

Life in Minnesota 14

Hello everyone. I just realized that I wrote last August '09 and here we are May '10.

So much has happened. How is at a new job, starting today at Imation, which used to be a division of 3M. He is their official PMP (certified program manager) for the consumer electronics division. Last February he was again laid off working in the worst environment imaginable. Leaving was more or less mutual. How was ready to quit anyway. So enough said about that.

The job hunt these last two months have been better compared to '08-'09. There were a lot of jobs available. How interviewed for 4 jobs and one of them was Imation. One of the other jobs might have relocated us or How to Santa Clara, CA, but the job req. got pulled. If a job opportunity came up for relocating, we would consider it seriously only to CA, that is. But for now, we're here for the present.

They're offering him a handsome salary, the most he's ever made in Minnesota, starting with 25 hours of vacation right off the bat plus an 8% bonus based on his salary if the company does well including him.

During the period I wrote last, I worked and finished the needlework on the 6ft. x 6ft. chuppah for Asher and Jennifer's wedding and April 3rd they got married in Nashville, Tn.

Jennifer is my new lovely daughter-in-law, in fact to hell with the "in-law" stuff. She's my daughter, period. At the rehearsal dinner, she gave me a gift of a handkerchief with the following embroidered on it: *"Thank you for raising your son to be the man of my dreams."* Okay...after that she strangled my heart.

Jennifer has a 3-year old son named Brayden who's a holy terror but we love him already. Asher met Jennifer when she was pregnant with Brayden so he's been in Brayden's life from the very beginning. Soon Brayden will be Brayden James Stolz, when Asher adopts him sometime this year. It's a coincidence that his middle name is also James. Needless to say, Asher is crazy about the boy and now he has the family he's always wanted. We'll have to think of a Hebrew name for him and his mom. Hmm...

All the months preceding the wedding was a little chaotic for Jennifer and her poor mother. The planning and organizing the best decorated set-up including flowers wrapped around the chuppah poles was an all out effort the night before and the day of. We had one disaster –all weddings do.

The wedding was at 4:30pm. Jennifer that morning went to the florist to pick up her bouquet only to find it was brown and wilted. "Oh just pick the brown ones off," they tell her. So the poor girl went and got some silk flowers to replace it and walking down the aisle no one would have guessed that she was holding a lovely round bouquet of silk flowers. It was a very stylish gathering at the Sheraton and the kids had the presidential suite (I think it was called) for the night. Brayden was adorable in his little tux; Destiny was a junior bridesmaid.

The interior of the suite was larger than most people's home. There was a living room, dining room and humongous king-size bed and room. They had a his and her bathroom, luxurious to the max including a large Jacuzzi tub, which I highly recommended they use when they would finally collapse.

We took the grandkids home to put them to bed and Monday following we drove back home to Minnesota, a 12-14 hour trip. We took the car because we transported the chuppah and the poles. We had a little DVD player on my lap while How drove and we watched/heard the entire 1st season

of West Wing –very entertaining and absorbing because the time rolled by so quickly. Besides the stops we made to gas up and eat, the trip was relatively easy and not long or arduous.

Backing up a little, our dearest friend Gene Carlock lost his courageous fight with cancer and died just before Christmas. Gene and How were college buddies, both got their degrees in industrial design and he was a successful designer running a private firm out of his home.

We had planned to see him and bought tickets to fly out, but things deteriorated rapidly. Cynthia, Gene's wife decided she wanted to do a musical memorial in January so we flew out late January for the weekend event.

We had no time to visit with anyone except I did sing Sunday services at First Congregational where I used to sing and saw Cheryl Anderson, the best ever work-harassed conductor on the planet. We barely had 5 minutes together, but it was nice to be with the gang again, even for a short time. They asked me to sing "Amazing Grace" as the introit for the service a cappella.

For those of you who receive this missive and live in Santa Cruz, we apologize we couldn't alert anyone we were in town. We were in and out because How needed to be back at work. Turns out weeks later he was out of a job and needn't have killed himself getting back. Hindsight is great, isn't it?

For those of you who don't know, I've decided to apply to graduate school to get a Masters in Clinical Psychology. I want to be a licensed counselor/therapist for seniors and be involved in compiling statistics and doing research to work on senior legislation both on a state and national level. But first things first...I need to get accepted first and come up with foundation grants or free money to pay for the 3-year program –2 years of class work, and 1 year of practicum, actually working with clients under supervision. I've been doing counseling anyway but I want the chops legally to do it and pass the national boards.

About the degree in psychology, when some of you went to school to do counseling, a master in social work was the only useful degree to have to do what I want to do unless you went for a doctorate. A master in psychology was a "useless" degree, but not anymore. As of January this year both in Minnesota and California, a law was passed to include people with LPCC licensure as a "mental health professional." Those were the key words that allow one to have a private practice and bill insurance. In other words it allows LPCC's (license to practice as a counselor/therapist) to bill particularly Medicare and Medicaid and maintain a private practice without being under supervision. And the new law allows reciprocity. That degree now has teeth and that's the licensure I'm going after.

I will still do my stained glass work but realistically, as I age I may have less energy to do the massive projects that I've done. Just looking ahead and prove what I've always told seniors –and that is they have more years for life-long learning and taking on a new career. Change is the spice of life and I like tasting new things...Love to all of you, Howard & Maria

May 3, 2010