

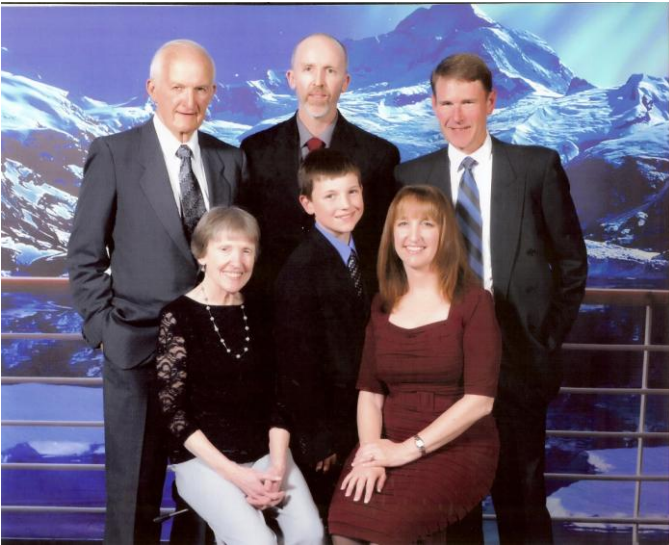
# THE STEVENS FAMILY 2011 NEWSLETTER

April 2012

## Greetings Again Family and Friends:

Once again (finally) the Stevens Family is glad to share several of our 2011 experiences.

**Sandy and Ralph's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary and Scott and Ralph's birthdays** were celebrated on board the Golden Princess cruise ship in mid July. The Alaska cruise had been planned for the past two



years and was sponsored entirely by Scott and Kelle. It included a cabin upgrade for Ralph and Sandy to a balcony room that offered beautiful views although rain and winds occurred for 6 of the 7 cruise days. Our family was fortunate to be joined by Sandy's brother Tom and sister-in-law Janice in addition to their daughter Bree and her family, husband Heath and two small children Bryston (4)



and Kinsley (2). The twelve family members met in Seattle two days prior to sailing in order to see some tourist attractions such as the Space Needle, salmon

ladders, Nordstrom's original store, underground Seattle and Boeing aircraft company. We enjoyed seafood at Ivar's Acres of Clams near



the Pikes Place ("Flying Fish") Market and the first Starbucks coffee house. Ralph did his usual spreadsheet to keep track of who, what, when and where all events would occur and it was referenced frequently. Eating was, as always, a major event especially on board the ship where the "more formal" dining at dinner was supplemented with buffet style and less formal restaurants. All food presentations, quantity



and quality were excellent and highlighted by marching chefs carrying huge Baked Alaskan dessert.

The 3,000 passenger Golden Princess ship had 16 decks that required occasional long travel through narrow aisles and multi-elevators. The travel was

somewhat difficult to navigate Sandy's small wheelchair, but everyone was very accommodating. Numerous activities were available and everyone found their favorites to join. Ralph and Kelle won the salsa dance competition, Brian won closest to the pin contest and Scott won at bingo. The putting green was difficult as was the golf simulator (at \$30 per half hour). Basketball and table tennis were fun events and the little ones enjoyed swimming whenever possible. The rocking motion of the ship made for interesting waves in the pool and strong winds kept Ralph from standing outside at the bow of the ship. Night time events included several musical shows but they were of medium quality. Trivia contests were fun but one group was winning so often they were accused of having a hidden computer with direct contact to Google. On-shore excursions occurred in Juno, Skagway,

small wheelchair except when boarding buses or special event vehicles such as the "Duck" amphibious vehicle to tour Ketchikan, first by street and then in the bay. *More photos about the trip can be viewed on Scott's web site:* <http://seizethedayguy.com>



**Kelle's family** had their usual share of activities during 2011 that required extreme time-management. Brian left Scintera Networks (voluntarily) and is now employed by Cavendish Kinetics, Inc and is using MEMS (micro electromechanical systems) SEE MORE at <http://www.cavendish-kinetics.com>. He still works too many hours but it's becoming routine when employed in the high tech business. Brian's two children, Connor (18) and Briana (20) continue their studies, Connor a senior at Bellarmine high school and Briana a junior at San Jose State. Connor was given a humanitarian award by the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors for his quick thinking and professional actions while controlling traffic and directing a rescue helicopter during a freeway accident.



Ketchikan and Victoria, British Columbia. Sandy and Ralph were joined by Tom and Janice for the White Pass Scenic Railway train ride in Skagway while others decided to experience the Mendenhall

**Kelle is still the Global Compensation Manager at Quantum.** Her 10 years there is almost an aberration considering today's rapid relocating and unemployment. Occasional business trips result in Zachary staying with Ralph and Sandy which makes for some welcomed and fun interactions. Kelle maintains her 1/3<sup>th</sup> share of season tickets to San Jose Sharks hockey games and performs micro-managing to attend to the increasing needs of Zachary. She still attends occasional weekend classes for scrapbook sessions and did an excellent job with a special book about the Alaska cruise for her parents. Probably the biggest event their 2011 family experiences was moving into a new home that is less than 10 minutes away from Ralph and



Glacier tour, the zip line, the Misty Fjord's seaplane ride, and city tours. Sandy did well in the

Sandy. They moved into the smaller (and more affordable) home in mid May but some modifications (enlarged shower, paint and floor upgrade) were not completed until several months



later. They also have two new cats (sisters Annie and Kahlua) that make for some interesting experiences, Annie is very good at leaping great heights such as to the top of a refrigerator. A scary incident happened late one night when Zachary and Brian were both gone. The cats were playing a little too rough and knocked over a large vase causing lots of noise. Naturally, Kelle was awakened and a bit concerned but all was well except for Kelle's nerves and the broken vase. Kelle's 2005 Prius lost the "diamond lane driving privilege" (solo computer lane) that causes her to now spend considerably more time in freeway traffic. She's been thinking about purchasing a diamond lane compliant vehicle..... *just as soon as she wins the lottery.*

Zachary graduated from the 5<sup>th</sup> grade at Valley Christian Elementary School and is now attending 6<sup>th</sup> grade at Valley Christian Junior High School that recently opened their newest facility, a 46,000 Square Foot Conservatory of the Arts Center. Zachary is still doing interesting (but extremely time consuming) robotic activities and was head programmer for the 2011-12 season. There's no time for soccer this year but golf and piano continue with golf being the #1 activity of choice. For his April birthday, his dad took him to play the famous Pebble Beach course in



Monterey where he shot 98 that included a par on Number 7, one of the most beautiful par 3 holes in the world. He participates in two bands and both teachers are vying for his trombone talents. Along with his many music performances was his speech presentation of Martin Luther King's animation filled "I Have a Dream".

**Ralph is still vacillating** the details of the new kitchen remodel but managed to clear up some confusion about the roof design by making a cardboard

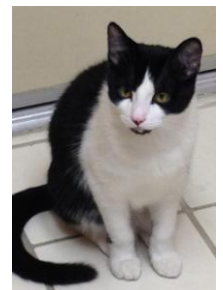
model, Eight different configurations were made before finally selecting what is termed as the "Bay Roof" design that



includes bay windows in the preferred kitchen. Hopefully, 2012 will provide some real construction activity that has been talked about for much too long.

**Scott didn't quite make it** to six years at Hewlett Packard and was one of the 800 software engineers who was let go in June 2011. Fortunately, through past experiences, he has learned the benefits of staying connected with friends. His extensive use of the Internet, especially linkedin.com, resulted in three job offers in less than one month. He is now working at Anvita Health Company that is a wholly owned subsidiary of Humana Insurance Company. His commute is a bit longer than at HP and he also lost his diamond lane privileges with his 2001 Prius thus causing him to be considering a compatible vehicle in the near future as is Kelle. He recently proved his technical worth by discovering a major error in one of the Anvita software programs and was personally congratulated by the CEO.

Scott now has a roommate of the 4-legged variety. Mavrick, the cat, is ready to play at a moment's notice and has similar unique abilities as Zachary's Anna and Kahlua. Maverick can remove and play with the bathroom sink stopper and proudly drags it into the



kitchen floor to be noticed by all. As Scott realizes, there are responsibilities that come with having an

animal and Scott found a reliable, but costly, company to look after Maverick when needed, mostly during Scott's travel. Animal care is quite a lucrative business in his area and owners are willing to pay high prices for good service. Scott's animal care takers text and send photos daily to make him feel at ease about being away from Maverick.

**Ralph** camped and sailed with friends Bard Johnson and Wes Harrison at Huntington Lake for the 5<sup>th</sup> year ,but as occasionally happens, he didn't have any family members attending to share the

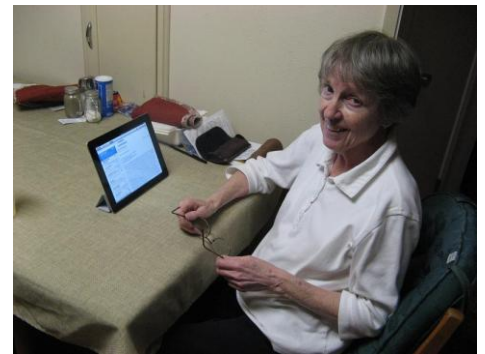


relaxing "close to nature" experiences He agreed (albeit reluctantly) to organize his 60<sup>th</sup> high school reunion that is planned for October 12-13-14, 2012 in Elmhurst, Illinois. Twenty three volunteers will make contact with over 240 classmates (from 362) and negotiate with venues for lodging, high school tour, bus, lunch, dinner and cocktail social. Fortunately, having produced the 55<sup>th</sup> reunion in 2007 has given Ralph better knowledge of what to do and how to best handle many of the situations. The expensive color reunion book of our 55<sup>th</sup> reunion will be replaced with a "Class Directory" having current mail and email addresses and brief personal comments by classmates, A sample "mini survey" in October resulted in over 80 classmates and guests indicating they were interested in attending (*"providing God willing and the creek don't rise"*). Sandy had second thoughts about Ralph's time spent doing reunion related activities instead of concentrating more on house projects such as the new kitchen.

**Sandy** continues to be as involved with Zachary as much as possible but she no longer holds title to being taller. About midyear, as predicted, Zachary became taller than "Ahma". She still records audio books onto disks and her iPod and has entered the 21<sup>st</sup> Century by becoming more familiar with her

new Apple iPad. Shopping will never be the same.

Her decreasing bone density has become a bigger issue and she began a 2-year program of daily self injection of a



new drug "Forteo". It's not only very expensive but it is a refrigerated drug that requires special handling. If only chocolate brownies would be a remedy of improved bone density instead of Forteo, the issue would be resolved.

**Planned activities** for 2012 include another visit by Peter Liebsch, our 1985 foreign exchange student from Germany as well as a first-ever visit by Gerhard Kerz who hosted Scott during his 3-month 1978 summer in Germany. Zachary's robot team has been chosen to represent the USA in Brazil that will require a creative fund raising campaign.

*Best wishes to all for a safe, happy, prosperous and healthy 2012.*

