

Happy Holidays 2008



Belated Happy New Year!

We have a good excuse for getting this letter out late this year... I wanted to wait to include pictures from New Zealand! We spent the week of Christmas in Nelson, New Zealand. It was one of those “trips of a lifetime” that included paddling (kayaking), horse-trekking (horse-back riding) and tramping (hiking) – Kiwis use slightly different terms than we do for these various outdoor activities. If you’re interested in hundreds of “Christmas in Summer” pictures, they can be found at www.mtnclarks.us.



Although this trip was easily the highlight of our year, we managed to keep ourselves busy the other 51 weeks of 2008. **Ashlyn** (18) is now a senior and has completed all of her college applications. She is thinking about chemistry or journalism, but is clearly keeping her options open. Although soccer is still one of the major joys in her life, she has stepped back a bit from the hugely competitive soccer life. This fall she coached a team of ten-year old girls for the county rec league. Whew! It was quite the experience, but I believe Ashlyn was duly rewarded by the love of those girls (they dubbed Ash “Coach Awesome”). We could all use reinforcement like that! She also played on a showcase team, which she enjoyed, but it wasn’t really “the same” as nearly all of her former teammates are now off at college. Oh, and in traditional Ashlyn fashion, Basher broke another bone (this time her hand) while NOT playing soccer ☺. Ashlyn took on a few other challenges this year, including volunteering during campaign/election activities and learning to play the piano. She is very much looking forward to graduation and moving on to the next phase of her life.

Kehvon is also approaching a major transition, as she will graduate from college this year. She is busily interviewing at medical schools around the country and already has her first acceptance. I don’t believe she will make a final decision about where she will attend until March or April. Early last summer she spent a couple weeks in the Netherlands completing a “Chemistry in Art” class, basically learning about the chemical processes involved in art restoration and preservation. She was home for what seemed like 3 hours and then left to spend the rest of the summer at the University of Iowa completing an internship where she worked in a medical research lab and completed clinical shadowing experiences. She had quite the flood adventure being first relocated to a different dorm and then evacuated to a hotel. She has continued to serve as a Young Life leader and give campus tours and interview potential scholarship students and who knows what all else. She is one of the few people in the world who will probably find med school restful! ☺





Life is much the same for Norm and me. **Norm** continues to bless us with beautiful woodworking and knitting/crocheting projects. He has resumed a more formal soccer life, playing on three different teams and earning a silver medal at the state geezer tournament (I'm *pretty* sure that's what it was called). I have mixed emotions about this new endeavor, as at least one person gets hurt (as in "sent to the hospital" hurt) in every game and one of these times it's bound to be him, but he has so much fun and is getting in fabulous shape, so what can I do? Just make sure his health insurance is paid up, I guess ☺. As for **me**, there is not much to report. In addition to the other mountain races I have done for a couple years now, I managed to complete a 25K race (15.5 miles) up and down a mountain this year, which is a new "longest distance" for me.

We were very blessed to have my parents, my sisters and their families here for the holidays (yes, I know we weren't here, but my parents house and pet-sat for us). We did our gift exchange on New Year's Day (Kehvon's 21st birthday – yeeks!). Now we are recovering from jet lag and trying to prepare for the very busy coming year.



We wish you the very best in 2009! Norm, Heather, Kehvon, & Ashlyn
Here are a few more photos to fill up the page...



(left) Frenchman's Cove in Abel Tasman National Park, where we kayaked.

(right) Lake Rotoiti in the mountains of NZ



(below right) Adventures in picture taking (Nelson Beach)

Ashlyn, Marit (my niece) and Kehvon

