

Greetings Family and Friends!

2009 was truly a year to remember... or forget, depending on your perspective and tolerance for cynicism. On the international side, our economy is in a shambles and we're seeing terrorism in the US again. On the personal side, we are all being affected in some way.

Eileen

In late January, shortly after our last newsletter was mailed, Eileen was laid off from NCA where she had been working and advancing for over 10 years. This news came a month after we bought a new Prius to make her commute to their new DC office more tolerable. Instead, we were left with a new payment for a car we otherwise did not need and 25% less income. That's not to mention the emotional effect this unforeseen event had on Eileen and our family.



Eileen with Sue (center) and a friend in CA

In need of some emotional therapy and with all sorts of newfound free time, Eileen flew to California in late January to visit her sister, Sue.

Apparently she had a pretty good time, and it was a nice to get away

from the cold, her job situation, and us (in no particular order).

Eileen remained unemployed for over half the year, during which she managed one last Madison conference for NCA as a consultant. While on that trip, Eileen managed to fracture something in her right foot and had to wear a "space boot" for several months. This made driving and going on job interviews a bit difficult, but she managed.

In August she finally landed a position with AIHA (American Industrial Hygiene Assoc.) in Fairfax as a planner for their biggest annual technical conference, which involves hundreds of speakers and thousands of members.



Eileen, Lee, Sue, and Cindy 9/09

So far so good with this new job, but she's definitely missing being "The Candy Mom".

Obviously suffering from travel withdrawal, Eileen flew down to Florida in September to celebrate her father, Al's, 70th birthday.

Little did she know, Bruce had begun planning a surprise party to celebrate Eileen's 50th birthday. Just a few days after her return from Florida, about 30 friends attended the event on the evening of September 13th and waited in silence to



Eileen arrives to find about 30 friends waiting to call her "old"

scare the bejesus out of her when she returned from a spa appointment in anticipation of a dinner out. Welcome to the "club", sweetie.

Bruce

Bruce spent a good part of the first half of the year finalizing plans for his high school class' 35-year reunion, which was a huge success at the end of June. While on the trip, Bruce made the usual rounds visiting family.



The CHS Class of 1974 35-Year Reunion Committee



Mt. Fuji, December 2009 (taken from Kamakura monorail station)

Bruce continued his travels to Tokyo for Orbital, making three more trips in June, September, and December. It is unclear whether he will attend the trips coming in 2010, but there is some chance of it.

Bruce transitioned into Systems Engineering on the COTS program in December upon return from Japan.

In October Bruce and Linda surprised their father, Earl, on his 80th birthday with an elegant dinner at the Coldwater Café in Tipp City, OH. The original plan was to have all us "kids" there, but plans are just that... plans.



Bruce, Linda, and Earl at Coldwater Cafe

Bruce continued his interest in the open source software community, Joomla! by starting a user's group in the Northern Virginia area. At last tally, the group's membership is 32 strong and includes enthusiasts not only from NoVA but also from DC and Baltimore. You can visit the group's website at <http://novajoomla.com>.

David

David returned to school after the 2009 winter break and began to have side effects from some medication he was taking. At its worst, he would sleep for days at a time and missed several key exams as a result. Things got so bad that we had to request a medical withdrawal for David and bring him home. He spent the remainder of spring and most of the summer trying to get the medication "cocktail" worked out while working as an intern again at Orbital. By the time it was time to return to Atlanta, we and David thought he was fine. But only a few weeks after returning to school, David had to be brought home again. David remains at home and continues to undergo therapy and medication adjustments. It is unclear whether he will return to GA Tech at this point. He may instead finish out his degree at a local college, such as George Mason Univ.

Meanwhile, he is in another rock band playing bass guitar. We hope he can fit school and a job into his regime very soon.



Eileen gets a smile from Rachel during our November visit

Rachel

When it comes to Rachel, most of the time no news is good news. And that's certainly the case this year. She's now 18½ and is probably about as tall as Eileen. We visited Rachel five times but never had a vehicle to take her out anywhere. On the positive side, the medical staff at St. Mary's has been trying to

reduce the number of anticonvulsant medications she's taking. We have seen only a small improvement in her alertness, but most of the time she sleeps through our webcam calls.

We continue to visit with Rachel electronically twice each week.

Andrew

Andrew is a junior at SLHS pursuing a full IB diploma and continues in the percussion section of the marching and symphonic bands at SLHS. He'll be auditioning for the wind ensemble in January, and hopes to advance.



Eileen, Andrew, Timo and Bruce at Luray Caverns

Our family did a student exchange with a Germany family over the summer through Andrew's German class. For three weeks in July, Andrew and some of his classmates visited families in Braunschweig and spent time exploring different German cities. In exchange, in October we hosted a German student, Timo Schewik, from Braunschweig for three weeks. It was reminiscent of the

days we had an au pair living with us, but without the (need for) child care. Funny how having a guest can get us out of the house to do things we don't normally do as a family, such as visit Luray Caverns and the Smithsonian Udvar Hazy Center at Dulles Airport. But we also included Timo in some everyday activities, such as shopping at Target and playing mini-golf with David and Andrew. Timo also went with the other German students to take a tour of the monuments in DC as well as Mount Vernon.



David and Andrew at Woody's Golf Center

We enjoyed learning about the differences as well as similarities between our cultures. He was fascinated with yellow school buses, something they don't have where he lives, Halloween costumes and decorations, and most of all microwave popcorn.

An Early Snow Storm

As most of you probably know, the weekend before Christmas the mid-Atlantic and Northeast got hit with an unusual early winter storm that dumped as much as two feet of snow in and around the DC area. Though our total was *only* about 17", it came so fast that getting dug out took a couple days. The photo below was taken Dec 20th, the day after the snow stopped and just after David and I finished shoveling the driveway. During the week after Christmas, the sun came out and the temperature warmed to around 50F every day. A week after the snow fell, it was mostly melted. Only the high piles from shoveling and plowing remained.



Be sure to visit our website at <http://scherzinger.org> where there is a lot more detail about the past years, the past 13 years of newsletters, as well as lots of photos. Best wishes for you and yours in 2010!

Happy New Year!

The Scherzingers

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