

Living Happily Ever After

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Feeling Hot Hot Hot!

Our big trip of the year turned into an extremely memorable trip to Hawaii. While on Oahu we stayed with Dave and Cathy who took us out in their amazing boat so we could swim at the sandbar and enjoy the ocean waves. Their son Chris talked us into going to the Big Island of Hawaii to see the active volcano. We rearranged our plans and went for one night. Excellent decision. It was a spectacular sight getting up close and personal with the hot lava. Alexandria (17mos) couldn't stop talking about "lava, hot" and "lava tubes". We also enjoyed spending quiet time on Molokai (our favorite) and exploring Kauai including hiking part of the Napali coastline (what a view). While on Kauai, we even got to view filming of CBS show *Amazing Race* (Dec 18 Episode) which was extra special as it happens to be one of the few shows we watch on occasion. On our way home to Texas we stopped for a day in San Francisco where we enjoyed seeing Alcatraz, riding street cars, eating a Ghirradelli Hot Fudge Sundae, and walking around Fisherman's Wharf.



Spring Break South Carolina Style

In March, we joined Bob, Linda, and Kim in Hilton Head Island, South Carolina for a week of vacationing on the beach. Alexandria enjoyed playing at the beach, swimming in the pool, and riding bikes. Even more exciting was having her Grandparents and Auntie around to give her lots of attention and love. Liston and Caroline enjoyed going out on a movie and dinner date while the grandparents cared for Alexandria. At the end of the week we spent two days in Savannah eating Pralines and sightseeing before going back to Texas.



A Special Logan Treat

Logan came with us to Texas while Gillian went on her honeymoon in May. He and Alexandria had a wonderful time playing together. We took trips to the zoo, the aquarium, Chuck E Cheese, and the playground to keep everyone busy. We all had a good time painting, playing with Play Doh, baking cookies, and playing with toys. We loved getting to know him better and look forward to similar visits with him in the future.

Maintaining Ties With Family and Friends

We've kept up well with the Biases, Browns, and Gugliottis this year. We started the year with a trip to Disney World where we met with Linda, Bob, Kim, Gillian, Gillian's boyfriend, and Logan for the weekend. It was a terrific surprise to first see the very pleased Logan walking down the street holding hands with Mickey Mouse. The downer of the weekend was when Alexandria got her first ear infection. We spent less time at the parks than we had planned. Luckily her grandparents understood and enjoyed spending time with her in spite of having to do so at the Walk-In Clinic and hotel room. We were also happy that Grammy and Esther were able to drive over for lunch one afternoon. Gillian got engaged at Disney that weekend which started a series of events including a wedding, honeymoon, and divorce in the months that followed. We went to St. Pete for the wedding and then went back when they split up to be supportive of Gillian and Logan during a challenging time. We also went to Tampa in between to see Barb & Jim (and their new home) and go to the River. In August, we enjoyed celebrating with Kim and the Biases as Kim earned her Doctorate of Education from the University of Central Florida. We visited with Barb and Jim in February before they left Tallahassee and even squeezed in a FSU basketball game during that weekend. We enjoyed a wonderful trip to Indiana in December. In addition to the folks we counted on visiting with (Lane, Norm, Jennifer, Emily), we were excited to see just about everyone including all the cousins and their children.

Exercising Is A Family Affair (especially the swimming)

Alexandria continues to be a little fish and absolutely loves the water. We built a fence around our pool to help keep her from getting in without us. She went swimming almost every day all summer and we joined the YMCA this winter so we could have access to the indoor heated pool. She is actually getting pretty good at "swimming" and can kick her feet, move her arms, and propel herself through the pool. Now if we could just get her to put her head up for air, she'd be able to go down the slide and swim in the deep end. Since joining the Y, we have also enjoyed playing racquetball, taking Spin Classes, and using the weight training facilities. We have made a big effort to be more active and even bought bike gear for the family. Alexandria constantly requests to ride bikes, get the helmet on, etc. and loves to be in her little bike trailer while we ride.



Homecoming Fun: Grandma and Grandpa joined us for a week of fun in the Fall. They shared in celebrating Halloween with our little Hula Girl and then we all headed to Oklahoma State University for a cold and rainy homecoming weekend. The magnitude of OSU homecoming is unfathomable to those who have not experienced it, so a good time was had by all in spite of the weather. Linda and Bob stayed with us in Texas most of the next week and enjoyed playing, swimming at the Y, and being entertained by their granddaughter. We saw them again 10 days later when we all met in Tallahassee for Florida State University's warm and damp homecoming weekend. Both of our teams won homecoming and are also bowl bound this year with OSU headed to the Houston Bowl where we will cheer them on in person and FSU headed to the Sugar Bowl which we will watch from afar.



Holidays

We enjoyed spending Alex's first Christmas at home in Texas in 2001 and look forward to a joyful Christmas again this year. We are fortunate to have neighbors and friends nearby who help us celebrate the season. Carolyn and Lloyd joined us for Christmas dinner in 2001 and we joined them for Thanksgiving this year. We are heading to Florida to visit shortly after Christmas.

We have started an annual 4th of July tradition involving our friends in the area joining us for cooking out, swimming, kids playing, eating watermelon, and then viewing a spectacular fireworks display in Rockwall, Texas. The group picture gets bigger each time as new friends and new babies join in the celebration. We enjoyed the Burrows and Taylors joining us for the second time in 2002. We also welcomed the Koefeldas into our annual festivities.

Allie's first Easter was spent hunting for eggs, realizing there was candy in the eggs, then eating the candy in the eggs. We joined Anna, Greg, Ashley, and Anna's mom at their house to have Easter Dinner, play games, and let the kids hunt for more eggs.

Camping: Our regular bi-annual (spring and fall) camping trips with friends were once again eventful and memorable events. The first trip was scheduled for early April since Anna was VERY pregnant with Hailey and we did not want to get too close to her due date. It ended up pouring rain and most people left Saturday morning. Rebecca, Julie, Jerry, Jake, Joe, and us stayed on and played cards, played ball, and goofed around all day. Rebecca, Julie, Jerry, and Jake decided to head home Saturday night and the rest of us braved the cold and rain until Sunday. Alexandria was thrilled to spend so much time outside regardless of the rain and cold. We also went camping in October and it decided to threaten rain again. This time we were smarter and Joe changed our reservation so we could all have shelters to move into in case of rain. This seemed to make the rain gods happy and we all stayed dry when it did drizzle a couple of times. It was a great trip with lots of games, S'mores, and socializing fun.

Other Tidbits: We have a regular playdate with Anna, Ashley, and Hailey every week and have had fun seeing Cheryl and Natalie as well as Julie and Jake throughout the year. Alexandria spends lots of time with her friends Max and Max. One Max, a Boxer, lives next door, and the other Max, a mixed breed, lives across the street. Allie seems convinced they are her dogs and likes to throw balls, give pats, and get kisses. We also enjoyed going to the playground, the library, and the Wet Zone waterpark when it was open in the summer. Alexandria would love to be outside (playing with rocks, teaching grasshoppers how to jump, running in circles, swinging, etc.), shopping (which Caroline hates), or swimming all the time. Alex has also become very proficient at talking, walking up and down stairs, counting, coloring, e-mailing, talking on the phone, and taking care of her baby dolls.

In September, we traveled to Austin and San Antonio with the Burrow Family in Anna's new mini-van. The trip was a lot of fun including stopping for humongous burritos, experiencing Sea World, and seeing the Bats. Hopefully, we will make another trip together in the near future. Of course, if the Burrows end up adding another little one, we may end up having to rent a bus ☺

Job Front: Our professional lives continue to be rewarding with each of us working to keep a good balance between family life, work life, and community involvement. Liston is still with Allegiance Telecom working as a Senior Systems Administrator where he puts his technical genius and efficiency skills to good use. He also served as Chairperson of the Environmental Services Board for the City of Rowlett and is currently on the Lakeshore Takeline Appeals Board for the City of Rowlett. Caroline works two afternoons a week seeing private pediatric clients in their own homes or daycares and occasionally fills in at local nursing homes for Speech-Language Pathologists who are out. Caroline is getting enough referrals to be selective and is trying to build a bigger caseload closer to home. She currently serves on the Traffic and Safety Committee for the City of Rowlett. Alex has a fantastic nanny who works part time taking care of her while we are both working. The nanny is a native Spanish speaker and Alexandria is quickly becoming bilingual. They have a wonderful time playing together and we are so pleased to have found such a great person for Alexandria.

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