

## Happy New Year to Our Family and Friends!

What a year! 2011 was notable in several regards for us and the DC area. It was a weather rollercoaster, we certainly had our share of accidents, and our youngest son is now in college (and we are officially “old”).

A 9” snowfall in late January was followed by one of the warmest Februarys on record with a few days in the 70s. In both March and April we saw several days in the 80s as well as snow on cherry blossoms (both very rare). April also gave us the worst tornado outbreak on record with 18 being reported within a 4-day period. Then came the heat in May with several days above 90 degrees, one at 98. July was the hottest month on record for the area with 25 days over 90 and several of those were well over 100 degrees! August brought us the now infamous hurricane Irene and a 5.8 earthquake that was felt in Nova Scotia and was centered only an hour south of our home. September gave us hurricane Lee with only a couple days without rain, flooding everywhere, and both bridges providing N/S access to our home badly damaged. We even had a few inches of snow for Halloween! Both November and December were relatively dry and warmer than usual, enough for plenty of motorcycle riding. Compared to the northeast, we were “spared”.

### Eileen

Eileen finished her second year working for AIHA and is well into her third, planning their conference. This year the annual conference took her to Portland, OR. As is becoming a tradition, Bruce flew out and joined her to spend a damp but pleasant weekend touring the area’s wine country and national parks.



Eileen Enjoying the Portland Coast

We entered our favorite of Eileen’s chili recipes (Diablo’s Kiss) in Orbital’s first annual Chili Challenge and as all “us guys” anticipated, it won first place! Eileen went on to win second place in another contest with the same chili and first place in a dessert competition at work. So this validates the source of Bruce’s weight problem.

Eileen continues with dental reconstruction resulting from her traumatic bicycling accident last August. With any luck, it will be finished by February.

### Bruce

Bruce had a couple notable events during the year. In April while test driving a new car, he and Eileen were involved in an accident on I-66. We still don’t know how he managed to be given a ticket, having been struck from behind but at least there were no injuries. Then in May, while riding his motorcycle home from work, he was

involved in another accident. The motorcycle was totaled but Bruce woke up in Fairfax hospital with a concussion and some road rash and no recollection of the incident (still true). Not easily dissuaded, he bought a touring bike a week later and did the same summer ride as in 2010 to visit relatives and friends in Indiana and Ohio but in more comfort.



Our 2005 Yamaha Royal Star Venture

Bruce still chairs the NoVA Joomla! User Group, but has had little time to spend on it thanks to his busy work schedule. Speaking of work, Orbital will launch its first COTS (demo) spacecraft right here in Virginia about midyear, capping 3 years of work on the project for the team.

### David

David completed the fall semester of his final year at George Mason University in Fairfax and was a TA for two classes. He will graduate in May with a B.S. in Computer Science (just like his Dad). He



David Rocks with the Piecycles at the Brookfield Swim Club

is maintaining a 3.95 GPA. Smartypants! He is no longer playing bass for the Piecycles but is now with a band named “Rely on Fire”, which had its first public performance on December 30 at Fat Tuesday’s near the GMU campus. They began recording on January 2, 2012.

David successfully passed two screening interviews with Google (Pittsburgh) and just had his first in-person interview January 5<sup>th</sup>. This time he was in a room for 5 hours with a whiteboard, writing code and solving algorithms for Google engineers. He breezed through and said they were impressed. He is psyched! By the time you read this he’ll either know that he’ll have another interview with them or a job waiting when he graduates.

### Rachel

It’s remarkable that Rachel is now 20 years old and will be living at St. Mary’s in Norfolk for only another year, after which time she will be one of the first residents to move into the new Albero House adult facility now under construction there. Eileen and I



Groundbreaking Ceremony for the New Albero House Adult Facility in Norfolk

attended the groundbreaking ceremony in September. Rachel will now be able to live there indefinitely. We are tremendously relieved.

From a health standpoint she's been doing better since her medications have been reduced, decreasing her sleepiness and increasing her appetite. She continues to enjoy her Friday pizza/pasta dinners and we still love seeing her on the webcam twice each week.

**Andrew**

Just prior to graduating, Andrew received the Fairfax Peace Award that he earned at the end of 2010. We decided to arrange a surprise and the staff at St. Mary's took the opportunity to bring Rachel to attend the ceremony while we flew Eileen's mother, Sandy, here to attend. It was a bit overwhelming for Andrew, who was so overcome by emotion that he was unable to walk to the podium to accept his award.



Andrew and Rachel at the Fairfax Peace Award Ceremony in Fairfax

Andrew graduated from South Lakes High School in June and is now an honors freshman at George Mason University and majoring in chemistry with a minor in physics and renewable energy. He became a member of the Jewish fraternity Alpha Epsilon Pi after pledging for the fall semester. He is still getting adjusted to the concept of independence, but displays a developing mastery of it when he visits home. He has a new girlfriend named Katrina who is also in the honors program at GMU.

**In Closing...**

To finish the year, we bought a new 2012 Hyundai Tucson to replace the old Ford Taurus wagon that became too unreliable to drive. This will be Bruce's car and his



Bruce's New "Cage"

2004 Chrysler will be shared. During the holiday break, Eileen, Bruce, and Andrew took the new car to visit Rachel and she was able to ride in the back seat so she could check out the holiday lights display at Norfolk Botanical Gardens with us. Despite the 90-minute wait in line and



Happy Girl!

the 1-hour crawl through the display, Rachel returned to her room with the biggest smile on her face we'd ever seen. And she was still smiling

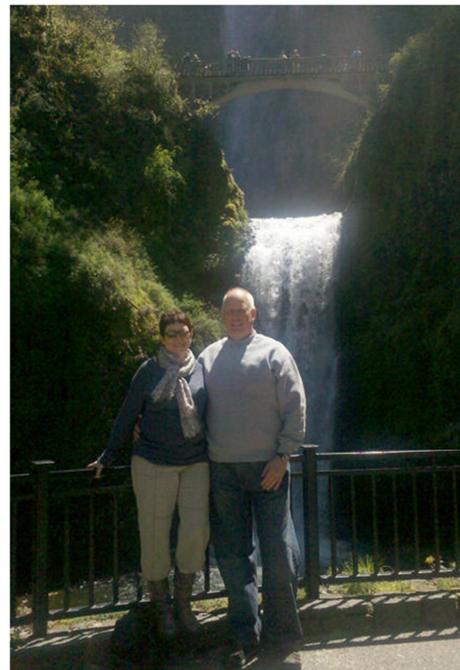
when we kissed her goodbye the next morning.

November brought a sad turn of events when Eileen's mom, Sandy (age 71), passed away unexpectedly after enduring a brief illness. None of us knew how ill she really was until the night before she passed away. Bruce and Eileen were able to fly down to Florida to be with her during her last moments. She was a wonderful woman who will truly be missed.



Andrew with His Proud Grandma after the Peace Award Ceremony

Be sure to visit our website at <http://scherzinger.org> where there is a lot more detail about the 15 years of our lives, as well as lots of photos. We are also on Facebook and have enjoyed keeping up with many of you during the past year. Best wishes for you and yours in 2012!



**Happy New Year!**

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