins was interesting. Sandy’s 92 year old uncle, Robert Gay, arranged a dinner gathering of approximately eighteen relatives and friends living in or near Marion, Illinois including Aunt Mildred and others of the Gay Families. Cousin Gary Gay brought his “Little Men” carvings and demonstrated the methods and tools used to make them. Uncle Tom Trammell is an avid (and very good) golfer and he gave Zachary his very first golf lessons and introduced him to a



“Hybrid” golf club. We enjoyed visiting with everyone and hope to plan another trip and similar gathering in the future. After 24 hours in Marion (a typical Stevens family visit) we departed for Memphis where we visited tourist venues such as Elvis Presley’s Graceland, the National Civil Rights Museum, Mud Island, Stax and Sun Recording studios and the Peabody Hotel where we saw the famous “Peabody Ducks” walk the red carpet. Five motel nights was the limit of Kelle and Zachary sleeping in the same room with everyone else who didn’t sleep as quietly so we had separate rooms in Nashville the night before catching the plane back to San Jose. The “separate room” criteria will most likely be followed on our next family adventure if and when it happens. *We all feel certain it will happen.*

VISITORS TO SAN JOSE included two of our German foreign exchange persons, Gunnar Kaysen and Peter Liebsch.

They both had made return visits since initially staying with us back in the mid-1980s but this time,

Gunnar Kaysen brought his wife Saskia, three sons Emil (5), Levi (2) and Iggi (1) and Saskia’s parents, mother Christa, father Peter and brother Tim.

They spent several days in San Francisco, another 3 nights with us and then rented a house in Pacific Grove near the ocean and Monterey Aquarium for almost two weeks. They wanted a warm and sunny California vacation but, unfortunately, ended up getting cool and cloudy weather instead. All of that means that they should return and stay with us longer in San Jose where it is typically warmer.



Peter Liebsch bought his charming girlfriend Susanne and we enjoyed a couple of days together reminiscing about his previous visits before they departed in our camper



van for almost two weeks of camping and wine tasting along the coast. Upon their return, Peter made an excellent BBQ dinner before going back to London where he and Susanne are employed. Scott was in San Jose for Sandy’s birthday and our anniversary 9/23 (same day) when Peter was here, but could only visit with Gunnar via telephone. Peter and Susanne managed to stop in Carlsbad during their road trip and stayed at Scott’s house.

My six-year old Garmin GPS was difficult to use and resulted in Peter replacing it with a very versatile and easy to use, TomTom One. The current GPS technology is truly amazing.



We wish everyone the very best during the current difficult economy and hope that everyone will survive with as little damaging consequences as possible.

Ralph and Sandy Stevens
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Reference Web sites:

1. **Zachary’s 5th recital video.**

<http://picasaweb.google.com/ralphbs8/ThinkOfMe2?authkey=hZLesL0IYVvk#5282675886827489314>

2. **Soccer video (Kelle’s end of season gift DVD to players)**

http://picasaweb.google.com/ralphbs8/SilverBullets2008Video2?authkey=WEKUSbl_osc#5283875029054179698

3. **Scott’s web site of family documents**

<http://geocities.com/scottmst@sbcglobal.net>