

# Marler Christmas Newsletter



## 2011: What a Year!!

This year was very good for the Marler family. In January, we adopted a 5-week old male Pitbull puppy that we named Brogan which means "sturdy and strong". He is

extremely cute and quickly bonded with our 5 year old female Pitbull Bailey. Over the year he grew into quite a tall, strong, smart boy and once he matures and calms down Brogan will be a great



family dog.

In March, Keegan had her 12<sup>th</sup> birthday and to celebrate we went to dinner and to see the movie "Rango" with Keegan's best friend Michelle.



Jeff finished his last Masters class and was glad to have completed this 2½ year journey. The university would not hold a graduation ceremony until July so Jeff would have to wait to get his diploma. When Jeff left for training at the end of the month Kristy's dad came to visit and help



## Helicopter + Tornado = Half-Marathon

In late March Jeff went to Huntsville, Alabama to train in the UH-60M, the newest version of the Blackhawk helicopters he has been flying for 16 years. While he was there tornados hit northern Alabama causing a region-wide power outage. Jeff and his coworkers, Jim and Brian, relocated to Nashville to wait for the power to return. Once they arrived in Tennessee, Jeff learned that weekend was the Rock-n-Roll Marathon.

On a whim, Jeff and his friends decided to enter the half-marathon. In fact Jeff and Jim had never run more than 6 miles in their lives. Jeff did not have any running clothes so he bought a sports shirt and lycra running shorts at the runner's expo and called Kristy to tell her of his crazy idea. Brian, who actually runs marathons, gave Jeff and Jim lots of advice on how to survive their ordeal: drink at every stop and use the sports gels to keep their energy up.

The next morning Jeff, Jim and Brian showed up at the start line with 20,000+ other runners to run what turned out to be a course with LOTS of hills. Jeff and Jim convinced Brian to go ahead without them. Jeff and Jim decided to run as much as they could and walk whenever they needed to, which turned out to be the first hill.

The first surprise happened at the two-mile marker when Jeff realized his running shorts had come apart from the crotch area towards the back of his shorts. GREAT-only 11.1 miles to go. Because Jeff was running so slowly he was already over near the curb so the potential mooning was limited to the runners on his side of the road. At first Jeff tried to pull his shirt down to cover the problem, but eventually realized that the better option was to pull down the shorts (plumber's crack mostly covered by his shirt) in order to move the tear farther down his legs.

At the six-mile marker, Jeff convinced Jim to continue without him as he had slowed down to a pathetic wobble. Actually considering the hilly course and the "wardrobe malfunction", Jeff was pretty happy with his 10 kilometer split time. Jeff jogged/walked the last 7.1 miles drinking sports drinks and squeezing sports gels to keep hydrated and energized. Jeff would have been ecstatic to see the finish line if he had the energy to show any other emotion besides pain.

After crossing the finish line and collecting his medal, Jeff headed for the area where volunteers passed out fruit, water/sports drink and energy bars, but was afraid if he stopped moving his muscles would lock up and he would fall over and not be able to get up. It was about a mile back to the hotel up and over an arching bridge. Jeff hobbled back to his room and put water, food and his cell phone on the nightstand in case once he got in bed and could not get up he would have sustenance and a way to call for help. In fact he did not lock his hotel room door to prevent them having to break it down in case he called for help.

After a hour nap and an excruciating shower (diaper rash), Jeff shuffled out to the living room to go through his swag bag and ran across a small gel-filled packet of pain reliever. Because Jeff had left his reading glasses in the bedroom he could not read the extremely small print on the pack but assumed it was similar to the energy Gu packs he had eaten during the race. When he squeezed it into his mouth it was the strongest minty taste ever. Using water he was able to choke down about 2/3 of the pack, which he learned two days later, was menthol to be rubbed on sore muscles. Lesson Learned: before you eat something with extremely small print, go get your reading glasses: "For external use only. Contact Poison Control if ingested".





with the kids.

In April, Kristy celebrated her 45<sup>th</sup> birthday with a trip to Disneyland. Kristy's dad had a great time with his kid and grandkids. Jeff survived a tornado and a half-marathon in the span of four days.

In early May, Jeff finished his helicopter training and became the first UH-60M pilot in the USAF while Kristy completed beginner obedience training with Brogan.



Jeff remained in Alabama for three more weeks for UH-60M Maintenance Pilot training (first in the USAF) and returned to Las Vegas at the end of the month in order to visit with Kristy's dad before he returned to Colorado.

In June, the kids finished school so we surprised them with another trip to Disneyland at the end of the month. An annual pass made this very affordable.



In July, Jeff attended his graduation ceremony and was one of only two graduates to be recognized for a perfect 4.0 GPA. He was conferred with a Masters of Aeronautical Sciences.

On the 14<sup>th</sup> of July Braden celebrated his 14<sup>th</sup> birthday, with his best friend Katie, with dinner and a movie. Kristy



and the kids spent every spare moment in the pool trying to beat the hot Las Vegas heat. At the end of the month Jeff and Kristy celebrated their 23<sup>rd</sup> wedding anniversary.

In August, Kristy's sister, Kerri, and her family came to visit from Colorado. The trip was a great bonding experience with Christian and Connor.



At the end of August, Jeff returned to Alabama to pick up a new UH-60M helicopter and fly it back to Nevada. On the trip, Jeff was able to stop and visit his brother Kelly in Guymon, Oklahoma. There were quite a few people from this small town who came out to the airport to see the helicopter and take pictures with Jeff and the crew.

We finished out the month with the kids returning to school. This year both Braden and Keegan are in Middle School. They are in the same



classroom with an awesome teacher, Mr. Marsh, which Braden has had for the last two years. The kids especially enjoy riding the bus to and from school every day.

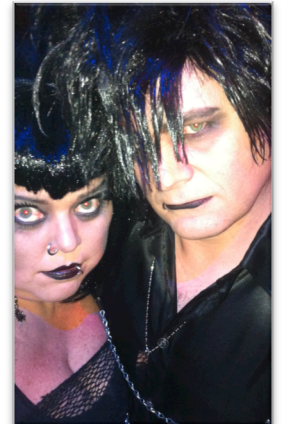
September was a month of getting back to our normal routines. After talking over Braden's academics and life skill levels with both his teacher and home therapy team we decided that Braden would stop ABA for the fall semester although Keegan would continue. Braden is thrilled with the

new routine and extra free time. An OU AFROTC college friend, Tammy (Martin) Pokorney, was assigned to Nellis Air Force Base Hospital here in Las Vegas. We have had a great time reliving our college days and rekindling our friendship.

In October, Jeff celebrated his 45<sup>th</sup> birthday with a night out with his favorite girl, Kristy. This year



for Halloween Jeff and Kristy decided to pick a costume that was the complete opposite of their personalities and so they decided to go Goth. Nobody recognized them until Kristy giggled. They went to MGM casino's Studio 54 for their Halloween Costume Party and had a great night out.



In November, Kristy decorated the house for Christmas and we spent Thanksgiving at the casino buffet. We also had visits from Jeff's brother Kelly and girlfriend Amber, Jeff's USAF friend Rick and Kristy's high school girlfriend Chrissy and husband Tony.

Now that December is here we have begun attending holiday parties and are eagerly awaiting Kristy's parents who will be here for the holidays and Santa's arrival.

This wouldn't be our annual newsletter without saying a special Thank You to our **School Team**: Mr. Marsh, Mrs. Mary and Mrs. Williams (the sweetest bus driver ever) & our **Tandem ABA Team**: Chris, Amanda, Nadene, Cambria, Christina and Pierce. We love you and appreciate your contribution to our family.

If you are ever in Las Vegas please give us a call. We enjoy visiting with family and friends.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you and yours...

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