

# Marler Christmas Newsletter



Of course we never intended to set a record for the latest Christmas card ever, but that is how it turned out. We have had a VERY interesting year, as you will soon read.

Kristy's parents came to visit us a few weeks before Christmas 2011, spoiling Braden and Keegan as grandparents have every right to do.



Jeff and Kristy took the opportunity to celebrate New Years Eve down on the Las Vegas Strip with a college Air Force ROTC friend Tammy Pokorney. Though we have lived in Vegas for 10 years this is the first time we actually braved the crowds to ring in the New Year on Las Vegas Boulevard. After watching the fireworks Jeff and Kristy started 2012 by heading to our room at the Wynn Casino and going to sleep. Hey, we are not as young as we use to be.

In February Kristy started taking Zumba classes three days a week and instantly became addicted. She was amazed at how difficult it was but really enjoyed the exercise. Jeff would walk with the kids around the indoor track while Kristy danced on the basketball court below.

In March our little miracle, Keegan, turned 13 years old. Of course we had to celebrate with a trip to our favorite place on Earth (Disneyland), with a souvenir pair of Mickey ears to remember the occasion. After the trip Jeff decided to sell

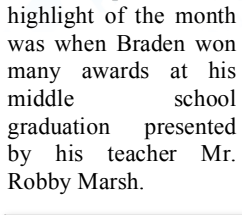


his much loved truck for something that got better gas mileage; a little blue VW Jetta.

In April, Jeff spent some time in California for work but got home in time to celebrate Kristy's 46<sup>th</sup> birthday. About the same time we got some interesting news. Jeff was scheduled to move in the summer of 2013. He was finally at that point in his career where he could take a staff job and so he called his assignment manager to see where we might be stationed. There weren't going to be a staff job for Jeff but if we were willing to move early there was a job at Ramstein Airbase, Germany. After talking it over with Kristy and doing some research to ensure the kid's medical and educational needs could be met, Jeff volunteered to leave his current job 9 months early and take a job in the Personnel Recovery Coordination Cell responsible for Europe and Africa.

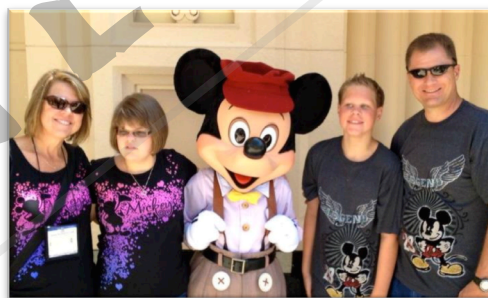
In May Jeff and Kristy went to a Cirque

DeSoleil type show for Mother's Day before Jeff went back to California for another work trip. The highlight of the month was when Braden won many awards at his middle school graduation presented by his teacher Mr. Robby Marsh.



June is the kid's favorite month as that is when school ends and summer begins. Jeff and Kristy put on their most authentic cowboy gear to attend a Rodney Carrington show down at the strip.

To celebrate Braden's 15<sup>th</sup> birthday early we went to Disneyland again for the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday, knowing that this would



be our last visit to our California home-away-from-home for several years. We all had a blast and got a picture with the kids' favorite person: Mickey Mouse. We actually took one day to go



to the beach and see the waves and play in the sand before heading back to the dessert. Braden's actual birthday was on the 14<sup>th</sup> and we celebrated again with his best friend in the world, Katie Wolfram and their family at a dinner for our two



teenagers. Jeff got his official orders to Germany so we decided to sell his Jetta as we could only ship one car to Germany and Kristy wanted to keep her Ford 500 that Tiger Woods won us in 2004. One horrible side effect of our move to Germany was we would have to find new homes for our beloved dogs, Bailey and Brogan. We were told Germany has a ban on all Pitbull dogs regardless of disposition. Though we did not want to we began to look for the perfect families for our four-legged children.

After Braden and Katie's birthday dinner, Kristy began to repack her suitcase for an once-in-a-lifetime trip to Northern Ireland with her dad and sister that they had been planning for months. Kristy, her sister, Kerri, and Dad, Jim, had a very robust trip planned to visit as much family as possible as well as



the beautiful sights that Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland had to offer. Kristy and Kerri were able to meet many of their relatives that they had never seen in their lives. They visited the Blarney Castle and kissed the Blarney stone; said to give you the gift of the gab.





They rented a car and drove around seeing the beautiful sights of castles and countryside and were able to visit places that they went to as children on their last visit around 40 years ago. Jeff took leave from work to watch the kids while Kristy was away, and was able to find a home for Brogan with a great family nearby. Unfortunately before the end of Kristy vacation, Jeff got so sick he had to call and ask Kristy to come home early. Though she missed out on several days of her vacation Jeff promised to make it up to her once they moved to Germany. August was a busy month. We found a great home for other dog and we said goodbye to Bailey, which was hard as Kristy was now home and had to personally say goodbye to her baby. The kids started school and had a lunch/movie date with their best friends: Katie and Michelle. This was also the last month the



kids would have after school therapy as they had both ready for life without ABA. They had both benefitted greatly from this intervention and have developed into fairly typical teenagers (Oh no-what have we done. Ha). Jeff had his last flight in a helicopter with his old unit and as part of a Jolly Green tradition had his feet painted green after landing. It took several weeks for the paint to come completely off. Jeff would soon leave for training, so Kristy took the opportunity to have a girl's weekend down at the Luxor Casino on the strip with some girlfriends.

In early September Jeff had his last day at work and left for Virginia for four weeks of training at the Joint Personnel Recovery Agency. An old friend from Jeff's days in the Infantry, Brian Griffin, called to say he would be in Las Vegas for his wedding. Brian's kids were the ring bearer and flower girl in our wedding in 1988. Unfortunately Jeff missed the wedding but Kristy was able to attend. After spending over 10 years in Las Vegas it seemed fitting that Kristy have an "Auf Weidershen" party to thank everyone for being part of our extended family in Las Vegas. Not everyone could make it but many family friends were able to have one last blowout at the Marler house. Jeff returned at the end of the month in time to drive the car to Los Angeles to get shipped to Germany and fly home to help the movers pack the house. After three days the house was empty and we were ready to start our marathon relocation to Germany. But before we left Kristy was able to attend Braden's High School's homecoming football game with the Wolfram family. We started our move to Germany by flying to Oklahoma to see as many of Jeff's family as possible. We also had the chance to see some old college friends while in our old college town, Norman. After five days

it was off to Colorado to see Kristy's family near Denver. Jeff had to leave for Florida after five days for Air Operations Center (AOC) Initial Qualification Training (IQT) but Kristy and the kids stayed for the whole month visiting with family and friends including her best friend of 30 years, Tina Akonom. Braden and Keegan were able to Trick or Treat with their cousins, Christian and Connor before packing for the last leg of our move.



The day after Jeff finished AOCIQT as the Distinguished Graduate, he flew to Baltimore, Maryland to meet Kristy and the kids to wait for their flight overseas. While we were waiting Kristy was able to have lunch with two high school friends, Julie and Val.



Finally after months of planning and preparation we left Baltimore on November 5<sup>th</sup> and arrived in Germany in the morning of November 6<sup>th</sup>. After too many hours waiting for our luggage to be released we were finally on our way to the hotel to try to catch up on our sleep and get our bodies adjusted to the new time zone. And this is where life threw us another curve ball....

On Veteran's Day, November 11<sup>th</sup>, Keegan came into our room complaining of feeling ill and began to have a seizure. We called an ambulance and Keegan was taken to the local children's hospital Intensive Care Unit (ICU) in Kaiserslautern where the doctors found she had an infection in her spinal fluid. In order to fight the infection Keegan needed antibiotics administered through an IV placed in her neck. Because the infection was probably inside her VP shunt the neurosurgeons removed the shunt she had had since 2006 and placed a temporary shunt, which quickly failed. Kristy realized it failed when Keegan went blind. The pressure was pushing on her optic nerve and preventing the signal from getting from her eyes to be processed by her brain. Kristy recognized this, it happened once like this in 2000, and told the doctors. The doctors had never seen a case like this but once they replaced the shunt Keegan's vision came back within hours. Unfortunately that temporary shunt pushed out and so did the next one, so the doctors decided to take the shunt and all associated medical hardware out and monitor her condition while continuing the antibiotics. The doctors wanted to get the infection under control but felt that constantly putting a temporary shunt in was reintroducing a foreign body into the infection area. Obviously Kristy and Jeff were extremely nervous as Keegan had had a shunt for the past 13 years and had just went blind when the shunt failed, but then a slight miracle happened. Keegan somehow began to drain on her own. She had a major headache for a week but after 12 hours, 24 hours, 48 hours, 72 hours and still not blind or



having seizures from increased pressure it seems that Keegan didn't need the shunt. The doctors think that during the last temporary shunt procedure they must have unknowingly broke through a membrane that now allowed

Keegan to drain spinal fluid on her own. They don't know what they did for sure but nobody was going to argue with the result.

Now during this whole time Kristy stayed with Keegan 24/7 while Jeff tried to in-process the base, find a used car and rent a home to live in and bring Keegan and Kristy Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner everyday. In the meantime Kristy's car arrived from the states, but Kristy still did not have her Germany driver's license so it sat on base while Jeff drove his used car. It turned out that our furniture was delivered on Thanksgiving Day and Jeff put it where he thought it should go.

Finally Jeff convinced Kristy (who just passed her drivers test) she needed to drive out to the house and take a break from the hospital after 18 straight days. Although she did not want to make her first drive in Germany near sunset, going to a home she had only been to once, with snow starting to fall, Kristy finally took the plunge and took Braden to our new home. Jeff arranged for friends to get him and Keegan whatever they needed for the next four days while Kristy unpacked a million boxes and rearranged every room in the house.

Keegan was eventually released from the hospital after almost a month and we were able to all go the house and sleep in our own beds. With both Jeff and Kristy in the house the real work began trying to unpack the remaining boxes and make the house a home. We also had to get the kids registered for school, set up doctor's appointments for everyone and Jeff had to start going to work.



Unfortunately with everything in such a state of disorder there was no way for Kristy to decorate the house in her normal fashion for Christmas.

We put up a single tree and had a very minimal Christmas. Kristy and Jeff decided to treat the first month in Germany as if it didn't exist and the beginning of our European Vacation really started in December. We had a very nice Christmas Dinner at Jeff and Kristy's sponsors, Martin and Adrienne Crawford, house and a very festive New Years Eve with a very loud fireworks show by our German neighbors.

So you can tell we have had an eventful 2012 and 2013 started off at a fast pace as well, but you'll have to wait 'til next year for that.

As we said before, we are sorry to send this Christmas newsletter so late, but hope that it finds you well and enjoying 2013 as much as we are. Obviously our contact information has changed, so please update your address book and please let us know if your information has changed so we can update ours as well.

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