



Christmas 2005

Duelm Family Newsletter

from Julie, Brian, Tony, and Brock in The Woodlands, Texas



Happy Holidays!

We hope this festive season finds you healthy and happy, with fond memories of the past year, and excitement for the year to come. We also hope you enjoy our family tradition of pictures and stories from the past twelve months.



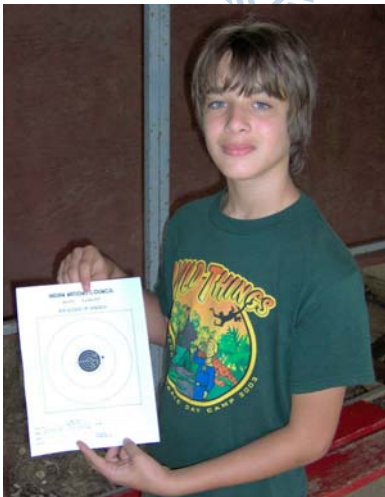
Tony - picking his spot

Note to Self: Skip Sophomore Year Next Time

Tony's sophomore year has brought two new adventures. First, the blood drains from my head daily as Tony takes the wheel in preparation for his driver's license exam. He's slowly realizing that real cars don't "drive" 200mph around hair-pin turns and jump over canyons, as they do in video games. We now vote for any political candidate who supports raising the legal driving age to 30 (ok...maybe 18 is ok).

Tony's second love has become debate competition, and he has been very successful at tournaments. However, we've noticed a downside. Even emptying the dishwasher now warrants a policy debate, and lately we've been accused of infringing on his civil rights under sections of U.S. Law that we didn't know existed. Now that I think of it, maybe they don't.

In sports, Tony hit his first home run this year, and did it in Babe Ruth style. As he walked to the plate, a teammate asked "Where are you going to hit it?" In good fun, Tony pointed his bat over the center field fence. He normally hits ground ball singles. After two strikes and ball, he got all of one and drove it...deep over the center field fence.



Brock - the marksman



Spring break in Santa Fe

Confirmed and Lethal

Brock was confirmed into the Methodist church in April. This warranted the only time in recent memory that Brock donned a sport coat and tie, replacing "cool" clothing that most folks would pass over at a thrift shop. I think "Cool" must refer to the number of holes allowed in a pair of jeans.

Brock also continues in Boy Scouts and earned his First Class rank this year, and is well on his way to Star. After completing archery last year, he took riflery this year at summer camp and scored nearly perfect on his first attempt. I'm beginning to wonder whether he has a career in weaponry, which makes me glad he also completed his First Aid merit badge.

This year also marked Brock's decision to play football for the first time. In an especially harrowing ordeal, Brock took a kickoff up the left side and galloped home free...until a large figure running equally fast in the opposite direction met Brock head on. The collision was audible in the stands, and Brock stood dazed watching stars and birds prance around his head while he regained coherent thought.



Tiger (in rear) and Princess

One Cat, Two Cat, Whose Cat? Your Cat!

This year we acquired another member of the family, and did it with drama. In January upon arriving at our friend's house to watch the Super Bowl, we found the neighborhood kids staring high up into a tree. There was a calico kitten, too scared to climb down and no ladder could reach her. Everyone had tried calling the fire department, but was told "we don't do that anymore." Well, that is until Julie drove to the fire station, and returned with the battalion from Central station and their 100-foot ladder truck. The great news was not that they retrieved the cat, but rather that we finished the entire fiasco just in time to catch the half-time show.

The Green Mile (or 800)

Each Thanksgiving we take our annual pilgrimage to the Midwest to visit with family. This year's trip would turn over the odometer, marketing the end of our 100,000 mile extended warranty. It was freezing cold in Indiana the night before we were to return to Texas. When we started the van, there was a loud pop, but no visible damage, so we started on our

journey. At the first stop for gas, we noticed a green fluid dripping from under the engine. Logical decisions aren't our strength, so with 99,100 miles on the odometer and several gallons of Prestone coolant in hand, we continued our voyage. Over 800 miles and 10 stops later (to add coolant), we arrived home with 90 miles left on our extended warranty. That was just enough for our local Mazda dealership to be dumbfounded (and out one new radiator thank you very much).

The Rest of the Story

When she isn't living at Starbucks, Julie continues to work the street corners making good money and practicing safe intersections as a school crossing guard. Brian continues to manage the Americas workforce development organization at Hewlett-Packard.



*Happy Holidays from Julie,
Brian, Tony, and Brock!*

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