

Happy Holidays!

As 2009 starts with a dismal economic outlook, we are thankful that we are all healthy and that we got through 2008 unscathed (other than seeing a worrisome decline in our 401 Ks). On the upside, Eileen and Bruce celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary. Now **that** was a milestone ☺.

Family Loss

In February Eileen's Aunt Leila passed away after a prolonged illness. Bruce and Eileen attended the funeral in Staten Island, where Leila lived for as long as we can recall. Leila was regarded as the "rock" in the family, and was deeply loved by everyone who knew her. She is and will always be sincerely missed by us all.

Madison

Eileen organizes semi-annual workshops at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, and this year both Bruce and Andrew flew out to meet her for a mini-vacation there in July. Madison is an eclectic college town with a lot of character. Bruce took a solo bicycle tour around Lake Monona while Eileen and Andrew took in one of the museums on State Street. Madison is small enough that walking or biking can get you about anywhere you need to be. So by the end of the week we were ready to see more of the outlying area. We ended up in New Glarus, a tiny village populated largely by families of Swiss emigrants. The town is famous for its Swiss cheese and for the New Glarus Brewery, where we got to sample some regional beers. It was a pleasant summer trip, but we wouldn't want to visit in the winter!



Eileen in New Glarus, Wisconsin
(she's there **behind** the cow)

Other Travel

It seems both Eileen and Bruce are traveling more for work these days. In addition to Eileen's typical 6 or so business trips per year to Madison, Chicago, Pittsburgh, and Hershey, Bruce flew to Houston in July (of all months) to support one of Orbital's new contracts. While in Houston Bruce got to briefly visit his cousins Terry and Matt and aunt Jan, whom he had not seen in 30 years. They had dinner at the Kemah boardwalk, which a month later was heavily damaged by hurricane Ike.



Matt, Jan, and Terry at Landry's, Kemah

Bruce also ran into a high school friend, Cary Cheatham, who just happens to work for Boeing in the very same building where the meetings with NASA and Boeing were held. A very memorable trip, indeed!

In December Bruce traveled again, this time to Tokyo, Japan, to meet with a vendor there who will provide one of the communication subsystems needed for the same contract. That was Bruce's first international travel other than to the Caribbean. Another trip there is likely in early 2009, and we may be looking for a way to include Eileen next time. Check the website for photos.

Family Update

After spending a good amount of his time during the spring and summer tutoring high school students in Northern Virginia, **David** is back on track at GA Tech and completed the fall semester in decent shape. His passion for mathematics is insatiable, and he is acing some pretty advanced courses. He is adding mathematics as a minor along with his computer science degree. He has joined forces with some school friends and is playing bass guitar in a fledgling band called "Bears in Your Face" in Atlanta. He's now composing music for his band and really seems to have a knack for it. Most importantly, he truly enjoys it. He left the guitar and amp at school, so it was pretty quiet at home over winter break, the only noise coming from some pretty rowdy video game sessions with Andrew.

Rachel is still doing well at St. Mary's in Norfolk. The Make-A-Wish meals ended in July, but Bruce and Eileen continue to have meals catered or pizza delivered to her every Friday since she enjoys gourmet food so much. The webcam system is now being used by several families with children at St. Mary's, who are very grateful for it. Rachel also attended the annual St. Mary's prom. Dates for the prom were young adults from the Norfolk Academy.



Rachel is ready for the Prom

We continue to visit with Rachel electronically twice each week and try to get down to Norfolk every 6-8 weeks. In July we took Rachel to Virginia Beach since she seems to like going out to hear the water, all the birds and people.

Andrew continued his involvement in Drama tech at SLHS. The big production for 2008 was Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*. It was a stellar performance and received county-wide acclaim. The costumes and stage sets were very elaborate, as were many of the special effects handled by the tech crew.



Andrew continues in the percussion section of the marching and symphonic bands at SLHS. The band did much better in 2008 competitions than in 2007, which Andrew attributes mostly to the larger band that resulted from summer's redistricting. This year the percussion section won numerous awards in various competitions and the Seahawks band will be performing at Carnegie Hall in NYC this spring. In addition Andrew again participated in the "All Things Rock" summer band camp, composing and recording music. The band culminated in a live performance at Jammin Java, a music club in Vienna.

After four long years, **Bruce** finally completed his master's degree in systems engineering from GWU.



Ironically, Bruce moved back to the software engineering department at Orbital to work on the COTS program. The Commercial Orbital Transport System is Orbital's

first man-rated system and will deliver cargo to the International Space Station beginning in December 2010. Bruce is responsible for all flight software for the vehicle. In mid-December, Orbital was granted a \$1.9B contract to supply cargo to the ISS with 8 missions over the next 5 years. Orbital is one of few companies in the greater DC area that is actually hiring right now.

Although Bruce's activity in open source software has significantly diminished, he continues to support the work he has done and develop websites as a hobby. Bruce created his latest website for his high school class and assumed the role of chairman of its reunion committee. Planning is underway for the 35-year reunion next June. As a precursor to all this, Bruce visited Connersville in late June while on a long overdue visit with his parents, half brother Dave, and sisters-in-law. Keith had left for Afghanistan a couple weeks before, so they did not get to see each other. Subsequently, Bruce discovered two of his high school classmates (John Wilson and Monte Pursifull) live in Virginia Beach. So during July and August visits to see Rachel, Bruce and Eileen also paid brief visits to see these



Monte Pursifull with Bruce in VA Beach

old friends (did I say "old"?).

In January, **Eileen** paid a visit to her family (mom, dad, brother and sisters) in Florida. Her sister, Sue from California joined her so the entire family was there together for the first



time in many years.

Her job at the National Confectioners Association is keeping her very busy for a "part-time" position, but she enjoys it very much as she is meeting so many interesting people, travels quite a bit and gets all kinds of very cool candy. Her nickname is "The Candy Mom" or "Mrs. Willy Wonka". Her office is preparing to move to D.C. (Georgetown) which will turn her 15 minute commute to a minimum of a 1.5 hour trip daily, each way!!! Cool location but terrible commute. In order to make this more tolerable, she just bought a 2009 Prius the last week of December. She is loving the 45 miles per gallon that she is getting.



Eileen makes gummi candies at the NCA Resident Course in Madison, WI



One of Eileen's newest past-times is Facebook, so if you are on it, please look for her there. She would be happy to add you as a friend if you are not already. In addition, she keeps busy with various volunteer activities through the local high school and being a "band mom".

Be sure to visit our website at <http://scherzinger.org> where there is a lot more detail about the past years, the past 12 years of newsletters, as well as lots of photos. Best wishes for you and yours in 2009!

Happy New Year!

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