

Greetings from Virginia!

2007 was a fairly busy but quieter year, in some respects, for our family. We've learned this happens when parents have kids in college.

House Painting

In February, the stark off-white walls of this big house got a facelift. We finally broke down (after 8 years) and hired a painter. After two weeks of disarray, living amidst tarps and furniture moved from room to room, we now have a totally new look including some faux painting. If you have some time, ask Bruce to tell you the story of what happened to the bathroom (one of those simple jobs that turned into a nightmare).

A Family Affair

In September, Bruce and Eileen trekked into central Texas to attend the wedding of Bruce's knockout niece, Jessica Bardasian, and her bodacious beau, Nick Marchetti. The weekend was full of

frolicking and good eatin' at the Rough Creek Ranch, some 11,000 acres of deer, antelope, and other varmints not to mention a big sky full of Texas atmosphere. Eileen and Bruce got to go on an ATV adventure and Bruce tried the zip-line. It was kind of like being kids again! Good times... really good times. This would also be the closest thing to a vacation we'd have in 2007.

Getting' Old

Speaking of old people, Eileen and Bruce will celebrate 25 years of marriage (without even coming close to killing each other) next October. Plans are not set yet, but there's been talk of a cruise or travel somewhere far from the rat race we know. Guess we'll just have to tell you all about it next year... or not. Still have to pay for college. Drat!

Photo removed by request

Family Update

David

David's first year at GA Tech went without a hitch and he made the Dean's List his first semester. His second year, however, got off to a rocky start due to health issues and he had to withdraw from the first semester. He'll be taking a much-needed break from cramming stuff into his brain and probably stay home through spring



David rocks out on the bass

and summer semesters, likely working at Orbital as an intern again (still up in the air there, but he'll be working somewhere ☺).

David has continued pursuing his interest in guitar by picking up electric bass on his own. He bought an inexpensive bass and amp over the summer, knowing he'd be taking it to school with him. Like he was with his acoustic at first, he can't put the thing down. Within a few weeks, he had mastered a good number of Red Hot Chili Peppers licks, and started to work on some of his own techniques. At school he even joined a few other fledgling musicians in his apartment building and started jamming with them. He has actually become quite good and sincerely wants to join a band. But, ding, ding... reality check. School first! Oh, yeah...now the quiet level has just increased with David and his bass back at home. It's all good!



Eileen with Rachel at St. Mary's

Rachel had an interesting year at St. Mary's. In June, she was granted her "wish" by the Make-A-Wish™ Foundation. What was her wish? How about a catered gourmet meal once per week for whole year! The meals are being donated by Coastal Cooks of Virginia Beach and personally delivered each week by Kim Schultz, who usually stays to watch Rachel devour her meal. Rachel's love for good food has been revived by this simple act of kindness, and we are both impressed by and truly thankful to Coastal for the generosity and empathy they've shown our little angel. One of the Hampton Roads newspapers, the Virginian Pilot, learned of Rachel's wish and published an article with color photo based on an interview with us at St. Mary's in November. Rachel, you're a celebrity!

So, then Bruce got another of his crazy ideas. What if Rachel could see US in addition to our being able to see HER during our now twice-weekly webcam calls? He did a little shopping and ended up buying a large LCD flat panel TV and computer for St. Mary's. We have arranged to have a 2-way call during her gourmet meals. She seems to see and recognize us on the large screen and responds with the occasional smile or hand gesture to let us know she's happy. Nick and Brendy Hantzes, whose daughter Molly also lives at St. Mary's split the cost of the equipment with us. To them and the kind folks at Coastal Cooks and St. Mary's we send our most heartfelt gratitude and respect.

Andrew

Andrew's Vex Robotics team competed in the First Vex Challenge in Delaware in January. And although they finished in the bottom 10%, they did not finish in last place. In fact, they had one of the best robots there. If it weren't for a slight mis-wiring problem going into the first wave of elimination heats, they probably could have given first place a run. Chalk it up to life's experiences. The entire endeavor, including the weekly team meetings, is chronicled at <http://team3271.scherzinger.org>.

Andrew became very involved in Drama productions throughout the school year and was a "Techie"- working on the sound and sets of several plays. He even auditioned and was chosen for a part in the end of year musical. We saw a less inhibited side of Andrew.



Andrew takes a Game Boy break at St. Mary's

Andrew is now a freshman at South Lakes High School in Reston, which is an International Baccalaureate (IB) school (and just happens to be adjacent to Langston Hughes Middle School). He

used the summer to jump start his freshman year by taking a full year's course of Geometry in 5 weeks. Now he is enrolled in Algebra II and is doing well as a result, though the stress is definitely intense at times and his work load keeps him up until midnight far too often. We're coming to the conclusion that IB may actually be a tougher regimen than Advanced Placement (AP), and convinced that IB seems geared more to preparing kids for real life career situations, which is a good thing.

Andrew joined the marching band (percussion section) which kept him extremely busy for the first half of the school year. Although he still says he likes playing his drums, he has not had much time to practice at home. In fact, his school commitments forced him to stop his lessons at All Things Rock™ in the fall. Bummer, man. As the finale to the "marching season", the band marched in the annual Reston Holiday Parade which was televised. With a disproportionate number of percussionists turning out for the event, Andrew headlined the musical entourage by carrying one end of the band's banner. It was windy and freezing that day, but worth the shivering.

Bruce completed the third year of his 4-year master's program at GWU and has only two courses remaining to get his degree in systems engineering. Not to jump the gun or anything, but an opportunity for Bruce did present itself within Orbital and he decided it was too good to pass up. As a result, Bruce is no longer a software engineer at Orbital, but is now officially part of the systems engineering department. His responsibilities still have a very strong software emphasis, but the focus is on process improvement for all electrical subsystems of the GEO spacecraft product line.

Bruce is still active in open source software, primarily with the website content management system called "Joomla". However, time has simply not permitted the level of involvement he maintained last year, though he did participate in the "Joomla, Pizza, Bugs, and Fun" bug squashing event in DC in early December. This event accelerated the completion of the final pre-release candidate for the long-awaited version 1.5. Once he finishes school, Bruce hopes to establish a deeper contributory level of involvement in this incredibly active and social community.

Eileen's job is starting to rack up frequent flyer miles, if you know what I mean. I suppose since most full-time jobs end up being 45-50 hours per week, it should not be surprising for a part-time job to actually BE 40 hours. When she prepares for and travels to her various workshops and seminars, she sometimes puts in 70-hour weeks. She has traveled to Chicago, Madison-WI, Las Vegas, Atlanta, and more. Go figure. Go Eileen!



Eileen, her boss Alison Bodor, and Yvette Thomas of PMCA at Hotel Hershey

Occasionally, something fun happens with her job (I mean besides always having 200 lbs of candy on hand at home). This year she was invited to a black tie fundraiser at the swank and historic Hotel Hershey (guess where?). It was a grand affair with great people, food and of course, chocolate!

Be sure to visit our family website at <http://scherzinger.org> where there is a lot more detail about the past years, the past 11 years of newsletters, as well as lots of photos. Best wishes for you and yours in 2008!



Bruce and Eileen at Hershey Gardens

Happy New Year!

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