



Christmas 2006

# 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 perfected his skill at the arcade, much to the delight of hopeful onlookers

## The Anti-Retirement

This fall we began to experience "anti-retirement." It's spelled C-O-L-L-E-G-E. Tony started the journey in earnest, taking an SAT prep course and then his SAT test early as a fall semester junior. He scored well, though will take the SAT again in the spring. The college process is different than in my day so we've consulted a college counselor. She recommended that parents should also consult a psychic, a psychologist, and most of all, a planner (financial, of course). We learned that TUITION is spelled with lots of zeros. So much for retiring before 90.

## The South Go Further South

As if living in Texas wasn't far enough south, this June saw Tony and Brock each take trips even further south. Tony joined a dozen youth from his church for a mission trip to Guatemala. They worked in a remote village in the mountains near Quiche, and while climbing the steep mountain from the airport, one of the vans gave up. Their week-long stay included conducting bible study for several hundred children and helping construct a church and Christian school.



Tony on a mission trip in Guatemala

Brock traveled with his Boy Scout troop to Florida where they sailed on an 80 foot yacht for six days around the Florida Keys and the Marquesis Islands. Each day was spent snorkeling and fishing. One day they decided to do both, throwing chum off one side of the boat and kids off the other. That brainstorm attracted several four foot barracudas to join the fun. Another highlight of the trip included the half-way stop in Key West, when we arrived just in time for gay pride week. You just have to wonder whether our adult leaders are due for remedial "youth protection training"



Brock and his good friend from Boy Scouts played against each other this season



Brock sailing in Florida

## Who Do You Live With?

Julie continues to work the street corners making good money and practicing safe intersections as a school crossing guard. The kids (and parents) have come to love her slightly off-beat mannerisms, including dressing in full costume for most holidays, or any time the mood suits her.



Unfortunately, we didn't take a picture of her costume this year so just included this one of her normal attire as mom of two, and often three, boys.

## Debate This!

Last year we reported that Tony was perfecting his debate skills (much to our dismay). This year he took those skills on the road, placing at multiple tournaments, and qualifying him for state competition. His specialty is cross-examination (CX), otherwise known as Policy Debate, and often at home called Parent Debate.

## Tackle by Brock

Brock continued with football this year, playing as middle linebacker. Yes, I said linebacker. Our Brock has added a bit of muscle over the past year. He enjoyed the new position, and frankly, it's been a great outlet for him to express rage that might otherwise be directed at...well...us.

## Who Lives With You?

Julie's mom joined our cast of characters this summer by choosing Texas over other great locations we recommended, such as other family members, a foreign country, and even hell. Seriously, she has been a good addition since one more adult balances our tag-team match against two teenagers. While Texas has become her home base, she spends just as much time visiting family and friends around the country. To help her get around, Brock designed this high-speed wheelchair for her by lodging his gas-powered scooter under the chair frame.



## The Rest of the Story

In other news, Brian changed jobs this year, leaving his role leading employee training to pursue a new career at HP as a human resources manager. He enjoys the new challenge.



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