



MARLER

Christmas Newsletter



Volume 18

December 2008

Sorry this is getting to you late this year. We got a lot of emails wondering what was going on, so we figured we better get cracking. All is well with us it has just been a busy time of year as you will soon read.



We finished up 2007 with holiday parties and dinners with dear friends. It was a nice, quiet Christmas for the Marler family. Kristy was not able to decorate for Christmas 2006 as we had just moved into our new home, so this time she went to town. I thought we were going to blow a circuit breaker or burn down the house with all the lights in the house. The kids scored a Wii from Santa and have played with it all year long. We were able to watch the New Year's Eve fireworks on the Las Vegas strip from our master bedroom window. It was perfect; no crowds and no parking issues.

Once January hit we were back to our old routine. A highlight was when Jeff was named his Squadron's Flight Commander of the Year for 2007.

Unfortunately in February Keegan was hospitalized with seizures. After a few days she was released and we changed her seizure medicine to prevent more cluster seizures. Luckily Jeff was not in Iraq this time so it was easier to make sure Braden was taken care of. Jeff was very busy at work with a RED FLAG exercise. This was the first time CSAR helicopters had participated since Jeff had been assigned there and resulted in a lot of long days.

In March we traveled to Maryland to see Kristy's parents. Kristy's dad was planning to retire in the summer, so we wanted to get their house ready for sale. Kristy flipped/staged the entire house over two weeks while the kids enjoyed lots of attention from Grandma and Grandpa. While we were there we celebrated St. Patrick's Day, Easter and Keegan's 9th birthday. Grandma and Grandpa threw Keegan a Hello Kitty party. What a lucky girl.



While we were there we saw all the sights in the D.C. area. Kristy thought the White House looked a lot smaller than

on TV. Jeff made time to see his Officer Training School roommate Matt McGuinness at the Pentagon. Jeff has been in the military for two decades and had never been there. Jeff and Matt caught up on the last seven years and had a few laughs. Braden was in heaven while in MD as he rode on planes, boats and lots of trains during the trip. Keegan enjoyed the limo ride to and from the airport. She loved being able to walk around in the big car while it was moving.

In April Kristy celebrated another birthday. Not sure if she really celebrated being another year older, but she observed the occasion with dignity. Jeff had to travel to Tucson, AZ for an exercise planning conference. While away, Braden had a visit to the dentist. He has a strong gag reflex so we had to schedule him to be sedated to remove a few baby teeth to make room for his adult teeth. He was brought out of surgery loopy and loving the ride in the wheelchair. Before the month was over Jeff was back on the road again, this time to Colorado to attend Altitude Chamber training.

May had it's high and low points. Keegan ended up in the hospital again for more seizures. After adjusting her seizure medicine again, she was released. Luckily her hospitalization did not prevent us from going on our annual pilgrimage to Disneyland. The kids were upset that the "It's A Small World" attraction was closed for refurbishment, but enjoyed all the other rides especially the roller-coasters. Braden rode "California Screaming" 7 times in a row. Jeff and Kristy had to take turns to keep from getting sick. This year we stayed



in the Disney Paradise Pier Hotel. It was Hawaiian/beach themed. We enjoyed swimming in the pool after a long day at the park. We returned to Las Vegas just in time to finish the school year out.

As June began and school finished, Jeff headed out to San Diego for a week of flying over the open ocean at night wearing Night Vision Goggles. While he was there his hotel was right on the beach and the weather was gorgeous, not

hot like in Las Vegas. On trips like this Jeff loves being in the Air Force. Meanwhile in Las Vegas, the kid's summer therapy schedule started and the pool in our community was open. The kids love swimming and went twice a day. Even with SPF-50 sun block, Kristy and the kids got a nice tan. Jeff came home just in time to go on another work trip to Temecula, CA. Back to California, for the third time in a month, this time for a week of parachute jump training. Jeff is not qualified to jump so he clears the drop zone prior to each jump so all of the enlisted guys who work for him can jump as much as possible. Jeff does get some freefall air tunnel time so it is not without some fun. Keegan started to see a new doctor courtesy of Candlelighters of Las Vegas. Clinical Psychologist, Dr. Jo Velasquez, who specializes in neurological studies, planned to map Keegan's brain to see where the deficits were from years of chemotherapy, tumor and hydrocephalus damage and brain surgeries. Upon completion of tests Keegan would start neurofeedback. During neurofeedback probes are attached to Keegan's head and ears. Those probes connect to a computer game that gives her brain a workout. The computer software trains her brain to slow down or speed-up depending on the results wanted. Hopefully this will train Keegan's brain to function better.

It really got hot in July. Kristy and the kids spent most of their time in the pool. We went to the strip on the fourth of July, but returned home to watch the fireworks. We have a good view from our master bedroom of the strip even though it is over 15 miles away. Fireworks are shot off of the roofs of all casinos, so we get quite a panoramic view of the entire city. Jeff's mom, Lucille, and her husband, Doug, came for their annual visit for a bowling tournament. They were able to see how big the kids had grown and enjoy a dip in the pool with us.

In mid July, Braden celebrated his 11th birthday. We had planned to have a swimming party but thunderstorms rolled in and closed the pool. We loaded up the cars and took all the kids to see the WALL-E movie.



Braden and the kids had fun despite not being able to swim. Jeff and Kristy ended the month celebrating their 20th wedding anniversary by staying at the



Palazzo Casino on the strip. We got the total VIP treatment. We went to a very nice dinner at a French restaurant, saw Phantom of the Opera and went to Tao (a hip nightclub). When they finally woke up the next day, Jeff and Kristy spent a little time poolside before heading back to reality.

In August Kristy started decorating the kid's elementary school for the new year. She is the decorating lady on PTSO. This year the school implemented a school uniform policy. The kids can only wear red, white or navy blue. They look patriotic everyday and



picking out their outfit every morning is much easier, but it is hard to identify Braden and Keegan on the playground cause everyone looks the same. Right before school started most of our Autism therapists moved on, which caused us to scramble to hire a new team. As always it worked out fine and we found some great kids to work with Braden and Keegan. Jeff also returned to school. He enrolled at Embry Riddle to begin his Masters Degree in Aerospace Science. He really worked hard at managing a busy work schedule, his masters class and family life.

This year Braden is in 5th grade (last year of elementary school); he splits his time in a typical class (which includes "SPECIALS": PE, music, science, library and art), in Resource for academics, and in a secondary Autism room. Keegan is in 3rd grade with the same schedule. The staff provides familiarity, compassion and security for our kids. We adore them all! The kids have many friends at school and never find themselves lonely. It warms your heart to see the interaction!

By September, the kids therapy team was up to speed and Jeff was off again this time for Hurricane Gustav. Jeff is

one of the few pilots in his flying unit that went to New Orleans for Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Because he has experience with this kind of operation, his name was on the short list of pilots to deploy to Houston, TX. So while most people were enjoying the three day Labor day weekend, Jeff spent the weekend planning the cross country trip and actually left on Labor Day. Because the helicopters travel fairly slow compared to airplanes it took two days and 10 flight hours to reach Houston. The helicopter rescue force set up on the Texas Air National Guard base that President Bush was once stationed at. Luckily the hurricane was not going to cause as much damage as Katrina, so the helicopters were told to return to Nevada and prepare for the next Hurricane. So Jeff jumped in his helicopter and flew two days and 10 hours back to Las Vegas. Once he returned home he turned around and took off to Tucson, AZ again for another exercise planning conference.

Before we knew it October was here. This time Kristy was off. She flew to Colorado to help her Parent's decorate their new home. She spent 10 days there and left thrilled with the way the house turned out. She worked long hours and finished sewing the last window treatment hours before her flight home. Jeff finished his first masters class and two weeks later started his second. Jeff got a visit from one of his best friends, Todd



Johnson, who was in Las Vegas for training. Kristy returned home in time to help Jeff celebrated his 42nd birthday. He actually had a masters class that night so we had to schedule dinner and a movie for that weekend. Right about that time Jeff was honored with another award. This time he was named 57th Wing Flight Commander for the Quarter, third quarter, 2008. Halloween arrived. This year Keegan dressed up as a honeybee and Braden was an Officer of the law. He especially loved having handcuffs and a billy club to keep his Sissy inline.



In early November, Jeff volunteered to work at the Nellis Air show "Aviation Nation" again. Kristy and the kids opted not to attend because the loud noise of the Thunderbirds Demonstration Team. For Thanksgiving we had a small feast at home. Before we had even loaded the dishwasher with the Thanksgiving

dishes, Kristy had pulled down all the Thanksgiving decorations and started decorating the house for Christmas. Kristy worked on it all weekend. Thanksgiving weekend Kristy and Jeff normally work on this newsletter but it didn't work out that way and that is why you are getting this late this year.

December was here! Kristy was back to the kid's school to decorated for the holidays. Before the first week was over, Jeff left for Tucson yet again. This time he was there to view a Personnel Recovery exercise called ANGEL THUNDER. He flew one of the exercise's rescue missions while there. In Jeff's absence, Kristy threw a girlfriend's holiday party/ornament exchange. Kristy enjoys her girlfriends and all the laughter they share. When Jeff got back from Tucson we treated our therapy team out for a Christmas dinner and gift exchange. We are so grateful for having such great warm-hearted teens around us to teach and befriend our children. Jeff surprised Kristy by offering to take the family to Disneyland to see the Christmas decorations. We always go during summer so going in December is going to be different. The kids have talked about Disneyland non-stop ever since we told them. We will stay at the Disney Paradise Pier Hotel again and plan to see all the holiday decorations and parades. When we get back from Disneyland, Kristy's high school girlfriend, Suzee, and hubby Bernard and son, Quatro will stop by for a short visit. Kristy always looks forward to seeing Suzee. While Suzee is here we are going to see a Cirque de Solei show (Mystere) and go to Mount Charleston to play in the snow. The Marler family will attend a few holiday gatherings before and after Christmas day and look forward to ringing in the New Year.

This wouldn't be our annual newsletter without saying a special Thank You to special people in our daily lives: **Home team**~ Bethie, Robby, Richard, Jamie, Jessi, Tanner, Trevor, Ashtynn, Raegan and our Lovaas consultant Joe Donohue. **School team**~ Ms. Anderson, Ms. Erika, Mrs. Sandy, Mrs. Manning, Mr. North, Mrs. Stacy, Ms. Liz, Mrs. Graf, Mrs. Carlisi and our principles Mrs. Murray and Mrs. Cooper. **Medical team**~ Dr. Maller, Dr. Blum, Dr. Bernstein, Dr. Velasquez, Angela (RN) and everyone at Candelights of Las Vegas. All these dedicated people have enriched our children's lives and we will cherish them always! We feel so blessed to have so many angels among us.

We continue to have monthly Lovaas workshops, endless therapy hours (ABA, Speech, OT), neurofeedback and school. The kid's schedules remains full and we still enjoy seeing little gains in spite of their diagnoses. They are our greatest reward and we are so proud of them!

Remember, if you are ever in Las Vegas, be sure to look us up for a visit. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! Love,

Jeff, Kristy, Braden & Keegan Marler

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