

# ***BlogBooker***

From Blog to Book.

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# Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>7</b>
1.1	November . . . . .	7
	Come On Over To Our Pad (2008-11-04 09:03) . . . . .	7
	An Overview of October (2008-11-04 09:16) . . . . .	8
	Spencer and Tiffany Motorcycle Trained (2008-11-08 21:39) . . . . .	14
	Taylor's World (2008-11-11 09:55) . . . . .	15
	Sail Away, Sail Away, Sail Away (2008-11-17 12:05) . . . . .	17
1.2	December . . . . .	19
	Count Your Many Blessings (2008-12-01 23:27) . . . . .	19
	It's Me! Taylor! (2008-12-04 11:19) . . . . .	21
<b>2</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>27</b>
2.1	February . . . . .	27
	The EXTRA LONG Christmas blog post (2009-02-03 13:12) . . . . .	27
	You Are What You Eat (2009-02-09 10:28) . . . . .	41
	Neptune Subs, aka the reason Spencer likes going sailing (2009-02-09 14:33) . . . . .	46
	Happy Birthday Heather!!! (2009-02-13 16:14) . . . . .	50
	Welding 101: The Union of a Girl's Bike and a Weedeater Motor (2009-02-28 16:13) . . . . .	54
2.2	March . . . . .	57
	Taylor's Triple Terrific Tournament (2009-03-09 13:14) . . . . .	57
	Come Celebrate Emily's Suzuki Book 1 Party! (2009-03-11 16:25) . . . . .	58
	Emily's Book 1 Party, Episode 2 (2009-03-13 20:24) . . . . .	58
	Episode Three of Book 1 (2009-03-25 19:05) . . . . .	59
	The Finale (2009-03-27 09:23) . . . . .	60
	Spring Break in Nauvoo (2009-03-29 17:19) . . . . .	60
	Popcorn Popping on the I-Don't-Know-What-Kind- of Tree (2009-03-30 15:39) . . . . .	69
2.3	April . . . . .	70
	Tiffany Running as Fast as She Has Strength (2009-04-08 16:14) . . . . .	70

	A Couple of Noteworthy Items to blog out of Chronological Order (2009-04-10 16:12) . . . . .	77
	Preparations for a Perfect Passover (2009-04-15 11:52) . . . . .	80
	Easter Eggs and Baskets (2009-04-16 09:02) . . . . .	92
	Colorado, Denver South Mission en Espanol! (2009-04-28 15:59) . . . . .	99
2.4	June . . . . .	101
	A Little Spring Concert (Back in April!) (2009-06-13 13:35) . . . . .	101
	My Birthday in the Month of May (2009-06-16 12:23) . . . . .	103
	Another Family Milestone- Damon Goes to the Temple (2009-06-24 13:52) . . . . .	105
	A Baptism in Beaumont (2009-06-25 08:52) . . . . .	107
2.5	July . . . . .	112
	Fun With Grandma and Grandpa in Modesto, California! (2009-07-01 15:50) . . . . .	112
	A Janis Family Reunion and 50th Wedding Anniversary (2009-07-03 21:02) . . . . .	119
	My Little Boy is All Grown Up! (2009-07-16 11:44) . . . . .	128
	Fun With James (2009-07-24 13:32) . . . . .	137
	Elder Janis (2009-07-28 12:15) . . . . .	145
2.6	September . . . . .	154
	Happy Birthday Spencer! (2009-09-02 16:35) . . . . .	154
	Boys and Backpacks, and Little Miss Sunshine (2009-09-02 16:38) . . . . .	164
2.7	October . . . . .	167
	A Little Tribute to My Grandpa (2009-10-08 21:29) . . . . .	167
	Happy Birthday SrD! (2009-10-10 13:00) . . . . .	168
	Football Frenzie (2009-10-16 09:38) . . . . .	170
	Happy Birthday Emily! (2009-10-20 05:51) . . . . .	177
	A Rally in Houston (2009-10-22 09:40) . . . . .	184
	No Pina Coladas, Just Getting Caught in the Rain (2009-10-26 08:50) . . . . .	186
	Homecoming Week for Spencer (2009-10-26 09:27) . . . . .	187
2.8	November . . . . .	197
	Renaissance Festival (2009-11-01 15:47) . . . . .	197
	Happy Halloween! (2009-11-03 06:16) . . . . .	200
	A Tea Party in Texas (2009-11-06 05:50) . . . . .	203
2.9	December . . . . .	205
	A Great Thanksgiving Week (2009-12-04 06:10) . . . . .	205



<b>3</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>211</b>
3.1	January . . . . .	211
	Taylor Turned 16! (2010-01-13 06:57) . . . . .	211
	December With a Flurry of Fun (2010-01-13 07:18) . . . . .	211
	Taylor’s Tremendous Trim (2010-01-20 10:12) . . . . .	225
3.2	March . . . . .	225
	Catching Up (2010-03-24 04:54) . . . . .	225
3.3	April . . . . .	238
	Second Spring Break with the Bingham’s (2010-04-14 08:50) . . . . .	238
	Third Spring Break With the Brandon Janis’s (2010-04-14 09:22) . . . . .	247
3.4	May . . . . .	256
	A Trip to Utah (2010-05-12 09:40) . . . . .	256
	The Beaumont Gusher Marathon (2010-05-12 10:50) . . . . .	259
	Birthday in Beaumont (2010-05-26 09:56) . . . . .	262
	From Cumorah’s Hill (2010-05-26 10:09) . . . . .	266
	A Spencer Post (2010-05-26 11:11) . . . . .	271
3.5	June . . . . .	277
	Oh Danny Boy (2010-06-22 20:47) . . . . .	277
	Swim Team 2010 (2010-06-29 08:57) . . . . .	278
3.6	July . . . . .	283
	Our Fourth of July (2010-07-07 08:42) . . . . .	283
	TIMBER! (2010-07-07 09:13) . . . . .	286
3.7	September . . . . .	292
	Girls Camp (2010-09-14 10:51) . . . . .	292
	Family Vacation to Fort Walton Beach, FL (2010-09-14 12:18) . . . . .	298
	Cinco Ranch Football Season Begins! (2010-09-14 13:42) . . . . .	315
	Cinco Ranch Football Season Begins! (2010-09-14 13:42) . . . . .	324
3.8	October . . . . .	333
	Spencer is an Elder (2010-10-03 13:33) . . . . .	333
	BYU - Idaho!!! (2010-10-03 13:50) . . . . .	335
	Breakfast At Tiffany’s (2010-10-05 10:31) . . . . .	343
	A Possum in the Garbage (2010-10-18 14:43) . . . . .	350

<b>4</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>353</b>
4.1	January . . . . .	353
	Time to Catch Up! (2011-01-07 11:46) . . . . .	353
	October: A Nerd Dance and Emily's B-Day Party (2011-01-07 21:35) . . . . .	376
	October: Halloween (2011-01-07 21:52) . . . . .	380
	November: Trip to Ohio! (2011-01-07 21:59) . . . . .	384
	November: Taylor the Lumberjack (2011-01-07 22:42) . . . . .	392
	November: Thanksgiving (2011-01-07 23:36) . . . . .	395
	November 29 - Taylor is 17!!! (2011-01-14 15:23) . . . . .	397
	December: Young Women in Excellence Night (2011-01-14 16:33) . . . . .	399
	December: Christmas Piano Recital (2011-01-16 17:56) . . . . .	404
	December: Hanukkah, Oh Hanukkah, Come Light the Menorah! (2011-01-16 18:56) . . . . .	407
	December: An Epic Christmas Trip! (2011-01-16 19:17) . . . . .	410
4.2	February . . . . .	439
	The Janis Restaurant (2011-02-21 13:56) . . . . .	439
	A Garden is Growing in My Backyard! (2011-02-21 14:49) . . . . .	443
	A Manly Day (2011-02-28 12:49) . . . . .	449
4.3	March . . . . .	458
	Beaumont Gusher #2 (2011-03-25 09:57) . . . . .	458
4.4	July . . . . .	463
	Moroni's Quest (2011-07-15 08:16) . . . . .	463
	When You Believe (2011-07-19 20:03) . . . . .	464
	Happy Easter! (2011-07-19 20:16) . . . . .	465
	The Kemah Boardwalk (2011-07-19 20:28) . . . . .	472
	Branson, Missouri (2011-07-19 21:43) . . . . .	480
	Branson, Missouri (2011-07-20 16:58) . . . . .	490
	Nauvoo the Reunion (2011-07-26 07:05) . . . . .	502
	Summer Swimming (2011-07-26 07:43) . . . . .	513
	Paradise (2011-07-27 07:38) . . . . .	519

# 1. 2008

## 1.1 November

### Come On Over To Our Pad (2008-11-04 09:03)

Well, here we go!

Step inside

Glimpse our flow

Share our ride.

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Amy Coons (2008-11-04 13:22:00)

Hip, hip HOORAY!!! I am SOOOOO happy you have a blog!! I promise to check and comment. Don't feel bad if you post in spurts...I'll love reading/seeing whatever you do!

Shelby Bingham (2008-11-04 14:18:00)

Okay, Tiff, I no longer have my excuse that I am too old to blog. I have been thinking about doing a blog too. We'll see if I actually do it. I know my kids will be excited to see your blog too!

Kold\_Kadavr\_flatliner (2008-12-05 10:08:00)

Well, don't mind if I do, friends — You know this: the time of Christ's return is any hour, so puh-leeze spread this like peanut butter to alla your friends. If the following isn't too relevant, that's poifectly understandable; yet, Christ the King is always relevant if thou knowest where thou goest — Read the signs of the times (between the lines) and know God's a concrete, coherent reality (check-out 'Lui et moi' by Gabriel Bossis, too)! GOD BLESSA YOUSE -Fr. Sarducci, SNL

## An Overview of October (2008-11-04 09:16)



This is our table for Rosh Hashannah, the Feast of Trumpets this year. Pictured is a round challah raisin loaf of bread which I always make, a ceasar salad, and a plate of several varieties of apples and some pomegranates. There are also three little pots of different honeys which we dip the apples in, which is a Jewish tradition. Not pictured are the cornish game hens, pomegranate Italian soda, a homemade apple pie, and our family, a friend of Spencer's and the missionaries.

We start the dinner by listening to the Shofar blasts on the internet, discuss the holy days and how the Feast of Trumpets applies to our day,

the Book of Mormon, missionary work, and the gathering of Israel. Then we feast! It is always a memorable dinner.



We were busy this month with two Eagle

Scout projects. Taylor did a canned food drive for the Houston Food Bank. This place is amazing! It is the central storehouse that collects, sorts and distributes food to 400 hunger relief agencies in 18 surrounding counties here in Houston. They

feed 80,000 people each week! As part of his project, (and this was actually the end of September) Taylor sent a quick email out to the sisters in the Katy, TX stake and asked them to donate canned food when they came for the General Womens Conference. He expected to just sit for a couple of hours and get a couple of bags. We brought one of 20 boxes the food bank gave us, and after a 1/2 hour, he called and said he needed more. So I took 5 more over. The six boxes

were all filled! This was the first leg of his project. More later.



The same night Taylor was doing his food drive, (also the end of September) Spencer was going on his first date, and it was Homecoming. He took a girl named Crystal Elliott. They went in a group and had a good time.

Damon's birthday was uneventful for our family, as Damon was testifying in a stressful court arbitration all day. He was covered

in poison ivy from working in the front yard (how did that get here?!!) in- between sessions of General Conference the weekend before. He

wouldn't let me take a picture.



We took a 5-day trip up to

Dallas to participate in many events. First was a TCU/BYU womens soccer game in which

cousin Aubriana played very well! Then there was the BYU/TCU football game which was humiliating and depressing. But at least we got to eat at Risky's BBQ, our favorite restaurant in Fort Worth! All you can eat ribs! We ate a combined 118 ribs, (the equivalent of 5 cows) A couple of days later was a combined Eagle Court for cousins Ethan and Chad, and a beautiful baptism for cousin Laura. And bonus was the primary program the next day in their ward!



We drove home on Emily's birthday. We made a birthday cake and cupcakes and she helped decorate them. She got a bike and a webkinz, a book, gif tcard and money, all of which she was so excited about!

[EMBED] Emily is taking English riding lessons from a girl in

our stake and is loving it. The horse she rides is named Cisco and is an old ex-race horse. He is very gentle, but very big. She has learned to trot and post while trotting, and she is learning to canter. This last lesson, she had her first fall,



which I happened to get filming. (Click on the play button to see the video) She was trying to get him to canter and he kind of shied and bucked at the lead rope her teacher was swinging at him. But she got back on and trotted a bit after the fall and was very brave, even though it hurt, it was scary and she wanted to burst into tears.



Spencer's Eagle Project was doing a clothing drive for the Goodwill of Houston. He went to the Goodwill's main campus and met with the CEO who told us all about the mission of Goodwill, and showed us around. This organization is amazing as well. They recycle used clothing in their stores for a "premium" price. The clothing is in the stores for only 2 weeks. It is then brought to the main campus and sold in big bins for a fraction of the cost. It is only in the bins for 2-3 hours, where it is bundled and sold by the pound to overseas charities. The money they generate from selling is used to employ and train people

who have physical disabilities or other barriers to employment. They really do a wonderful service! Spencer made up a flyer talking about Goodwill to raise awareness about it and distributed it along with a note asking people to donate used clothing for his drive to about 1000 homes. Then on Saturday, October 25, he went around and gathered it up. It was fun, we had donuts and kolaches (a sausage in a blanket-type treat) and there was a lot of enthusiasm from his friends who helped.



On Halloween, in conjunction with our ward's trunk-or-treat, Taylor did another leg of his Eagle Project. He organized a service auction where the bidders bid for services donated by ward members with cans of food. The highest bid was 100 cans for 4 hours of dirt bike training. Guess who won that one? :) The auction was successful and this week, Taylor will be going to the winners of the bidding to collect the cans.



Emily was the only one who carved a pumpkin this year, as the





## Spencer and Tiffany Motorcycle Trained (2008-11-08 21:39)



Yep, that's right! Spencer and Tiffany took a two-day, 15 hour motorcycle training course this past Thursday and Friday. It was a lot of fun, though the instructor, Louie, was a bit colorful. (His language, and his florescent t-shirt. He had a tattoo on the nape of his neck, under his bald head, scary earrings with a big hole in the middle, pierced tongue, and a scraggly goatee -beard :)) We learned all the basics of motorcycle parts, safety, and driving. Two to three hours of classroom and five hours on the bikes each day. Spencer was in Heaven! It was a little scary for



me, but I got more comfortable as the time went on. Spencer, though became fearless fast! It was definitely an adventure! The first video is Spencer on the Ninja during lunch. Louie let him ride for fun when we came back from lunch early on Friday. The second video (much shorter) is me in the middle of a tight figure eight. (To view, just click on the play button, even though it looks weird, it will get clear and play fine.)

[EMBED] [EMBED]

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John&Sue (2008-11-09 21:24:00)

Wow. How fun. Mom and I will have to follow suit and take lessons ourselves. Thanks for capturing such a fun adventure.  
Dad

Amy Coons (2008-11-10 12:33:00)

Heehee. This was fun! You are always up for new things Tiff. Now I know what you want for Christmas!!

Spencer (2008-11-10 12:49:00)

this is spencer... yea my mom liked it, but she wont talk about it, i can only guess she likes it more than shes willing to admit :D  
My dad wants one, and i need a car cause mine just blew (another story for another time haha) and so im hoping to have one  
by the time yall are out here. dont get your hopes up though :)

Whitney Haslem (2008-11-13 10:34:00)

Go Tiffany! That's really pretty cool that you know how to ride a motorcycle. Those things are heavy! With Amy's present (a  
motorcycle of your own) you could be the driver and Damon could ride along piggy back!

Shelby Bingham (2008-11-18 18:20:00)

Tiff, you are always up to trying new things - this reminds me of the picture of you and one of the boys on a wave runner (of  
course you were about 7 months pregnant with Emily at the time!) I hope your kids will remember what a good sport you  
were!

### **Taylor's World (2008-11-11 09:55)**

Taylor is working on his Communications merit badge and has to teach a skill to someone. So he taught Damon how  
to knit a hat using the Nifty Knitter! Damon made it for Emily.





Taylor got a skim board for Christmas last year and hasn't been able to use it much this year. We took a trip to the beach in March when Brandon and Mindy and Daron and Heather cousins came out for Spring Break, and he had a blast. Right after that, he broke his pinky finger, so he was disabled from skimboarding. When he healed, we had another trip to the beach with Jeff and Shelby cousins and he had a bad skimboarding fall that ripped up his knee. We haven't been back to the beach since then. But yesterday, we had a huge dump of rain and Taylor saw some sweet skimboarding opportunities in the neighborhood and took them. He got Spencer to come take pictures and a video. So here, for your enjoyment is Taylor, and his skimboarding skills! (Spencer used the camera at a vertical angle, so you can watch this while lounging on your side:))

[EMBED]

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Amy Coons (2008-11-11 21:15:00)

First, is Damon smiling in the second picture because he is happy about knitting or because he is posing? :) Nice job!

The skim board video is great, especially lounging on my side! LOL!:)

### **Sail Away, Sail Away, Sail Away (2008-11-17 12:05)**

Last week we finally got back down to Seabrook, TX to sail. Ike ripped the harbor up pretty bad, but luckily the boats we use didn't get any damage. It was a perfect day for sailing! The wind was between 10-15 knots and we were able to get the boat up to about 8 knots. Taylor took the helm and put his feet up on it. It looked funny, so I had to take a video. Anyone interested for a December ride? Weather permitting, we'll set sail with any of ye land lubbers!







[EMBED]

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Amy Coons (2008-11-17 21:49:00)

I do love Enya!;) I liked the view you gave of the water. That looks so calming to be out there. And the pic of you and Damon is great!! Thanks for putting it up!

Shelby Bingham (2008-11-18 18:16:00)

Ditto to Amy's comments! I know Brian had a great time sailing with y'all this summer – glad to hear the boats survived Ike.

Whitney Haslem (2008-11-21 10:43:00)

Looks like so much fun! I'd love to go for a ride for Christmas if that's what your offering! Can't wait to see you soon.

## 1.2 December

### Count Your Many Blessings (2008-12-01 23:27)





I've had some realizations lately. One is that I am a complainer. That is a hard one to admit. But I am and I have a trophy case for some of the past complaints that I like to get out and polish occasionally. But General Conference, Thanksgiving, a sacrament meeting, and the scriptures have helped me see that I won't complain so much if I am grateful. In Alma 34:38 it says after a powerful sermon: "live in thanksgiving daily, for the many mercies and blessings which he doth bestow upon you." My heart has been more full and grateful since. I have also learned that if you are grateful, even in trials, your heart has more room for faith and trust in the Lord, and life is just good.

So we celebrated Thanksgiving and had an all-out feast! Shelby and Jeff and family came to share it with us and we had a great time! Spencer peeled a ton of potatoes, and Emily and Julie got to make the pumpkin pies with Rachel watching every step. Shelby made "Rita Rolls" and brought her freezer strawberry jam. Everything was so good! Even the white meat was juicy.

After dinner, we gathered and sang Count Your Many Blessings and each got a peice of paper and we counted our many blessings and shared some of them with each other. Everyone had very thoughtful lists.

I am grateful to have such a marvelous family. Each of you and your love makes my life wonderful! I am grateful for the gospel of Jesus Christ and the knowledge that I have a Heavenly Father who loves me and has a plan for me. That He sent His Son to pay my debts that I may stand clean before Him. That we have a prophet to guide us through this world of chaos, and that He gave us the Book of Mormon and other scriptures to hear His voice. And I am grateful for this beautiful, beautiful world.

The pictures are from our ward's annual Turkey Bowl, where it's Aaronic vs Melchizedek. The first picture has Spencer, Taylor and Brian in it. The second is Taylor playing QB (he got to be QB the three last hikes.) and the third is our Thanksgiving table.

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Amy Coons (2008-12-02 08:46:00)

Thank you for your insight Tiff. I really enjoyed reading this. Our family is very blessed. It will be good to see everyone (although am I going to recognize yours and Shelby's kids???)

Amy (2008-12-05 10:36:00)

What a wonderful post! Thanks for sharing!



**It's Me! Taylor! (2008-12-04 11:19)**



Taylor turned 15 years old on Saturday. It's been fifteen wonderful years of watching him grow, learn, and develop. He works hard, has self discipline, has a great sense of humor, befriends everyone, is dependable, optimistic, talented and successful in anything he puts his mind to. I love this guy! He is my friend.

I am going to do what Amy does and go down memory lane a bit with Taylor. The first picture is 2000, the next is 2001, and so on.













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Shelby Bingham (2008-12-05 11:19:00)

What a nice tribute to Taylor! We are so glad to be part of your life, Taylor! Have a happy year being 15!

Amy Coons (2008-12-06 00:01:00)

Oldy moldy Taylor!! :) Lookin' good, and I think my favorite, well, it was tough, but I'll choose the simple one against the fence. Loved reading this post!



## 2. 2009

### 2.1 February

#### The EXTRA LONG Christmas blog post (2009-02-03 13:12)

Well, it's been a long while and I have to post or I might never get back to it. December was a flurry of family and celebrations.

We celebrated sister Whitney's graduation. A BYU trivia game, a chocolate cake and the cougar fight song!





[EMBED]

Then we celebrated Hanukkah. Menorahs with candles burning, potato latkes sizzling in oil, the miracle of lights story, and a dreidel game made for a magical evening.



Then came Christmas Eve and the celebration of our Savior's birth. Great actors (shepherds with fashionable towels and robes, angels with silver garland halos, Elizabeth, Mary, and Joseph who did their part to the tee, and a darling babe in the manger) great singing and an especially great spirit!







Then a fabulous Christmas morning! I have never seen so many presents! It was glorious and a bit overwhelming. But we made it through the unwrapping and enjoyed our time on the phone with missionary brother James in Cicily!













December 26th we celebrated cousin Christian's birthday. I was too wrapped up in Christian's party to remember to take pictures except when cousin Julie was deep in decorating a fuzzy wuzzy teddy bear cake! I did get Christian after his nap on Aunt Val's lap on his b-day though, and some group shots too.









December 27th was a day I had been anticipating since Damon Jr. turned 8 years old: an Eagle Court of Honor. And this was the day of all scouting days, the culmination of years and tears, a triple Eagle court. We celebrated my three sons advancement to the rank of Eagle Scout. Grandma and Grandpa Janis, Uncle Roark and Uncle Daron's families came out, and the whole kaboodle of the Scott family (minus a much missed missionary) joined us in our grand celebration. TV cameras were there and an interview after the ceremony made me a bit tongue-tied. So many hands helped set up the dining hall and prepare foil dinners, which I can't say a big enough thank you to. I wish there was room enough for the slide show of the boys growing through their scouting years to be posted here. It was shown at the ceremony. I am so proud of my boys and their accomplishment!

















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Amy Coons (2009-02-03 22:45:00)

First, those foil dinners were SOOOO good and it wasn't because I was camping and anything would taste good...they were just good!

Thank you so much again for hosting such big events. My family and I had a wonderful time, always to remember. :)

Shelby Bingham (2009-02-04 09:12:00)

Yea!! I knew you would get some time to post eventually! Thanks again for all the effort for a fun-filled Christmas week! You must be very BORED now that all the scout stuff is finished up! LOL!! Talk to you soon!

The Scott Family (2009-02-04 22:02:00)

Lots of fun! Congrats to Damon, Spencer, and Taylor for accomplishing a major milestone in their life! Nice Janis family picture by the way!

Whitney Haslem (2009-02-13 12:32:00)

We had such a good time Tiffany!!! Thanks again for hosting all of us! We were quite the crowd. I love getting to see all of the pictures, Jacob and I were pretty big slackers this year when it came to taking our own pics. Congrats again to the buys for their Eagles. I am now waiting to know if I will have a little boy to go through the scouting program with...

### **You Are What You Eat (2009-02-09 10:28)**

Once the fattening holidays were past, Damon (to be known in the blog world now as Sr. D) changed his life. He needed to get his cholesterol level down in order to get life insurance which had expired, and January came with that goal. Last spring, when Uncle Brandon's family came for a visit, Aunt Mindy brought a book that has changed the way I eat, and it is what Sr. D is now abiding by. Fastidiously! For him, it's all or nothing, baby. This book is called Original Fast Foods and it has the most understandable, make-sense education on health and body systems I've ever read. (Not that I am a doctor or scholar on the subject or anything) Anyway, I have been mostly dairy and egg free and have cut back a lot on sugar and meat this past year. I am pleased about my waistline, and a chronic infection that has plagued me for 20 years has not returned this whole year.



But when Sr. D started in, it was even more drastic. He went raw for two weeks. Nothing cooked, all vegetables and fruit, nothing else. By two weeks, he was weak and constantly hungry. Then it was our Friday night date and he was pretty depressed about where we would go to eat and so took us to Souper Salad. They had gross baked potatoes (the kind that are sticky) and he ate it dipped in a little salsa. He was so happy! It was like someone had just put a Prime Rib in front of him. He felt full for the first time in forever.

So now he is enjoying life in a new way and food as well. Let me take you to our kitchen for a very brief look at our culinary changes.

This is Sr. D making our morning fruit smoothie breakfast. (One of the wonderful changes is that he is making me meals for breakfast and lunch!) He plops an apple, banana, orange, frozen blueberries, a little water and ice, and any other fruits sitting on the counter into the blender and presses "liquefy." He pours a cup for Emily then he grabs the tub of greens and shoves a couple of handfuls into the blender to whiz it up. Yum yum! I look forward to it every morning. It's like pouring life into my system. (Spencer is our photographer here and standing taller than ever on the counter for some creative shots.:)) Cheers!







For lunch he has found some great treats. A vegetable red curry over rice. It has coconut milk, red curry paste, pineapple chunks, tomato chunks, peppers, and bamboo shoots. Ooh good! He also shoves a salad into a wheat pita pocket with a touch of balsamic

vinaigrette . Pictured here is a fresh concoction he created with a sliced tomato drizzled with the vinaigrette , chopped fresh basil leaves and a bit of crumbled goat cheese. We found these crackers or flat bread that add a lot of good crunch to the meal. Sometimes we add a slice of avocado to it.



On to dinner (with snacks of nuts and fruit throughout the afternoon). This next picture is a homemade marinara sauce from the Original Fast Foods book that I made last week. It was ok . A little different. Damon liked it and I was ok with it. It had canned tomatoes, sauteed zucchini, carrots, onion, garlic all whizzed in the blender. For the kids I made meatballs that were less than desirable. I had one. So my plate is pictured.



So a couple of questions that might just come up: Results? and How are the kids eating? Well, the results are really great! Sr. D has gone in to a health clinic and had his blood drawn each week so he could see results of his sacrifice. His cholesterol has come down from 318 to 232, his triglycerides have dropped more than half. And he has lost 13 pounds since January 3, 2009. He isn't snoring like he used to and because of that, I think, he sleeps better. He has more energy throughout the day. He teaches early morning seminary and last semester his body was shutting down around 8:00 every night, including weekends. Now he is still going strong at 10:00. His clothes are starting to get baggy too. Sr. D applied for life insurance and a nurse came out to take his blood. (It took 7 pokes to finally get some! Heather can relate! Sorry Heather, that must be where you got it!:) He is confident he will be accepted.

As to the kids. They are being educated and understand the principles taught in the book, and are eating the dinners I make. They still like and eat junk, but I think overall, they are trending towards healthier eating habits. They don't like the green smoothies, but Taylor wasn't feeling too good this morning and so asked for it. Spencer has gone off milk and loves crushed Corn Flakes and almond milk that I make (virgin; no honey or vanilla. Just soaked or unsoaked almonds and water whizzed in the blender and strained).

So there you have it. A scientific study being conducted in the Janis household with good results. This has been a rather major focus of our lives this past month and finding new and delicious recipes will be a life long pursuit.

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Heather (2009-02-09 14:55:00)

I could not do no dairy or eggs. Just couldn't. We try not to eat too much of it, though. But we have been trying to eat more fruits and vegetables and less sugars and meats. I ought to check out the book and get some recipe ideas. The almond milk sounds yummy!

Amy Coons (2009-02-09 21:16:00)

Wow. I've got plenty of recipes with no egg/dairy, but most make up with it with sugar!! Wow guys! And Sr. D (love the name...was that you Tiff that created that?) congrats on the huge drop in your count. The eating habits worked!!!

### **Neptune Subs, aka the reason Spencer likes going sailing (2009-02-09 14:33)**

So sailing is relaxing and peaceful and educational and family bonding. None of those reasons rank very high on Spencer's priority measuring stick. BUT, after a good, or cold sailing adventure, we have a TRADITION! (I love traditions, and tradition is a very Jewish thing) It's called Neptune subs. It is a little sub sandwich shop that makes really yummy sandwiches. And the boys all like getting a hot roast beef, which is loaded with the meat. So sailing is tolerated and then comes the good stuff!:) Poor Sr. D and I. We used to share a hot roast beef, but now, sniff, sniff, he gets a plain baked potato and I get a dinner salad that is iceberg lettuce and tomatoes, and a soup, which Sr. D likes to dip his potato in. But that's ok. Life is still beautiful.

Here we are inside Neptunes.





This is the outside of Neptunes. Sr. D and Emily are posing.



Now, do you see the poster above the Janis Family members? It is a poster of a partial BALD guy. They change these out every month or so. And they are all known bald guys. Sean Connery I believe was one of them one month. Here is a little closer look:



It says Bald Monday. Now you might be wondering, "What is Bald Monday?" or you might be wondering, "What am

I going to fix for dinner tonight?" but I can only answer the first of the questions. Inside, they have fliers that explain what Bald Monday is and I took a picture of it for you!



The man who started the operation is bald and I guess celebrates it and it's just got character! So sailing isn't complete without a stop at Neptune Subs, if time permits!

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Shelby Bingham (2009-02-10 12:16:00)

That is so hilarious, Tiff! I say "You go, bald guy!" So Damon doesn't put anything on his baked potato? I told Jeff about your last post and he is inspired - not to go off everything, but to cut WAY back on the bad stuff and add WAY more of the good stuff and to get back to running again (it's been a month since he last ran). I need to go grocery shopping.

Amy Coons (2009-02-10 13:13:00)

I'm still laughing! That is so original. Really, really funny! Next time, go sailing on the first Monday of the month...that ought to be interesting!!

Whitney Haslem (2009-02-13 12:28:00)

Gotta love originality! Way to go Neptune Subs! Those sandwiches would have been fun to try when we went sailing for Christmas, but instead we all opted to go have a Texas treat for lunch, Whataburger! Very good stuff also, probably not as healthy...

## Happy Birthday Heather!!! (2009-02-13 16:14)

When Heather was born, I made up a little song for her that goes:

Hello Heather,  
How's the weather?  
Let's go together  
To the park!

Now she is 20 years old and I want to celebrate in this post by writing another poem to her.

H eaven sent for me to love

E verything glad in a girl

A perfect gift from above.

T ime ripples fast in a swirl

H appy memories all whirl

E ntwinning my heart and mind

R ound Heather to ever bind.

When she graduated to college, I put a slide show together of her, one picture for every year. I think one year is missed, but this is the slide show in a mini collage, plus three pictures from the last three years.

Heather, you have been a joy to raise and love. I love you!







Heather, the self portrait taker. This is a very typical, delightful picture I caught at Niagara Falls November 2006.



Heather the Beautiful! This was taken in Fort Walton Beach, Florida August 2007.



Heather and her sibs. She is sporting her stylin short haircut. Taken December 22, 2008.

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Shelby Bingham (2009-02-13 21:21:00)

It's hard to believe Heather is 20! I sent a Happy Birthday wish to Heather on Facebook - lots of happy birthday wishes from all her friends. I was reflecting back and realized that Heather is now the age I was when she was born. I had turned 20 just 6 weeks before she was born and got to be present when she made her appearance into the world - thanks for including me in that special time! I just can't imagine life without Heather! We love her so much!! Thanks for the beautiful post, Tiffany!

Amy Coons (2009-02-14 21:03:00)

Happy Birthday Heather! Did you have an "Old Lady" party like your mom did for #20? Hee hee. I think it's awesome that you share your birthday with G.Grandma Harris and you were the first GGgrandchild for the family. It was meant to be.

Tiff, this post was really great. I liked the poem for Heather, and I totally remember the "Hello Heather" song! My boys need songs like all your kids do...

John and Sue (2009-02-23 19:36:00)

I want to add my birthday wishes to Heather. I remember coming to Provo to help after Heather was born. Whitney and James had to come with me, so I always said that I was more of a hindrance than a help to Tiffany, but I had to be there! Heather was a darling baby and she has grown into a beautiful young woman. (It was so fun to see all the lovely pictures of Heather over the years that Tiffany posted).

I always felt that it was not a coincidence that Heather was born on Grandma Harris' birthday. I was the first Harris grandchild, Tiffany was the first great-grandchild, and Heather was the first great-great-grandchild. And we were all girls!

Heather has always been full of enthusiasm for everything she does and she is talented in so many areas. She has been such a blessing to our family these past 20 years. Happy Birthday Heather!

Welding 101: The Union of a Girl's Bike and a Weedeater Motor (2009-02-28 16:13)









Spencer has become fascinated with motors in all shapes and sizes, and motorcycles in every variety. So we sacrificed Emily's bike and our weedeater and let him be Mr. Edison for a week. He had to learn how to open up a bike chain, reverse the braking mechanism and weld. We rented a welder for a day from Lowe's. He hacksawed the pedals off the big gear and welded the motor onto the gear. It was pretty exciting, with each new obstacle and each new breakthrough, and he got it all the way put together! But he can't start the thing! He pulls the cord and the motor starts to turn, but because it's connected to the gear and rear wheel, there is too much friction and drag to get the motor to start. Ughh! He tried having Taylor spin the wheel holding the bike tire up and pulling; and he tried rolling down the driveway and yanking on the cord (now that was a funny sight!), but to no avail. So a very deformed-looking girl's bike is now gracing our garage. Don't know what the end of the story is... so stay tuned!

[EMBED]

[EMBED]

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Shelby Bingham (2009-03-01 14:01:00)

Sounds like an exciting project, Spencer! Can't wait to see if you can get it to work the way you envisioned it!

Amy Coons (2009-03-02 16:03:00)

Greg would have been right in there! I'm impressed with the welding...not necessarily that Spencer did it, but that Tiff and Sr.D let him!!!!

## 2.2 March

### Taylor's Triple Terrific Tournament (2009-03-09 13:14)



Taylor loves basketball. That is the fact. As I type, he is out on the driveway shooting and dribbling a ball. Since being in Katy, he has played in the Katy Youth Basketball program for the past 7 years and loved every minute of it. This year he couldn't play because he is too old. BUT! The stake put on a nice basketball season and Taylor was able to have enough basketball to semi-satisfy him.

Our ward did well enough to make it to the finals and on the last day (Sat. 3/7) we played three games. The first game Taylor scored 23 points in a 63-52 game! That was the game against the favored stake champs; they had been undefeated up to that point. The next game Taylor couldn't be stopped. He scored 25 points swooshing about 6 3-pointers. The last minute of the game we were down by one point and then the other team got the ball and drove it down for another basket. With 14 seconds left we took the ball down, and threw it to Taylor and he shot in 3 point range and made it, to tie the game. So in overtime, we lost, but it was pretty amazing. The final game we played the same team for the championships and they won by 2 points and heavily guarded Taylor the whole game so he only made 4 points. But what a great day for Taylor! It was great to see him in his element and on fire.

The first 9-second clip shows an assist by Taylor and a pick by Spencer. Spencer played the first of 3 games, but had a party to go to for the last 2. He played a great defense! The second clip is a basket Taylor makes. He is wearing a red shirt under the black jersey and Spencer is in a turquoise shirt (for anyone who doesn't recognize them).

[EMBED]

[EMBED]

Shelby Bingham (2009-03-12 09:22:00)

Great play-by-play commentary, Tiff! The games sound like they were very exciting and at times nail-biting! It should come as no surprise that one of Taylor's first words included "ball." (or was "ball" his actual first word?) Great job, guys!

### **Come Celebrate Emily's Suzuki Book 1 Party! (2009-03-11 16:25)**

I have been "teaching" Emily piano for the past year. She took piano from a Suzuki teacher in 2005 and had almost completed Book 1 when we stopped taking piano. So when I started up again, we started over and have taken a longer time because I am not as consistent as an appointed lesson. But we made it and she knows all 17 songs from memory. When the four older children finished their Suzuki Book 1, the teacher had a "Book 1 Party" and we did it at our home, the children invited any friends they wanted and I provided refreshments. They played all the songs in the book and it was a nice finale to their accomplishment.

So I have decided to have a Book 1 party for Emily on the blog to memorialize the Book 1 for all of posterity, since all of my children have accomplished this feat and I am so proud of all of them! This post will be the first 5 songs, tomorrow we will post 5 more, Friday 5 more and the last 3 we'll finish on Saturday.

The first song is called "Honeybee". Hold your applause till the end:)

[EMBED]

The second song in the book is called "Cuckoo"

[EMBED]

Next comes "Lightly Row"

[EMBED]

Fourth in the book is "French Children's Song"

[EMBED]

and finally, the last song of the day: "London Bridge"

[EMBED]

That's it for today, check in tomorrow for the next five songs!

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Shelby Bingham (2009-03-12 09:16:00)

(Clapping with enthusiasm!) Bravo, Emily! Congratulations on completing the first book! You made it look so effortless - isn't that the sign of true mastery? I know you worked very hard to get to this point! Keep up the great work! I look forward to hearing (literally) the rest of the pieces!

Amy Coons (2009-03-12 13:04:00)

Awesome! Love it! Keep going!

### **Emily's Book 1 Party, Episode 2 (2009-03-13 20:24)**

Well yesterday I got sick so we weren't able to get the next segment done, but today we did! (And I'm feeling much better!)

The first song is "Mary Had a Little Lamb"

[EMBED]

The next song is "Go Tell Aunt Rhody"

[EMBED]

Our next selection will be a tune entitled "Au Clair de la Lune"

[EMBED]

We will now be favored with "Long, Long Ago"

[EMBED]

And last, but not least for today is "Little Playmates"

[EMBED]

The show goes on...

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Amy Coons (2009-03-14 12:21:00)

Eric, Ryan, and I just watched your concerts. We love them! Awesome job Emily!

The Scott Family (2009-03-24 10:13:00)

Woohoo. Go Emily!

Love, Lauren and Val

### **Episode Three of Book 1 (2009-03-25 19:05)**

Well, it's been delayed, but here is the next series of performances! Emily will now favor us with a piece entitled Chant Arabe.

[EMBED]

Her next number will be Allegretto 1.

[EMBED]

For her third number Emily will now play Good-bye to Winter.

[EMBED]

Allegretto 2 comes next! Goody goody!

[EMBED]

And our last number of the day is called Christmas-Day Secrets.

[EMBED]

That's it for today's concert. The last two pieces in Book 1 will be posted tomorrow if all goes well!



## The Finale (2009-03-27 09:23)

And this is it! Better late than never! I got the footage done yesterday, but didn't get the computer to post it. The second to last song in the Suzuki 1 book is called Allegro. Emily will now play it for us!

[EMBED]

And now for the drum roll.....the last song!!! It is called Musette.

[EMBED]

Yea Emily! Take a bow and now... on to Book 2! :)

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What's up with Julie-girl (2009-03-27 11:35:00)

You did great Emily! I loved all your songs you played. I barely remember any of them. I'm still working on Book 2. Have fun on Book 2. Warning: very hard!

Julie:)

John and Sue (2009-03-27 11:57:00)

Wow! We just barely watched all of your recitals and are totally impressed by your accuracy and memory! Good Job, Emily!  
Love, G & G Scott

## Spring Break in Nauvoo (2009-03-29 17:19)



Well, we made a last minute decision to go to Nauvoo for Spring Break. We wanted to for a while, but weren't sure we could pull it off. But we moved forward, reserving a place and even seeing if Heather and Damon could get their schedules to work with it. And everything ended up working out to do it. We pulled out right after church, Sunday, March 15 and drove to Oklahoma City. We drove to Kansas City on Monday and met Heather and Damon at the airport. Then we drove 4 or five more hours to Nauvoo . We got there in the evening and went out looking for somewhere to eat and somewhere to buy food. Most places were closed and there were no grocery stores nearby. It was pretty remote. On the main street we found a diner open, though they were about to close and had just shut off the grill. But they fired it back up for us and we ate gratefully.



Tuesday we took a horse-drawn wagon ride around Old Nauvoo and learned where everything was and got an idea of the places we would like to visit. It was a pleasant ride except for the two guys sitting in front of Sr. D and Heather. One of them was rubbing the back of the other...the whole entire ride (25 min.). Taylor mentioned the other day that he still likes pink ties, but now he doesn't like pink shirts. When asked why he said one of the guys on the wagon ride was wearing a pink shirt. :)



Our first tour after the wagon ride was the Browning Gun shop. This was Spencer's choice. After going hunting with Uncle Kim, he got to know the name Browning really well and realized that this was where the original Browning set up shop, so he was impressed.

(Hopefully a picture of the Red Brick Store will be forthcoming)

Then I wanted to go to the Red Brick Store. It was March 17<sup>th</sup>, which is St. Patrick's Day and I knew that one family who I am descended from, James and Sarah McDonald, lived in Nauvoo, and were from Ireland! But March 17<sup>th</sup> is also the day the Relief Society was organized, and it was organized in the upstairs room of the Red Brick Store. So I definitely wanted to go in there on that special day. We got a few souvenirs and Spencer took a picture of me and Heather in the room upstairs. The store is owned and run by the Community of Christ, hence the souvenirs, but they were letting the missionary sisters have a special meeting there that night and they did a reenactment of the meeting, which I heard was really neat.







Wednesday we didn't get going and didn't do a whole lot, but we had a picnic at a park, Sr. D took the kids to the temple to do baptisms. I had brought a 1000 piece puzzle, so we worked on that off and on. We rented and watched October Sky and ate popcorn that night.  
(Hopefully another picture will be coming from Carthage)



Thursday morning we drove to Carthage, about a half hour from Nauvoo . There was a movie which celebrated the life of Joseph Smith through the writings and journals of those who knew him. Then we took a tour of the jail. The final room where he was shot in had a very special spirit, very reverent. I could have stayed there longer. In the afternoon we were back in Nauvoo and went to the Land and Records building and got a map of where James and Sarah McDonald lived along with other information about them. We went to the brick maker place, and the Scovil Bakery. We took a ride on an ox-drawn covered wagon and I did an endowment session at the temple while Sr. D took the kids down Parley Street and around Old Nauvoo more. After dinner we went to the building called the Cultural Hall and watched a musical put on by the Senior Missionaries called Rondeveau . It was hilarious! Very cute. The missionaries really made Nauvoo special. On every tour we went on they bore their testimony and I could just feel their love for the gospel and the early saints.





Friday we packed up and left Nauvoo . I didn't see nearly all I wanted to, but we saw and did much more than some wanted to. (The joy of history trips with teens:)) So I am excited to maybe go back someday and see it all. Before we dropped Heather and Damon off at the airport, we visited Adam- ondi - Ahman and overlooked the valley. It was neat to ponder the event that will take place there, the amazingness of the scene. We read some scriptures and then popped in the car and went to Liberty Jail. That was really neat too. The church has done an incredible job to make the facilities beautiful and inspiring, well kept and great presentations. It was sobering to ponder the trials and difficulties of the saints. They went through extremities we don't usually have to . We have our own and no matter what they are, they refine us and teach us and hopefully draw us closer to our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.





It was so good to see Heather and Damon and of course not long enough, but I am so grateful they could come. We said goodbye and headed to Oklahoma City. Friday we headed to Dallas. Cousin Chad was going to be ordained to a Priest, so we spent the rest of the weekend there. Fun to see family! Monday we drove the last leg and arrived at home sweet home and were welcomed warmly by our cat who couldn't stop purring.

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John and Sue (2009-03-30 17:04:00)

Wow, what a great trip! Thank you for sharing your adventures in Nauvoo and the wonderful family photos. Your family will have some very special memories of such a historic trip (almost back in time). Your perspective of how the early saints lived and the trials they endured will now be etched in your minds and hearts.

Amy Coons (2009-04-08 11:02:00)

I like reading all of it! I just told Eric and he said, "Naboo?" (from Star Wars). Memories for sure.:)

**Popcorn Popping on the I-Don't-Know-What-Kind- of Tree (2009-03-30 15:39)**



Every Spring I look out the window and what do I see? Blossoms popping on our backyard trees. They only last a few days and I think they are so pretty! Within about a 10 day stint, our trees go from bare to blossomy to leafy. I had to post a picture as I looked out the window. And now you can see what I see!

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What's up with Julie-girl (2009-03-31 20:20:00)

Those are very pretty trees. A long time ago I thought popcorn can really pop on trees but then I realize they are blossoms. Those are pretty blossoms. I hardly ever see them. Julie:)

heather lorraine (2009-04-02 16:36:00)  
i miss texas:( everything is still dead here.

Amy Coons (2009-04-08 10:59:00)  
Ooh, we've got popcorn here right now on all the flowering pear trees. I love it!

2.3 April

Tiffany Running as Fast as She Has Strength (2009-04-08 16:14)





On March 28th I ran in a 5K race that our stake (church) sponsored. I had started running one time around our neighborhood (approx. 1/2 mile) months ago and came through the door gasping for breath. Emily was really scared, like I would keel over any second. I tried it again after a couple of months of weight training at the YMCA and it wasn't quite so bad. (Although I noticed some unsolicited jiggling in the midriff section AND the back side which was disturbing!) Then at the beginning of March, when Sr. D was out of town and then sick, I didn't want to go to the YMCA by myself, so I picked up running around the neighborhood again and wondered if I could go further than the 1/2 mile. When I found out about the 5K, I set a goal. Each week I upped the run another lap around the street. (5 kilometers = 3.106 miles)





The day of the race was freezing! I don't know the temp, but there was a good, strong wind that blew right through me. I was nervous. I had only run 2 1/2 miles up to that point but figured I could keep right on and my adrenaline would push me through. Sr. D and Emily came to cheer me on and I did it! I didn't stop running the whole time. There were people I passed who were walking. Then they would sprint ahead of me, then start walking and I would



keep a slow, steady lope and pass them. It was funny.







The stake had many other things going on that day too, like a 1 mile family walk, presentations by a chiropractor, nutritionist, podiatrist, and a weatherman on hurricane preparedness; food storage displays, and the fulltime missionaries had displays up and helped out with the races. A hospital also brought over a moving lab to do free blood screenings to test cholesterol levels and I got mine tested. The results came back in a normal range. Whew! Sr.



D wanted to take a picture of the lady taking my blood, "so that I could blog it". So he took a picture, but I will spare you the image!



They gave medals for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place in age/sex categories and I came in 1st in the 40-42 "girls"! I think I only



heard them announce a 2nd place winner, so there may have been only 2 of us, but hey! I'll take it!

I had a great time and I have kept running. I run 3 times a week and lift weights twice a week. On the days I run, we go to the YMCA and I do arms and upper body for 10 min. or so and then I run home, it's almost 2 miles and it feels great. (Especially when I finish!) I can actually feel an increased strength in my heart, lungs and legs. And I don't feel those jigglies anymore!

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Amy Coons (2009-04-08 21:24:00)

Wow, wow, WOW!!! I'm so honestly impressed Tiff!! Running has NEVER been a forte of mine. I think I remember being part of a 5K in Los Altos with the elementary school or something, and I was mad once the race started and I realized how long it was going to be. I did the Easter Run once with the stake there too. You have now heard the two running-long-than-a-lap races I've ever been in. Sad huh? KEEP IT UP TIFF!!! (And what happened to the jigglies...did you get stiffer exercise clothes? :)

What's up with Julie-girl (2009-04-09 12:20:00)

WOW!!! I can't even run a mile. I'm not really a person who is good and fast at running. Keep up the good work. Julie:)

Damon Janis (2009-04-09 12:56:00)

I'm amazed too. I guess now that you aren't chasing toddlers anymore you need another outlet for all that extra energy.

John and Sue (2009-04-09 13:04:00)

I talked to you the day that you had been in the race, and you filled me in on your running, but it was so fun to now see the pictures! I am proud of you for being so dedicated (but I am also envious since I probably couldn't even run to the mailbox and back home again). Maybe now that the weather is getting warmer, Dad and I will begin walking in the mornings again. You are a great example to us - keep up the pace!

Love, Mom

Shelby Bingham (2009-04-10 07:47:00)

I echo Mom, Amy and Julie's comments - running just hasn't been my "thing" and you are very inspirational to us, Tiff! I did hear or read that having a baby is equal to running a marathon - so apparently I've run more marathons than Jeff (and Mom has us all beat!)Hahaha! Anyway, Tiff, you rock!

**A Couple of Noteworthy Items to blog out of Chronological Order (2009-04-10 16:12)**



I feel like I have so much to write about right now and I'm leaving things out! Emily was in a dance recital before we left for Nauvoo and I wanted to blog it, but so much keeps coming up! She has been working on these dances for almost the whole year and the three girls in her class did a really great job. They did a 50's funk song to the song "Ain't That a Shame" and a drill dance too.



We also discovered a possum living under our shed in the back yard! We don't know what to do with it. Spencer, Taylor and I saw it the other day nosing around the back bushes and we took some pictures. It's as big as a raccoon or big cat! Yikes!



I played in a string quartet at March Enrichment. One of the ladies in my ward who plays viola had taken a class many years ago and she had to write some music, so she did and we played her piece . She actually played the cello part on her viola, because we have 2 violinists and 2 violists and no cellists in our ward. It was fun to practice, but 1/2 way through the performance, we got way off and it took me a couple of lines faking it to get back on track and it still didn't sound right, but it ended OK . Oh well. Here is the live recording. It was a difficult piece in that each part was playing a different syncopation , and it wasn't always harmonious even when we played it right. So there were only a few spots I could identify where we all were supposed to be. The rhythm changed a lot which made it fun and challenging.

[EMBED]

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Amy Coons (2009-04-10 21:23:00)

Emily...I love it! Keep going!

Tiffany...since when are there 2 violists in any ward??? That's great! I've never tried to write music, have you? Wow. Yay for your group! I get super nervous if I ever play in an event like this. Good faking!:) That was something I realized pretty early on in orchestra...the clarinetists and flutists could "lip sync" the whole time but the strings? Oh NO! In fact, even if you are playing the right notes but your bow going the wrong way it looks like you're off. We've got it rough.

Shelby Bingham (2009-04-11 12:21:00)

Very nice! If you hadn't mentioned the faking part I'm sure I would have thought that's how it was supposed to be! :) I'm glad that we all have had some opportunities to play our instruments over the years!



John and Sue (2009-04-13 17:59:00)

I wish I could have been there to see Emily dance. What fun!

I got a laugh at your comment that the possum was 'nosing' around the bushes. I think I would have a hard time doing any gardening in your back yard - wouldn't want to come face to face with him (or her)!

How great to hear you play your violin again, Tiffany! The piece did sound very challenging, but you did a great job. Like Shelby, I couldn't tell that there were any parts that were faked. Bravo!

### Preparations for a Perfect Passover (2009-04-15 11:52)



This year since I am blogging I wanted to chronicle my preparations for Passover. This is a day like unto Thanksgiving. They are both feasts and thus have many dishes and timing start and end times and a festive table to set so that the whole day is one culinary accomplishment to make any homemaker proud to BE a homemaker!



On Thursday morning, April 9th, I began by preparing the 1/2 leg of lamb. (Normally I get a whole shank portion, but with less people coming and Sr. D and my substantially reducing our meat intake I just got the smaller piece.) I combine 1/4 cup olive oil, 8-10 minced garlic cloves, a tablespoon each of fresh oregano leaves and thyme leaves, pepper and Kosher salt, and rub it with bare hands all over the lamb. Then I wrap it in plastic wrap and put in the fridge for it to cure.



Next I prepared the chicken broth that would be the base for the matzo ball soup. Into a big pot went a whole pullet, carrots, celery, an onion, garlic cloves, a turnip, thyme leaves, salt, pepper and water to simmer for 2 hours. And the aromas of Passover began! MMM!







Boiling eggs for the seder and making charoset came next. Charoset is also eaten during the seder, or program, at Passover. It represents the mortar used by the Israelites to make the bricks while they were slaves in Egypt. It is made by peeling and finely chopping up apples, and adding , cinnamon, chopped pecans, and a little apple juice. It is very yummy!



For the table centerpiece I have had a tradition for many years of buying fresh flowers and making vases out of the matza bread used in the seder. Matza is unleavened bread, which is the only bread eaten at Passover reminding us that the Israelites had to leave Egypt so fast they didn't have time to let their bread rise.



Then I made the matzo balls for the soup. They are like dumplings and the soup is just the matzo balls and the chicken broth with everything strained, and it is soooo good. The balls are made with matzo flour, eggs, oil, salt and water. They are boiled in the broth.

I also made a sponge cake which turned out wonderful, but forgot to document it. Ugh! And the strawberry shortcake tiered in parfait glasses with the sponge cake didn't get photographed either. So we will just have to imagine the look and taste as best we can!



For the feast I serve lamb, small red roasted potatoes, asparagus, gefilte fish, and then strawberry shortcake for dessert. Sometimes I throw in a Caesar salad too. The potatoes are made by combining in a bowl the washed and dried potatoes, chopped fresh rosemary leaves, garlic (I use a LOT of garlic at Passover) olive oil, salt and pepper. Toss it around and put potatoes on a cookie sheet at 375 for 1 hour, turning occasionally. They are so delicious! I got a picture of the rosemary being chopped, but not the final product. Oh bummer! At this point I am trying to simultaneously set the table, finish the parfait dessert, get the potatoes in and make sure the timing is still good. So I just forget all about taking pictures.





On to setting the table. Many years ago I found some green and yellow dishes at Dollar Tree and thought they would make a perfect set of Passover dishes, and they do! I use them only on Passover and Easter each year and they are so fun! Besides the big seder plate on the table, I put small portions of the food we eat during the seder on each person's plate. Emily was a big help on this part of the preparation. There is some unleavened bread, a hard-boiled egg, a little horseradish, a sprig of parsley, and a spoonful of charoset. (the apple stuff) Grape juice in the goblets, miniature frogs scattered in the middle and two candles finish off the table setting.



The lamb comes out and the aromas are amazing to the senses. Sr. D carves (and picks) the lamb (his absolute favorite part of Passover). He gives any in the kitchen the first juicy bites. The full-time elders arrive, and we are about ready to begin the seder. But I am still trying to do the very last touches: get the asparagus on the stove, but not turned on yet, matches placed near to light the candles during the seder, get a bowl, a pitcher of water and a towel for washing hands during the seder, and pull out the token bottle of gefilte fish from the fridge. (Sr. D loves this and it is a very traditional Passover feast item, but the rest of us cringe at the odor it gives off:))



And Passover begins! Shalom!



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Amy Coons (2009-04-15 21:18:00)

Nice documentary Tiff! I'm so glad ALL the preparations turned out so yummy. :) Let me guess, the elder is making the "peace" sign to be festive...right? Peace...shalom...hmmmm...not quite it. ;)



John and Sue (2009-04-16 12:07:00)

Wow, what a great look at what it's like to prepare for Passover! First we got to experience Hanukkah with your family and now we get to see what you do for Passover. (I almost feel like I'm Jewish.) Thanks for sharing your wonderful family traditions with us!

Shelby Bingham (2009-04-17 10:53:00)

Your children are fortunate that they are getting to have these traditions (usually the father doesn't pass on the traditions as well as the mother and so they are lost). Hopefully your girls will continue the traditions and maybe you'll get lucky and have daughters-in-law who will have the same desire that you have had to continue them for your sons' families. Living nearby we have had the good fortune to be able to join you guys for Hanukkah and Passover! Thanks for blogging about it!

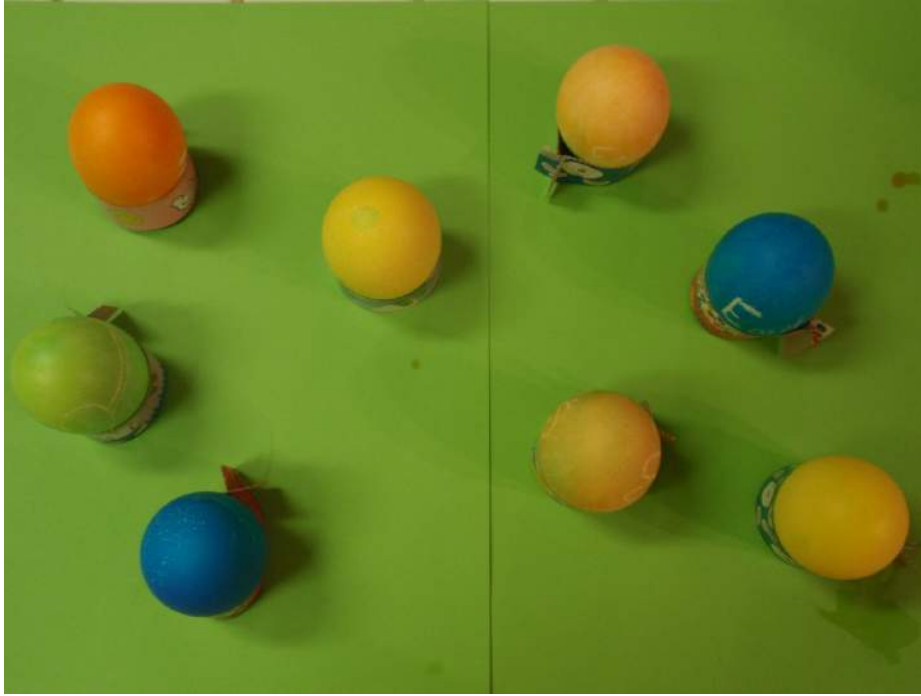
### **Easter Eggs and Baskets (2009-04-16 09:02)**



It's a little tough being the only one excited to color Easter eggs, but then again, there's no competition and all control. Emily and I set it all up. Taylor ended up coloring his in a jiffy when Emily was almost done. (Plopping them into the cups and getting on the computer) Spencer was at a party, came home at 11 and quickly dunked his for a light-toned pastel feel. "That way the color stays on the outside of the eggs."



But Emily and I had fun. She used the wax crayon, experimented with the colors and I just watched and took pictures, trying to be semi creative. They were so colorful. Instead of floral arranging, we tried our hands at eggal arranging.





I did not have it put together to do Easter baskets on Saturday this year, so Sunday was the day. We have church at 9 so the basket and hunt were short and sweet. The boys each got an orange Texas tie and a little key chain that said "choose ye this day" and Emily got a very soft, darling Webkinz Jr. stuffed dog. I had sent Heather and Damon an Easter box and we missed their participation.







The hunt consists of finding peanut m &ms all over the living room. Unsanitary, but it's not like the candy is doing their bodies any great good either. The kids came out about even and they were all courteous with each other. Easter is always such a good-natured morning at our home. I sang in the choir, taught Primary, made dinner, had a sister in the ward over for dinner, watched a Mormon Message from Elder Holland and talked with my mom on the phone. A happy Easter!



I know that my Redeemer lives and provided hope in this life and hope of eternal life. I'm grateful for spring and the new life and hope it brings and symbolizes!

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John and Sue (2009-04-16 11:59:00)

We feel your pain, Tiffany! Dad and I colored no eggs this year, had no candy egg hunt, or any Easter baskets to fill :( Life is different when your children get older or leave home altogether. It looks like you still had fun!

What's up with Julie-girl (2009-04-16 21:02:00)

You must have lot's of fun! Me, Jared, and Rachel were coloring eggs and we did lot's have pictures with a white crayon.:) I tried to put stickers on it but it just couldn't stick on.:( Oh well we had fun. We did you same Easter egg hunt as you did except we did chocolate eggs and our real eggs we colored and then we divided the chocolate equally. We had fun. But I wanted to make Easter Egg cookies and we didn't end up doing it. :( Oh well we had fun.

Julie:)

Amy Coons (2009-04-16 21:18:00)

Yummy M &Ms!!! We haven't colored eggs the last few years...a little nervous with Ryan...I've missed it! Nice job everyone!

## Colorado, Denver South Mission en Espanol! (2009-04-28 15:59)



Damon got his mission call on Friday, April 24th! He had flown home from BYU on Thursday and was still adjusting to life back home when I walked in with the envelope and announced it's arrival. He said, "Don't show me the postage! James told me that I would know by the postage whether it is foreign or stateside." So dutifully I kept the package in my custody and Emily and I covered the metered stamp in layers of masking tape. Then he said he wasn't prepared yet to open it. I wasn't prepared for that response. So we were all on pins and needles the rest of the day. Taylor had a youth temple trip and Spencer was at a lifeguard training session till late that night. And Sr. D and I had an all-day sailing training the next day. So Damon decided to open it Friday night after the boys got home.

Emily stayed up till she just couldn't keep her eyes open and lay asleep on the couch till Taylor arrived at about 11:15 PM. We woke her up and Damon called Heather and put her on speaker phone. He opened it and read it out loud, from beginning to end. "Wow!" was pretty much what his reaction was and then, looking at the camera, "Just for the record, I'm not disappointed, I'm really excited!" He feels really good about it, and is excited to learn Spanish. So then he took the tape off the postage. James said that if it was \$1.31 it was stateside, and \$1.37 if it was foreign. Well, his postage was \$1.34. We had a good laugh and thought it appropriate that stateside, but foreign language got it in the middle. But the rates have changed in the last 2 years since James left, so who knows? But Damon would have been confused nonetheless had he seen it at first.

On a personal note, my heart is full of gratitude for a son who has a strong testimony of the restored gospel and who also has a strong desire to serve the Lord and teach it to others. I don't take this great blessing for granted and feel to thank Heavenly Father for such abundance!

It was very exciting, nothing words can describe!

If you want the footage, here are the first 4 minutes I recorded.



[EMBED]

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Amy Coons (2009-04-28 20:10:00)

Damon, this is so awesome! I'm so happy for you!! I absolutely loved watching the video. Yep, even got a little teary eyed. I've never really gotten to listen to the WHOLE letter before (everything seems to stop after the first paragraph :) and it was inspiring. Thanks for sharing this Tiff. :)

Shelby Bingham (2009-04-29 11:55:00)

We are so excited for you, Damon! Thanks for sharing the video - I felt like I was actually there! :) You are a great example to all of us, Damon, but especially to the younger-than-you members of the family!

John and Sue (2009-04-29 12:08:00)

Wow, our first grandson has received his mission call! (Are we feeling old or what). It was so fun to get to see the video of the opening of 'The Envelope', it was almost as good as being there in person. We are so proud of you, Damon, for being willing to sacrifice two years of your life in the service of the Lord. You are setting the example for your brothers and cousins. We know you will be an excellent missionary!

Love, Grandpa and Grandma

What's up with Julie-girl (2009-04-29 12:23:00)

Congrats Damon! I can't wait to go on my mission. My Sunday School Class was just talking about going on a mission and being a missionary. If a move to Idaho then we would be close to each other. I think it would be cool to live in Colorado for a couple of years. This boy in my class asked "There is Spanish Speaking in Colorado?" I thought that was funny. Have fun Damon!  
Julie:)

Heather (2009-04-29 13:41:00)

Ack!! I hadn't even realized he'd already put in his papers!! WOW!! We're so excited for Damon! Love, Heather, Daron, Esther, and Nathan

The Scott Family (2009-04-29 22:24:00)

Congrats Damon - you'll be a great missionary!

aj&e (2009-05-20 07:54:36)

is he seriously old enough to do that yet? wait, are you two old enough to have a son old enough to do that? wonderful and weird all at the same time. we are so proud of damon jr and cannot wait to share in his adventure!

## 2.4 June

### A Little Spring Concert (Back in April!) (2009-06-13 13:35)



I have been a little occupied the past few weeks and May slipped by so fast! I will be catching up, because there is much to blog! Emily has been in a home school choir since a year ago January. The director is a home school mom that has 5 small children. The choir and director are mostly Mormon. Their group is called the Super Singers. They have a t-shirt with a logo on it and everything! At the end of April, they had their Spring concert for the parents. Then they went around to assisted living facilities and the Texas Children's Hospital for concerts. In December the Super Singers also had multiple concerts at the same facilities. I have been so impressed with Cindy Scott, the director. They practiced once a week for an hour and learned 10 songs. I have some partial clips of three songs that I especially liked that I want to share. It was a great experience for Emily.

The first song is Be Our Guest from Beauty and the Beast, with a few lyric changes to fit the group. It is always their opening number.

[EMBED] [EMBED]

This song I had to put in. It's The Rainbow Connection. It holds a bit of nostalgia for me, since I sang it as a solo in front of my Junior High School at the end of the year assembly.

[EMBED] This one is an upbeat song called We're Making Music All Day Long. It's at the end and they are singing in two parts.

Other songs included Tomorrow, Elvis' Blue Suede Shoes, Deep in the Heart of Texas, The Bare Necessities, Little People, a couple of others, and a song I had never heard called Everyday Heroes, which I loved most. So I have to

indulge anyone who cares to listen to one more. The words are really touching:

All around who can see, who is strong and who might be?  
Can we know who is brave, who will sacrifice to save?  
All around, who can see, what their fate is meant to be?  
People give, people care, there are heroes everywhere.  
Every day someone cries out, every day someone needs,  
Every day someone hears them, and listens and heeds,  
Every day there are heroes, people just like you and me,  
Every day there are heroes who never meant to be.  
People give, people care, there are heroes everywhere.

The beginning and ending are sung by the kids 10 and up, which was Emily and three other girls. [EMBED]

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Amy Coons (2009-06-13 17:57:36)

Eric and I loved listening! Very, very good! It's really great to hear kid voices singing so well. Awesome job Emily!

Shelby Bingham (2009-06-15 10:24:38)

I'm so glad Emily had this opportunity to be in a choir! I enjoyed all the songs very much! :)

John and Sue (2009-06-15 18:07:20)

Thank you for sharing Emily's concert, it was so fun to hear the songs. It has been many years since I last heard 'Rainbow Connection', but I remember how beautifully you sang it at your school, Tiffany. Emily's last song was especially pretty and the words very touching. Bravo!

## My Birthday in the Month of May (2009-06-16 12:23)



May 2nd rolled around as it does every year making me older. And as with each year of my life, I've learned a little more.

I have learned that counting my blessings and thanking my Heavenly Father for them can cheer me up fast and clear my head of negativity, doubt and fear.

I have learned that slowing down the pace of my life is so much more relaxing!

I have learned more about faith as an action word this past year. I truly had faith that the boys could have a triple eagle court of honor. I stressed and cried, but never gave up. And in spite of Spencer's initial resistance, and working around leaders' schedules and roadblock after roadblock, it came to pass.

I learned how to sail a boat.... and how to drive a motorcycle!

Being a Sunbeam teacher in Primary, I have learned more about Heavenly Father's love for me in the perfectly brilliant creativity He used to create this glorious world we have to live on. There isn't just one kind of tree, one kind of flower, one kind of animal, one type of landscape for us to admire and make this home pretty, there are thousands of different, unique, beautiful plants, animals, insects, flowers and terrains. The sky with clouds, rainbows and stars; our amazing, miraculous bodies. I feel His love more abundantly.

I'm glad I can still learn and that I have more of life to live and continue learning!

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Shelby Bingham (2009-06-17 09:44:21)

Words of wisdom - gratitude. Don't you love the new manual for Nursery/Sunbeams? Thanks for being my sister and friend!



Love you!

Amy Coons (2009-06-18 14:33:37)

Happy Birthday again Tiff! Thanks for sharing all your thoughts. Those Sunbeams are lucky to have you!!!

John and Sue (2009-06-20 12:41:59)

I'm sorry it has taken me so long to leave a comment, but better late than never:)

What a wonderful way to celebrate your birthday, by contemplating the things that you have learned during the past year. It is a blessing to know that no matter how old we get, we can still gain knowledge and (hopefully) wisdom. Again, Happy Birthday to you, Tiffany! What a precious daughter you are and always have been.

Another Family Milestone- Damon Goes to the Temple (2009-06-24 13:52)





The first tooth, the first step, learning how to whistle, read and tie a shoe. So exciting! But the milestones and firsts of later years: driving, dating, college, mission call, and now temple are pretty powerful. Each first that is celebrated in a child's life seems to be somehow associated with knowledge and freedom. And the more knowledge gained, the more choices and opportunity to express freedom and individuality. And the older you get those firsts come with

more responsibility.

On May 22, Damon Jr. went to the Houston Temple and received his endowments. Grandma and Grandpa Scott arrived in Texas just in time to be able to join us for a very special evening. I'm so grateful they could come and share it with us! (I can't find pictures of my parents at this event. Ugh.) I am grateful to have a son worthy to enter the temple and willing to learn more and take on more responsibility. And he took that very seriously too. I am so blessed!

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Heather (2009-06-26 12:54:14)

What a marvelous experience that must have been!

John and Sue (2009-07-01 12:27:04)

We were so excited to be able to be there in Houston with you when Damon went through the temple for the first time. It is hard to believe that we have a grandson old enough to be called as a missionary. Damon will set the example for his siblings and cousins. Thank you Damon for your goodness and willingness to serve the Lord.

Love, Grandma and Grandpa Scott

PS The pictures you posted are beautiful!

### **A Baptism in Beaumont (2009-06-25 08:52)**

















It had been months since we had been out to see our Beaumont cousins and what a wonderful excuse to do so: RACHEL'S BAPTISM!!! We went with Grandma and Grandpa Scott and had a wonderful time! The baptism was intimate with mostly family and a few friends. I don't think Tommy spent much time on the floor, he was passed around and around to eager arms! Church, good food, Weird Al, Pappadeaux, a tour of Beaumont, a veterans museum, slip n slide, Cracker Barrel, guitar jam session. It was so good to be with family!

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What's up with Julie-girl (2009-06-26 18:34:41)

I really loved the baptism and spending time with the family. We hope to see you soon.  
Julie:)

John and Sue (2009-07-01 12:14:32)

What wonderful memories we have of being there at Rachel's baptism and spending time with yours and Shelby's families. Thanks for the pictures and reminders of all we did to have a fun time together:)

## 2.5 July

### **Fun With Grandma and Grandpa in Modesto, California! (2009-07-01 15:50)**

On May 30th, we flew out to California and headed to Modesto for nearly a week to be with Grandma and Grandpa Scott. We had fun watching movies, going to the park, and relaxing. (Though I was still finishing up making a movie for Grandma and Grandpa Janis' 50th wedding anniversary, so I wasn't totally relaxed.:))Grandpa took Spencer and

Taylor out driving and taught them how to drive a stick shift. They thought that was great! And Grandma took Emily out to one of her favorite haunts: Yesterday's Books, a used book store, to find some old treasures. Emily also got to attend Activity Days with Grandma, who is the Activity Day leader. Plus we got a bonus trip to the chiropractic office for a line up of adjustments from Grandpa! It was so wonderful to be there and just hang out with them!!



Well, DDR is the thing to do at Grandma and Grandpa's house, and that is what Taylor and Emily (and sometimes Spencer) did for hours and hours. They really got a good workout!



There was lots of yummy food, "a veritable smorgasbord, orgasbord, orgasbord" every night! Taylor keeps talking about the best cake he's ever had!!





And a trip to Modesto would not be complete without a picnic dinner at Helen and High Park, which is what I always called it, though it is called the John Muir Park. (I just looked it up on Google Maps.) There was a guy there who had three dogs and he was throwing frisbys and the dogs were running, leaping and catching them. It was amazing to watch the stunts the dogs did. Emily was in awe and eventually was right in the middle of it throwing a frisby too.



We went to a place in Modesto called Boomers for some local entertainment and had a lot of fun. They have a rock wall, indoor video games, laser tag, mini golf, bumper boats, and the favorite attraction: speedway go karts! The kids -especially the boys- spent hours on them. (Sr. D and I had our share of speeding around the track too.) The weather was so gorgeous! Every time we go to California, California puts on its best display of perfect weather, and

my children are blown away.



What's up with Julie-girl (2009-07-03 11:54:10)

We had lot's of fun when we went to California. Also, we went to Boomer's too! I had lot's of fun there, especially the Go-Karts, Laser Tag and the Rock Wall. Me and one of my younger cousins were climbing the Rock Wall and I almost made it to the top but I couldn't do it. But my younger cousin did it. We had lot's of fun their.

Julie:)

John and Sue (2009-07-03 17:00:12)

It was so fun to have you and your family spend a few days with us this summer! It is a good thing that you all had computers and cell phones to help you pass the time (things can be quite boring in Modesto). Thanks for the great memories!

Amy Coons (2009-07-04 05:07:51)

I love it! Yep, always good food. :) Mom and Dad have been busy with visitors! And the stunt dog sounded really cool!

Amy Coons (2009-07-04 05:09:06)

OH, I also heard through the grapevine that Taylor is a DDR king. I love that you got a picture of it!

### **A Janis Family Reunion and 50th Wedding Anniversary (2009-07-03 21:02)**



Anybody recognize this place? I'll give you a hint: It's in Los Altos, California.





It was a grand reunion, and very fitting for the event celebrated during it: a 50 year anniversary! The forty plus Janis' descended on the lush, quiet city of Los Altos, CA on June 4th and checked into The Residence Inn. I don't think it will ever be the same again!:) The children quickly threw on bathing suits and jumped into the pool. The weather was very mild, but sunny. (If it had been in Houston, ALL Janis' would have jumped into the pool!)



The official start of the reunion was June 5th where we met at McKenzie Park, which was across the street from Grandpa Janis' old dental practice. Heather was the official reunion photographer and she was kept busy at the park with a family picture and smaller group pictures. One of the smaller pictures was Grandma and Grandpa with their grandchildren, which is always a circus act to pull off. (Sr. D took that picture) I had to get a picture of the parents trying to direct their children and help them smile, etc.



It is so fun to have so many children to love and squeeze and hug and kiss and take pictures of! This is Grandma and Nathan.



And it is so fun to have teens that were once the little ones running around, who now are so fun to talk to and listen to and laugh at and with! We took a historical tour of Los Altos, reading memories of Sr. D and his siblings of the different places they knew. (The first picture in this post is of my home on Avalon Dr. where I lived when I met Sr. D)

At the end of the tour we got a treat: an Itzit. It is an ultra deluxe ice cream sandwich with oatmeal cookies and the whole thing dipped in chocolate. I diverged from the nutritious diet to gobble a whole Itzit and it was amazing! Itzits were a favorite treat after a long, hot day of working in the yard in the good ol' days. In the picture: Chad, Spencer, Dover, Taylor.





The next day we spent at the beach, more specifically Pajaro Dunes. It was chilly, but fun. Grandpa's brothers, John and Paul came and his nephew, Jason brought a volleyball net and that was the hit of the day! In this pic, Spencer found some huge piece of seaweed and was playing with it like a bull whip.



Evan is a little warmer under the sand. Sweet dreams!





All of a sudden there were tons of birds attacking the water at once, so we assumed it was a school of fish that had just arrived for dinner!

The other highlights of the reunion were a movie night, a reception in honor of Grandma and Grandpa and a tribute at lunch on Sunday. I didn't get any pictures of it, but Heather did and I can't wait to get our CD!

The movie, which I put together, was a big hit thanks to Grandma and Grandpa for taking such great pictures over the years and also for the videos they both took and had converted to a digital format. They also consented to being interviewed on video by Allaire and gave the family such a treasure. The movie was also a big hit thanks to Allaire for doing the interview. It was such high quality! Thanks also goes to Heather for taking the wonderful picture of Grandma and Grandpa! And finally, Sr. D spend hours technically supporting me in the endeavor. It never would have made it to movie night without him waving his magic wand, or whatever he does to fix all of my mistakes, or the program's problems.

The reception was put on by Uncle Roark and Aunt Rebecca and it was a fabulous affair! Invitations were sent out to long-time-no-see-friends and there was lots of hugs and reacquainting. I even got to see my long lost friends Connie and Laura Moore! Grandma and Grandpa got to cut two cakes and feed them to each other. What a wonderful time!

The tribute was short, but full of love and emotion as each of their children talked about some part of Grandma and Grandpa's legacy that was important to them. Then they were presented with a picture of Christ and the sparrow, as well as two pictures of them that Aunt Rebecca had had framed. The reunion/anniversary was definitely an event to be remembered!!!

Just a couple of videos:

[EMBED] [EMBED]



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Amy Coons (2009-07-07 20:27:22)

Wow, wow, wow! I loved seeing pics of this event on Heather's blog too. It was a spectacular event for sure! Congratulations to Damon's parents!!

And I didn't recognize the house I lived in for 5 years. Once you mentioned it, yes, I totally remember the trees and what each of the windows went to, etc. But hey, I was 11 when we left, so it's been a while since I'd seen it. ;)

John and Sue (2009-07-08 12:34:16)

It was fun to see some pictures of the Janis reunion. We really enjoyed seeing a preview of the wonderful movie you and Damon produced for the reunion. You should win an Academy Award for your effort! It was fun to see a picture of our old house in Los Altos. Congratulations to Joel and Vivian for 50 years together and for having such a great family!

What's up with Julie-girl (2009-07-12 13:50:57)

I liked that video too. I thought it was excellent!:D Emily told me you had a fantastic time in Calif. I did not recognize that house which you probably know why.

Julie:)

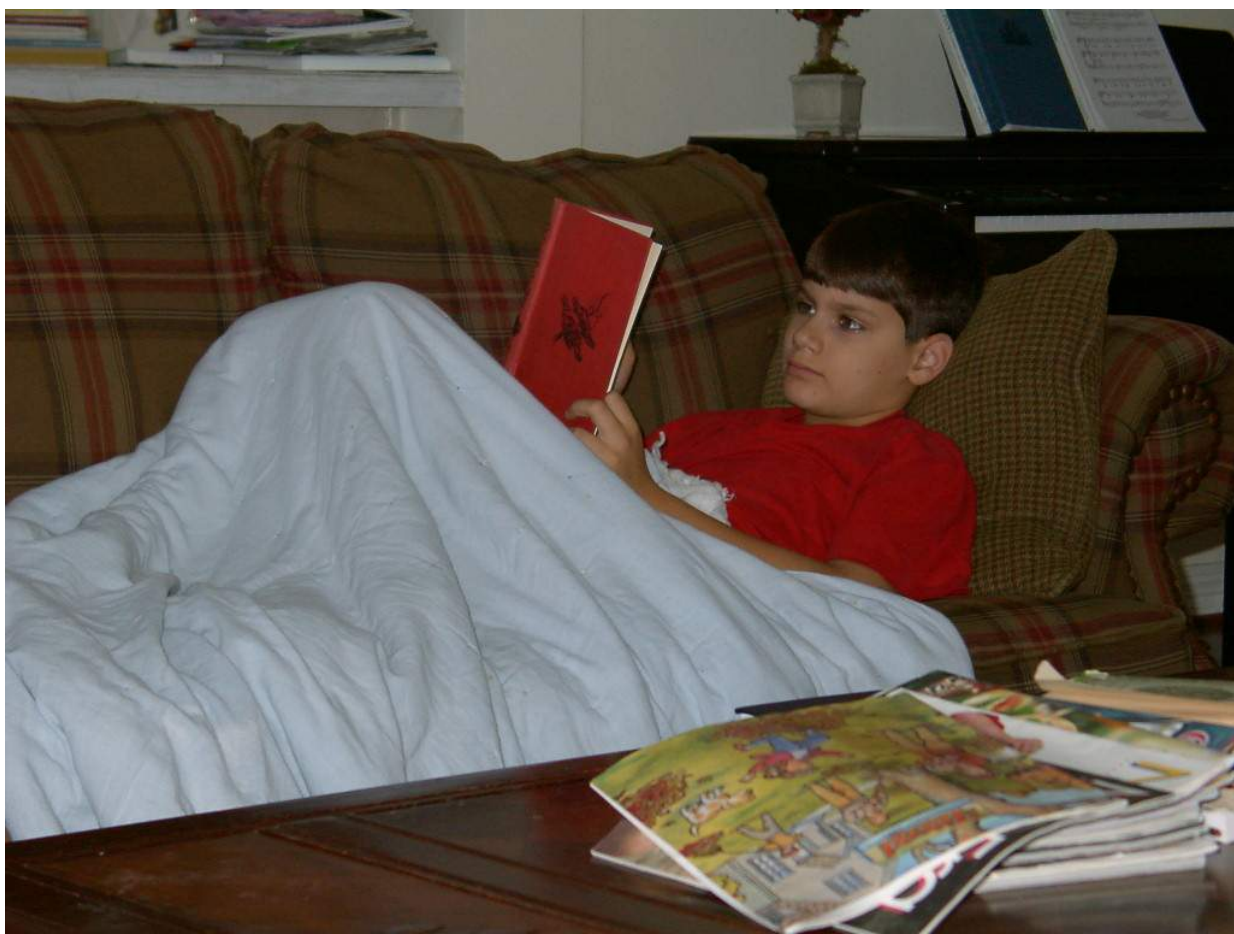
### **My Little Boy is All Grown Up! (2009-07-16 11:44)**



Damon turned 19 on Tuesday and he is all grown up. I feel sad that the times of him being part of my everyday life, watching him



play,



read,



create,





learn,



destroy,



swim,



and grow are over.



But I am so grateful for those times and will cherish them as I watch him leave, well prepared for what lies ahead. He is intelligent, kind, funny, strong, hard working, good looking, talented, ..." thrifty, brave, clean and reverent!"  
Seriously, he embodies the scout law and I'm so proud of him!





Happy birthday Damon!

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Damon Janis (2009-07-16 14:14:12)

Great post. It brought back a lot of great memories, what a great guy!

Amy Coons (2009-07-16 19:04:04)

Happy Birthday Damon!! Yikes. 19. You are going to be an awesome missionary Damon!!! And the pics were so fun to look at. ;)

John and Sue (2009-07-21 18:47:07)

I'm sorry that this comment is a few days late:( What a special birthday tribute from a mother who loves her son so much. We are all so proud of you, Damon, for your goodness and example. As you enter the MTC tomorrow you will be in our thoughts and prayers. We know you will be an excellent missionary.

### **Fun With James (2009-07-24 13:32)**

James, my baby brother, came to Katy after returning from the Italy, Catania Mission. He smirked at our Italian pronunciations, burned on the boat in the Gulf, played some sweet football and basketball with the boys, got some time in for World of Warcraft , and made a royal lasagna fit for Giorgio Napolitano (President of Italy-I looked it up)!



Sailing, I peppered him with questions about his mission, of the jalapeno variety, that's why he burned. But I was totally hanging on every word. He had a fantastic mission and was a SUPER missionary!





At Kemah , where the boat floats, there is a boardwalk, and the kids wanted some fun on the rides. And being in the spoil-my-kids-rotten-mood, we said OK! I got a picture of Uncle Jeff and Rachel on Pharaoh's Fury. See Jeff wave. (He's on the left) I thought I'd get a closer picture of them and my camera was a little off. Have you ever had that happen? Not quick enough, so I got





a GREAT picture of another couple! Too fantastic to not post.



James enjoyed a foot long

coney while Shelby had an interesting discussion with Sr. D.



We found some "stinky cheese," (sharp provolone) for the lasagna and no one but Jared minded.:)



Iron Chefolio watch out!!!





[EMBED]

It was so fun to have him here, and it was too short, but as they say in San Antonio, "Remember the Alamo!"

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Damon Janis (2009-07-24 15:14:44)

Great pictures and creativity, Tiff.

It was great having James with us for a few days.

Amy Coons (2009-07-24 20:11:01)

Oh, I wish I was there!!! The sailing looks great. James' lasagna looks awesome. :) That is so great that he saw yours and Shelby's families together. PAR-TY!!

(And the ride pics were funny. I did click on the one and saw Jeff waving. On the other, did the couple pose for you? Too funny!)

What's up with Julie-girl (2009-07-24 20:49:34)

I loved that time with James, we had lot's of fun. I really liked the sailing and the rides at the park near by. I never went on that ride my dad and Rachel went on. At first it looked scary but now it looks like a lot of fun. We need to go very soon!!!!

Julie:)

John and Sue (2009-07-27 17:19:52)

Thank you, Tiffany, for posting the fun pictures and commentary about James trip to Texas. He had a wonderful time with you and your family and with Shelby and her family. (We checked on the close up of Jeff waving - very funny!) Thanks again for all you did for James!

Elder Janis (2009-07-28 12:15)



Well it has finally happened. The long-awaited event that we have been preparing for for the past nineteen years, and more intensely for the past few months...Damon's mission. There were many goodbyes he said for several days

up until the last moment before heading into the doors of the MTC.



Bye Emily!



Bye Dad!





Bye Taylor!

Spencer had work very early and that goodbye was faster than a speeding mother to her camera!

Damon and I flew to Utah on Monday, July 20, and stayed in Provo at Grandma and Grandpa Janis' (who were still in Katy). We spent time with Heather and saw Jacob and Whitney, a friend, Justin, Aubriana and her friends, and a bit with Grandma and Grandpa before he went in.

We also went shopping at Mr. Mac. Damon loved it and highly recommends that place! They outfitted him in 2 suits, 5 ties, 8 shirts, 2 pairs of shoes, and a few other basics in one hour and 15 minutes! He loves all of his clothes and told me he just wanted to put them on when he was packing them in his luggage the day before.

Funny story: At Mr. Mac, there was this other father and mother with a son getting ready for a mission and I asked them where he was going. They said Colorado, Denver South. I said so was my son! Their son was not going to speak Spanish, though. Then I asked them where they were from and they said Houston! They are in a neighboring stake. Later, she asked if I know a family she knows and of course I did, they are in my ward and I visit taught with her. Another story to prove the smallness of the world in the church.

An hour before Damon went in the MTC, Heather took about 100 pictures. She has posted some of them on her blog <http://heatherlorraine.blogspot.com/2009/07/damon-missionary.html>. That was fun!



Then it was time to go. He was anxious to be there right on time. So we loaded up the car...and drove the one mile to the MTC.



There were two missionaries waiting for us when we pulled up to "station #9" at the curb. One took Damon's luggage while the other one took our picture.



Then it was the final goodbyes. Goodbye Grandma and Grandpa!





Goodbye Heather!





Goodbye Mom!

And then he turned, squared his shoulders, and walked to the door to begin his two year dedicated service to the Lord.



I have to say it was not as hard to say goodbye out on the curb in the beautiful sunshine as it would have been inside after a sentimental movie, so I was grateful for that, but the day was harder than I thought, as I teared up many times that afternoon and evening. But I have so much to be grateful for: a son who is willing and excited and ready to serve, a loving Heavenly Father who willingly sent His Son to His mission, Joseph Smith and the other early saints

who sacrificed so much to bring the gospel back in its fullness, and my Savior who sacrificed His life that I might have eternal blessings. But I do miss him.

It's been 7 days since he went in and we got his first letter (email)! He started a blog before going in the MTC. We will manage it while he's gone. He will email his "friends and family" letter to us, and we will post it on his blog along with any pictures he sends. So if you want to keep up with his mission, just go to <http://damonsmission.blogspot.com/>. His first letter is already up! So is his MTC address and his email address. You can email him, but he can't email anyone but immediate family (parents and siblings), so send him your address and he will reply by post. He already said he would LOVE letters!

There is a service that you can sign up for while he's in the MTC, and letters are free and delivered at 12:00 each weekday, so he gets them speedy delivery, not like regular mail or even email, because he only has 30 min. once a week on a computer. The service is called [dearelder.com](http://dearelder.com).

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Amy Coons (2009-07-28 22:07:42)

I liked reading all about this major event! I've checked out the blog and it is SO great! Awesome idea Damon!! I was glad to read that sunny day on the curb wasn't an awful situation, but o.k.! Damon's going to be a wonderful missionary, I know it. (You look really cute too Tiff.)

## 2.6 September

### Happy Birthday Spencer! (2009-09-02 16:35)

Yesterday we celebrated Spencer's 17th birthday! (Now it's been about a month. Life has been crazy!) It's truly amazing how time flies. He is a senior and driving and sounds like a man. He's not a little fellow playing with Legos and trading Pokemon anymore.

I am going to walk down memory lane in pictures, but I wish I could go down memory lane in videos! Spencer has added such spice to our home videos starting with, as a 6 month old, slipping in the sink while taking a bath and soaking Damon Jr. as he was innocently passing by. I think we have more laughs and entertainment from Spencer than all the rest of us combined. (I could do the videos, but it would be another 6 months before I got the blog post done!) The pictures start with the year 2000, when Spencer was 8 years old and each picture is one year later.

























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Amy Coons (2009-09-02 20:02:36)

Happy Birthday Spencer!! I really loved the little kid pictures...they made me smile.



John and Sue (2009-09-16 22:53:31)

Wow! Talk about a great tribute to Spencer. I thoroughly enjoyed the whole journal entry. Happy Birthday, Spencer.

**Boys and Backpacks, and Little Miss Sunshine (2009-09-02 16:38)**





Spencer and Taylor started school (away from home) for the first time in their lives on Monday. Both nervous and excited, they headed out at 5:40 to early morning seminary before the sun came up. I didn't see them till after 5:00 because they are in football and have practice after school.

They were both positive about the overall first day, though Taylor does not like his Spanish teacher or World

Geography teacher, and Spencer wasn't too sure about having 2 girls in his metal shop class. (They both have metal shop, which is actually agriculture mechanics I. They are going to drop it to have a study hall because they found out they won't be doing any metal work this semester.)



Emily and I have been having a great first week alone together in a quiet house. It's so different so fast, but I'm enjoying it! She is very studious and we have a great lineup of subjects this year. We are adding a theater class at a local homeschool store that offers classes two days a week to supplement the home schoolers, and we signed her up for more "official" (non-mom) piano lessons which are right down the street and probably one of the best teachers in Katy!

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Amy Coons (2009-09-02 20:01:20)

Whoa. Yes, big, big changes. Good luck to everyone!!

Mason (2009-09-30 13:56:17)

I can finally keep up with the "Jan Clan!" YESSSS!

## 2.7 October

### A Little Tribute to My Grandpa (2009-10-08 21:29)

My Grandpa Stucki passed away on August 30th, 2009. He was almost 89 years old. He served in World War 2 and really had an interesting life. He was a character and had some idiosyncrasies that made him endearing to me. I will take the liberty of recording a few memories.

I remember...

as a little child feeling so grown up helping him wash and dry the dishes after dinner. There was no dishwasher, so it was a long process and I wanted him to know I could work hard.

getting a lemon drop for helping.

we visited for Christmas one year when I was very young (less than 5). I didn't know how Santa was going to get down the chimney because Grandpa had a coal potbelly stove that had a skinny pipe going up to the ceiling. But I woke up in the night and thought I heard it rattling. I lay shivering with fright and excitement.

his enthusiastic voice. He would get started and then really get excited about whatever he was talking about.

his great laugh. He was always cracking jokes, mostly poking fun of himself and laughing.

picking him up at the Greyhound station. He preferred to travel by bus.

hearing him tell stories of what it was like growing up, of the war, and the Great Depression.

getting a Valentine card from him every year with a \$1 bill in it.

getting a birthday letter with a \$5 bill in it every year. He wrote it in blue ink usually and Mom would read it to me because his handwriting was challenging to read. But the "HAPPY BIRTHDAY TIFFANY" was done in red ink.

he came to Heather's baby blessing and stood in the circle.

he bought a crib for Heather.

calling him on a veterans day one year to thank him for his service to our country, and having a very nice visit with him.

visiting him on a long road trip with the kids. We spent the night at his home and enjoyed KFC for dinner. We went to Shoney's for the yummy breakfast buffet the next morning. Uncle Paul came too and tried to win a stuffed animal from a claw machine. He kept putting in dollars and trying but not succeeding, then letting the boys take a turn and Grandpa grew more and more agitated. It was pretty funny.

sending him a little Christmas package each year these past ten years or so. And sometime around the New Year, along would come a letter of thanks in his wonderful style. And I quote: *"You surely did give me a fantastic Christmas with a whole box full of splendid gifts. I feel rather guilty to be showered with such a huge assortment of presents. They will be keeping me thinking of you all through the year. Your box of gifts arrived Christmas Eve- afternoon, if there is such a "title!" Thus, because the Big Day was almost knocking on my door I didn't start shaking the box nor holding it up to the light nor cutting a little corner off to "Flashlight" it's secrets! thank you so very much for making Christmas Day a bright one to remember. It should be added, I guess that I was expecting ole St. Nick to bring me the usual coal for Christmas - an' it's always enough to keep me warm all winter!"*

Even though I didn't see him a whole ton in my life, he was always there and I knew he thought about me and loved me and was proud of me. I thought about him too, especially at Christmas because there was always a gift from him under the tree. I love him too and will miss him.

I want to share a couple of videos. One is in 1983 when we stopped in to say hi for a few minutes on a trip we were on. It kind of captures him I think. The next is some of the graveside service I got on video. It was very moving to have the WWII veterans there do the 21 gun salute and give the flag to Mom. It made it more beautiful and grand. Then there is a little at his house after the funeral as we are taking a look at some of his things and getting to know him a little more.

[EMBED]

[EMBED]



Shelby Bingham (2009-10-09 10:36:46)

Thank you, Tiffany, for getting the videos posted. I think you are right when you say you captured a bit of who Grandpa was to us. I was laughing and crying... :)

Amy Coons (2009-10-09 19:38:59)

I LOVED this. All of it. I liked reading your memories. And the quoted letter is seriously the genuine-original-deal. It accurately sums up Grandpa in a nutshell. Although, I think he didn't get coal every year...;)

I really loved the videos too. The 1993 one is so cute with Heather. I'm going to try to figure out how to copy the funeral video on to my computer, so when I burn a DVD later, wa-la! It's in my history too! I love digital stuff.

Thanks for this wonderful post Tiff.

John and Sue (2009-10-14 12:12:25)

Tiffany, I am finally getting around to commenting on this wonderful tribute you wrote about Grandpa. Thank you for all the sweet memories you shared and the videos (which were so touching). They all brought back so many special thoughts and feelings. The world isn't nearly as beautiful to me without him here.

aj&e (2009-10-16 08:17:25)

beautiful. what struck me is how much emmeline looks like heather in the video. what a sweet little girl heather was (and is). this post gave me a moment to reconsider the important things in life and make sure that i am taking time for them. thank you!

### **Happy Birthday SrD! (2009-10-10 13:00)**



Yesterday was SrD's birthday and I just have to post! He is a most wonderful companion and friend for me. I feel so lucky and blessed! Oh I feel a burst of literariness coming on!

D

ynamite Dad

A

ffectionate, articulate, ambitious and amusing

M

monster muscles

O

optimistic, orderly, original

N

ice, nautical, noble

The list could go on and on. I ended up getting a dictionary out to help my withered brain think of words of certain letters and I'm ecstatic to report I couldn't describe him as absurd, aimless, angry, annoying, obscure, odd, offensive, ogre, oily, orangutan (though when our boys were young, they were little monkeys! Hmm) , ordinary, outlaw, outrageous, nun, or nut! Whew!

Happy Birthday Hunny-Bunny!

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Amy Coons (2009-10-10 18:53:25)

Happy Birthday Damon! Oct. 9 is a popular day...your bithday, Whitney's anniversary, and a birthday for a nephew on the Coons' side! (And I thought the "no" adjectives were very funny!)

Shelby Bingham (2009-10-13 13:50:02)

Happy Birthday!

The Scott Family (2009-10-13 21:38:43)

Happy Birthday! Older and wiser too!

Football Frenzie (2009-10-16 09:38)



Above: Spencer #11, Below: Taylor #5



It has been a different year so far with the boys gone all day and just me and Emily at home. But it isn't as slow as one might expect! I'm doing volunteer stuff for the team each week and each of them has a game every week. So football has taken over our lives this fall, but it's been fun. (For Damon and I, not so much for Emily, but she's tried to be a good sport.) It has been very hot at the games, but the cool weather has finally arrived! (I think.)

Taylor and Spencer are both wide receivers (x receivers they say, which is more specific to the side they play on.) They usually get to be out on the field for 4 plays each game. Except for one game, they have not been thrown to. Of course, the game Spencer was thrown to was the only game I didn't go to. (it was an away game an hour away) But he caught it for a first down and was pretty excited about it.

Spencer has been working out with the varsity team, but the day before the first game, the head coach told him that because he is technically a freshman (credit wise) he can't play on varsity for six weeks. It's a law or something. So he has been playing in the JV games. He has gone to all the varsity games, and been down on the field, just not gotten to get in the uniform or play. So two weeks ago, he got to dress out for the first time. The game was too close for him to get any plays, but he didn't care. Last week was the Homecoming game. They smashed the other team and so Spencer got three plays!

Football has been a great experience for both boys. Physically it's pushed them, between hard workouts and long days at seminary, school and long practices after school. Mentally it has been challenging to learn the myriad of plays and all the complicated details and rules of the sport. Socially they have enjoyed the associations they have made; and spiritually,... well, each of them has given a Book of Mormon away, and they are seeing how language is a good indicator of intelligence, as it says in the For the Strength of Youth! :) They both say that their teams know they are LDS and are respected.





Taylor is #5! Go Taylor!



This is Spencer at the Homecoming game. He's #11.



"Number 11 on Morton Ranch is a scrub; Number 11 on Cinco Ranch is a STUD!" -Spencer (who is in the maroon jersey and white pants.)



Go #11!



# 11 in his white jersey





This is Rhodes Stadium where they play most of their games. It is Katy School District's stadium. Pretty lit, huh? This picture is before the game, listening to their school's song. (If you click on the picture, it will enlarge it. The man in the tan coat on the field taking pictures is our neighbor right across the street, Mr. Mosley. He takes awesome pictures at these games! Check out these pictures of my boys on his website Photos By Mose!

[http://www.photosbymose.com/Football/2009-08-28-Cinco-Ranch-vs-SA/2009-08-28-CR-vs-SA-Reagan/9444385\\_Jm3bj#633981671\\_vuavt](http://www.photosbymose.com/Football/2009-08-28-Cinco-Ranch-vs-SA/2009-08-28-CR-vs-SA-Reagan/9444385_Jm3bj#633981671_vuavt)

[http://www.photosbymose.com/Football/20090827-Cinco-Ranch-vs-Cy/20090827-CR-Soph-vs-Cy-Lakes/9488692\\_D6hxm#637220710\\_MtSmN](http://www.photosbymose.com/Football/20090827-Cinco-Ranch-vs-Cy/20090827-CR-Soph-vs-Cy-Lakes/9488692_D6hxm#637220710_MtSmN)

[http://www.photosbymose.com/Football/2009-09-10-CR-Soph-vs-Travis/2009-09-10-CR-Soph-vs-Travis/9627626\\_iMGNf#649058336\\_4LfNL](http://www.photosbymose.com/Football/2009-09-10-CR-Soph-vs-Travis/2009-09-10-CR-Soph-vs-Travis/9627626_iMGNf#649058336_4LfNL)

Now for some more unprofessional photographs!





Spencer in his JV uniform. He was #8. (Really?!)



Taylor in *his* white jersey.

[EMBED]

The Homecoming game was on a local TV channel, so Damon went home at half time to record it, and couldn't. So he just videoed the TV as it was going. This is one of Spencer's plays in the game. He is in the top right of the screen, and then he blocks and goes out of view, then comes back in after the play. You just see his jersey and number 11. He does a little skippy thing.

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John and Sue (2009-10-19 12:57:04)

Way to go Spencer and Taylor! When you guys decide to do something (like go to highschool), you do it in a big way. Good luck with the rest of the season! And by the way, you both look amazing in your uniforms:)

Amy Coons (2009-10-19 19:43:53)

Whoa. Am I really reading The Jan Clan??? This looks like some cool TV show! Looks like you are all (sorry Emily!) having a really fun time with this! Awesome job Taylor and Spencer! Can't wait to hear more highlights...

### **Happy Birthday Emily! (2009-10-20 05:51)**



Today is Emily's 12th birthday. Wow! My children are officially out of Primary. She is just growing up too fast. Emily is a wonderful daughter, full of love, very organized, loves animals, is sensitive to others feelings, generous, beautiful, and talented. I feel so blessed to be her mom!

As I've done this year, I am going to walk down memory lane. And instead of going through each file on my computer to find the best picture of her each year, I decided to just go to her birthday pictures. I've had fun making cakes for her or with her, and she's had some great parties, so I chose to highlight these fun, festive, celebrating pictures!

3 years old





5 years old





6 years old



7 years old  
180



8 years old



9 years old





10 years old



11 years old



12 is the first picture. Happy Birthday Emily!!!!

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Shelby Bingham (2009-10-21 14:13:10)

Happy Birthday, Emily!! I know this was a big one for you and it probably didn't come as fast as you would have liked it to (going into YW). Looking at the pictures reminded me of how much we have been able to celebrate birthdays with you guys over the years! We love you and hope you had a really happy and fun birthday this year!!

Amy Coons (2009-10-21 20:38:00)

Happy Birthday Emily!!! #12 is way big...I hope that you love your Beehive class...I would love to have you in mine!! And can I say you are just so stinkin' cute?!

John and Sue (2009-10-23 12:08:52)

Wow, Emily, I can't believe you are already twelve years old! It doesn't seem that long ago that I came to Provo and arrived just in time for your birth. After you were born, Aunt Val hosted a fun baby shower for you. You were such a cute and sweet baby and you are now growing into such a lovely young woman. Time flies much too fast for Grandmas!



## A Rally in Houston (2009-10-22 09:40)



Well, the political activist in me woke up from a twelve year nap and finally did something! On Saturday, October 17, I participated in a rally called "Operation Can You Hear Us Now?" I went downtown Houston to the Houston Chronicle to demonstrate my frustration of the biased media.

The Operation Can You Hear Us Now? was a national rally responding to the silence of the major networks on 9/12 at the Washington DC rally. I heard 1.7 million people peacefully demonstrated in DC and only Fox News covered it. So, on October 17th, Americans in cities across the country went to their local newspaper, and/or TV station and sent the message "Can You Hear Us Now?"

It was a beautiful day and there were about 80 people who came to the Chronicle, and including the TV stations, 300 came out to be heard and seen around Houston. I don't know how many across America, but I think thousands showed up. There is a cool link that shows 18 videos people took and put on youtube. The first one shows a group in North Carolina smashing a TV that says MSM (Main Stream Media) with a baseball bat. But if you flip through, you will see and feel the energy from patriots across this country, and it gives me hope that I'm not alone in my love of country and freedom! Here's the link: <http://www.breitbart.tv/can-you-hear-us-now-top-18-videos-from-nationwide-media-protests/#>

Some more shots from my little corner of America.



And here is a very short video clip I got. It was fun. Someone had brought a boombox and played patriotic songs like I'm Proud to be an American and songs like that. In my video, Neil Diamond's "Coming to America" is playing.

[EMBED]

John and Sue (2009-10-23 12:12:25)

Way to go, Tiffany! I like to keep up with what is going on in the political world, but I have yet to actually go to rally and make a statement. Thnaks for being brave and bold!

### No Pina Coladas, Just Getting Caught in the Rain (2009-10-26 08:50)



Ok, so it rained this morning before I got up for the second time today. (I get up at 5:15 to get the boys breakfast, make a lunch and spend a few minutes with them before they leave for twelve hours. Then sometimes I go crawl back in bed for the seminary hour.) I thought it was done raining, so instead of running on the treadmill at the YMCA, I decided to run 2 1/2 miles home from the gym after doing a little weights for my arms. It is finally cool enough in Katy for me to go back outside to run.

I got about half-way home when lightening and thunder rolled in really close. There was no shelter, so I kept on running, hoping I wouldn't be on the news tonight for getting struck. Then it started to rain. No problem, it was nice. Then it started to pour. All I could do was keep running home. I'm sure the wise, dry drivers in the cars passing me just clicked their tongues and shook their heads at such a nutso, OCD runner, who will run even in life-threatening weather! But I was caught!

Sr. D let me in after I had stood on the porch for 10 minutes waiting for him to get home from the YMCA. I wasn't sure Emily was up yet, so I just stood dripping on the porch. I asked him to take a picture of me before I came in. (Am I not

just the *beauty queen*?:))Behind me is our street flooded in water, gutters full and the water moving slowly up to the sidewalk. Yep, it was one of those Houston rain storms I talk about; how I never understood the concept of the Flood till I moved to Houston.

The other day I ran and *listened* to the song "Raindrops Keep Fallin' on my Head," but today I LIVED it!

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The Janis Clan (2009-10-26 09:25:36)

Somehow my iPod survived!

Amy Coons (2009-10-26 19:51:16)

I love it!! This was so funny. :)I remember driving to the airport with you in a crazy rain storm...flood waters for sure! And I'm glad the iPod fared well!

John and Sue (2009-10-27 17:51:37)

Thank goodness you are OK, Tiffany! You and Damon are really putting the rest of us to shame with all of your exercise and healthy food. You look pretty water-logged in this picture, but in the picture of you at the rally (in your last blog) you look really pretty! Mom

heather (2009-10-27 21:36:27)

HAHAHAHAHAHAHA you look like a drowned rat for sure:D I can just imagine you out there running along with your ipod with lightning flashing around your head and rain up to your knees. Oh mom. I bet Damon will enjoy this. I wish he were here to laugh about it with me:)

### **Homecoming Week for Spencer (2009-10-26 09:27)**

Spencer didn't want to go to Homecoming this year, but ended up going. A week before Homecoming, a friend asked if he would come in their group, so he said yes. Then they told him they were going in couples and told him who he was taking. So, we had less than a week to prepare. (Of course. That's my life!) Here is how he asked her. Cupcakes.





Here is how she responded. The smile says YES. I thought it a very clever answer!





The tradition in Texas is for the boy to give the girl a mum. (That's the silk flower in the middle) The mum has ribbons flowing down and is decorated according to the school colors if you are an underclassman. If you are a junior, you get a silver mum, and seniors get a gold mum. (Tradition!) You can *buy* them for a lot of money (a basic mum runs you around \$60) or you can *make* it for a lot of money. I think they are fun to make, so I made this one. You add stickers and cheap plastic school spirit trinkets, add lights, things that make noise and clank (jingle bells and whistles and cow bells), and any other cute fun toy or whatever. Then boy takes it to girl who gives boy a garter with a *little* mum on it that he wears on his arm. Macho I know, but it is a sort of trophy, so they all think it's cool. The day of the game, the kids wear their mums and garters at school. The girls wear overalls, which they have painted and decorated up, and attach their mum (which is heavy) to it. They also wear them to the game. It's pretty wild! Here is Ashley and Spencer exchanging the mum and garter. I put a Tinkerbell Pez dispenser on hers and a feather boa around the mum with mini Christmas lights which you can't see.



I had Taylor take a picture of Spencer at school with his football jersey and garter.



That night was the football game (Thursday, and I have already highlighted that in a previous post.) Saturday night was the Homecoming dance. Here is Spencer all spiffy and ready to go pick up his date and then meet all the parents at a location for them to take a million and one pictures. His car looks spiffy too, he spent more time shining *it* up than he did on himself.

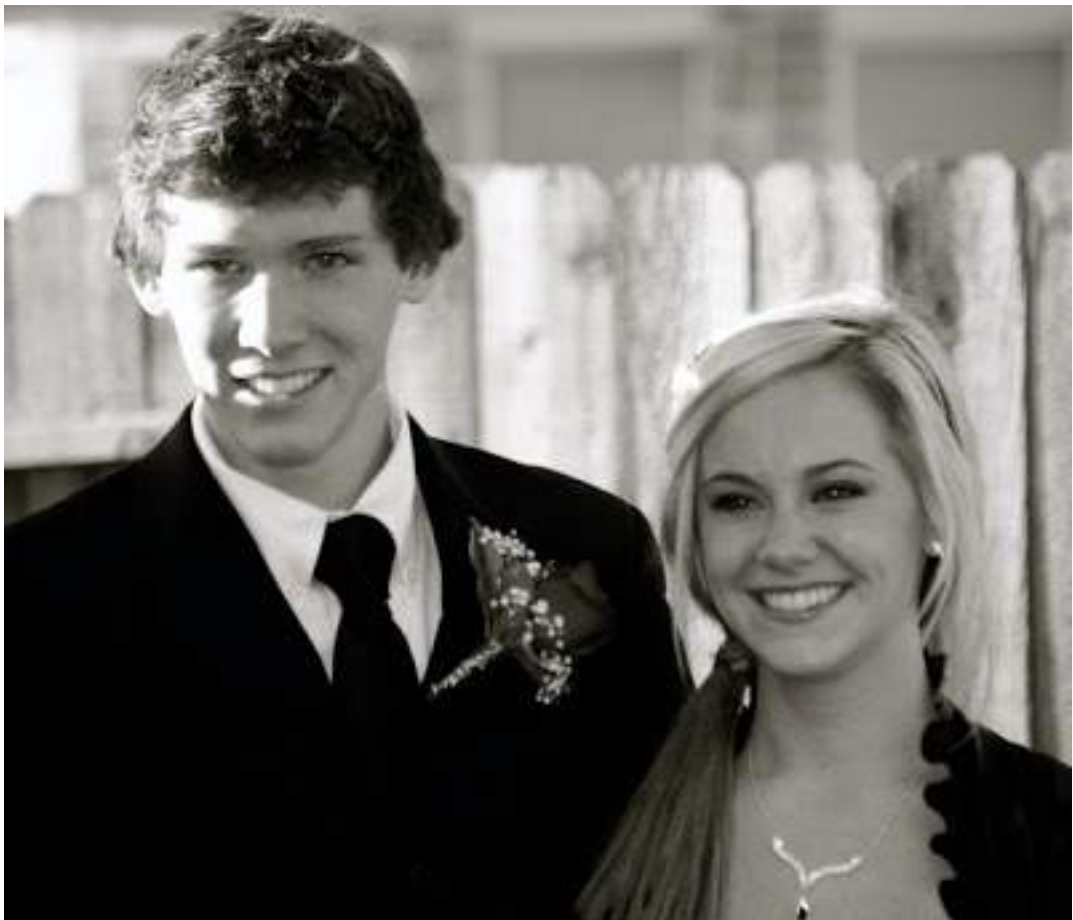




We went to the home of a friend of one of the parents to take pictures. There was a house that was on the market across the street that was vacant and I guess it was okay with the owners, so we took pictures there. Of course I forgot my camera, so I have copied some from others. Here are a few.



Ashley's is the red and white.







Then we went to a park with a little waterfall and a cool tunnel and took more.







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The Janis Clan (2009-10-28 05:51:03)

PS. It was a nice group of LDS kids in our ward and another ward.

John and Sue (2009-10-28 18:30:00)

Wowers! Texas really has some interesting and fun traditions. Spencer looked very handsome and his date was very pretty. You did a great job making the 'mum', Tiffany. (Do they offer classes at Michaels on how to make them?) Thanks for posting all the great pictures!

Amy Coons (2009-10-28 20:34:43)

I remember a BYU roommate from Texas (Katy in fact!) showing us pictures of the mums. We were all confused. BUT, it looks like such a FUN tradition!! Spencer's lookin' so handsome and his date is super cute.

I have a feeling though, I would have been one of the un-mummed girls in my day. BUT, Spencer kept that from happening to one lucky girl and it looks like it was all a success!

aj&e (2009-10-29 20:30:17)

all grown up... \*sigh\* ..but sooo handsome! wow! ashley's dress is super classy and chic. tiff, the mum is pretty fantastic.

## 2.8 November

### Renaissance Festival (2009-11-01 15:47)



No, this is not the Halloween post yet, though it may look like it. Emily has been in a theater class this fall and they performed at a Renaissance Festival last Tuesday. They performed a couple of scenes from *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. Emily was in both the High School play and the Junior High play. She played Mr. Beaver in the HS version, and Mrs. Beaver in the Jr. H. Emily and the girl who played Mrs. Beaver in the HS play are walking to the theater with their teacher (in the blue dress).



Emily as Mrs. Beaver (above) fixing food before she meets the two sons of Adam and two daughters of Eve. The cast (below) without Lucy, don't know where she is.



This place is amazing. It's a permanent facility about 1 1/2 hours north of Katy in Plantersville, TX. It has buildings and  
198

a big stadium (for the jousting tournament) that look like England in the middle ages. It's got outdoor theaters and rides that aren't electrically powered. Shops with clothing, trinkets, jewelry, and lots of food (turkey legs anyone?) The people running it all are a little eccentric in their dress and behavior, so I have only been once before.

Emily standing at the entrance as we left. She's got a plate of yummy funnel cake. (Like scones with powdered sugar on it.



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John and Sue (2009-11-02 12:59:03)

What fun pictures of Emily and her play! I wish I could have been there to see it. That Renaissance place looks so cool. Next time we come to visit maybe we can go there:)



Happy Halloween! (2009-11-03 06:16)



Emily had two friends go trick-or-treating with her and they coordinated their costumes and went as 50's girls.



Our ward does an annual trunk-or-treat on Halloween, before it gets dark so that the kids can get twice as much candy as they normally would. (Just kidding, I don't know why, it's just the tradition!) We went. Taylor got a mask (above) and a tail (below) to show Halloween spirit. The tail came from Target's \$1 section. The friend he's with below is Hardy and his brother went as Laurel. It was quite creative.



Remember the Alfred Hitchcock movie *The Birds*? Well, at a nearby intersection each fall, for about a month, we get a colony of purple martins that remind me of that movie. Each night there are thousands of them that cover telephone lines, trees, and store roofs. The air is just thick with them. I just can't photograph this phenomenon with justice, but I thought it appropriate to blog about it on Halloween!



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Amy Coons (2009-11-04 07:42:36)

Cute 50's girls! It's so fun to dress-up with friends. :) And we get these huge flocks of birds too. They'll fly from backyard to backyard sometimes. Ours is a popular one because there aren't many trees, just a big field. I remember once in particular



driving actually in CT and I swear it was a tens of thousands of birds. I don't remember these flocks in CA...do you?

Shelby Bingham (2009-11-04 08:55:42)

I know Julie would have loved to have gone out with Emily and her friends - sorry it didn't work out! I've seen those birds too, Tiff. It's pretty loud too! I don't remember that many birds in CA, Amy, but I do remember when we would see some on a wire or on a water tank Dad would say they were having a meeting - we all thought that was funny! :)

John and Sue (2009-11-04 13:10:16)

Great Halloween pictures! Emily and her friends looked very sweet.(I also saw Julie's picture in her 50's costume. It would have been fun for her and Emily to have been together for Halloween.)

As for the birds, we do have some migrating flocks come through Modesto every year. They line the power lines along Oakdale Road. However, I don't think we have as many as you all describe there.

heather (2009-11-05 15:01:44)

haha look at taylor's lap- cupcake crumbs all over, some mid-fall. haha. oh tay tay.

### **A Tea Party in Texas (2009-11-06 05:50)**

Monday, November 2, Sr. D took me, Emily, and Taylor to a tea party at the Sam Houston Race Park (a huge horse race track). It was pretty awesome. There were more than 10,000 freedom loving people there. There were several people who spoke, most notably Lord Monckton, who is exposing the fallacies in the "Global Warming" lie, and alerting America of a treaty Obama will probably sign soon which will compromise our national sovereignty. It was a great speech and it felt good to be part of the whole thing.

Emily, Taylor and Sr. D





One shot of the crowd



Lord Monckton in a cowboy hat.



The Scott Family (2009-11-09 17:05:10)  
Nice job you guys! Keep up the great work!

John and Sue (2009-11-09 17:48:03)  
Way to go Damon, Tiffany, Taylor and Emily! We (Dad and I) have seen Lord Monckton on TV before and he seems to know what he is talking about (and it's scary). Thanks for going out of your way in support of our freedoms!

## 2.9 December

### A Great Thanksgiving Week (2009-12-04 06:10)

Heather arrived on Monday and we were so excited to see her! Then on Wednesday, Shelby and Jeff and their children came in. On Thursday, Joel and Vivian flew in and then we all sat down to a yummy Thanksgiving dinner.





Saturday was another Cinco Ranch football game. They are in the playoffs and this game was against the Beaumont Westbrook Bruins. (The team cousin Brian would be going to, but he's at a private school.) Cinco beat them 49-26 and is now in the top 8 5-A schools still left in the state playoffs. Go Cougars! The game was at Rice Stadium and it was pretty cool. Unfortunately, Spencer didn't get any play time, but it was an exciting game and fun to have cousins join us!





The parents of the players make two lines for the players to run between and cheer them out on to the field. Before the players come out, the parents gather and have a prayer. It's pretty cool. And here comes Spencer!!! Woووو!







Tommy enjoying the last of the popcorn.



Sr. D and his girls.



Taylor and Brian after the game.



John and Sue (2009-12-16 19:05:46)

Here it is almost Christmas and I am just now posting a comment on your Thanksgiving blog. Thank you for sharing all the great photos! It makes it seem like we were almost there. Your Thanksgiving table looked beautiful and the food delicious! Mom

Dad/Papa/David/Grandpa (2009-12-27 19:07:10)

Hello Dear Janis Family! If you want the latest on the Hatch family please visit [www.usaus.blogspot.com](http://www.usaus.blogspot.com)...and leave a note to us.

I remember that dining table well when we had the wonderful dinner Jewish style.

## 3. 2010

### 3.1 January

**Taylor Turned 16!** (2010-01-13 06:57)



Well, he got a surprise birthday party and I didn't get any pictures that turned out. So I found this great shot that sums this guy up right now! He is a fun-loving fella that loves to tease and keep things happy. He can't slow down and likes action. He loves to drive cars of all things too! I love him! Happy VERY belated birthday, Taylor! (November 29!)

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Amy Coons (2010-01-13 22:20:00)  
Happy Birthday Taylor!

### **December With a Flurry of Fun** (2010-01-13 07:18)

Pictures are worth a thousand words. But I was not a very good picture taker in December cause I drooled over Heather's and forgot to take my own. Well, I took a few.

It snowed in Texas and as it drifted down, the Christmas Spirit just floated in too!





The high school football team made it to the semi finals in state playoffs and here is Spencer loading up on a charter bus to take them to Austin for the game in the Longhorn Stadium. They got to miss a day of school and were put up in a hotel for the night. Those football players are royalty for sure!





We had a really nice Hanukkah this year. It was quiet, as we didn't invite anyone to join us. Brisket, latkes, green menorah jello, and this year homemade jelly-filled donuts! They will now be a new tradition. Yum!



Candles, food, a story, music, gifts, a game of dreidel, love and tradition made for a nice evening.



Our 22nd wedding anniversary found us celebrating on the sailboat in Kemah harbor. We had a really nice night sail, slept on the boat and took another sail the next day. The kids came down and joined us the next evening and we all spent the night on the boat. Good times!





It's a little cold on the water in the Gulf of Mexico!



Christmas Eve and unwrapping the mystery present...



It was so cold that we built a wonderful fire that glowed and created a cozy feel.





Christmas morning found Elder Janis' stocking lonely and empty. It looked so stark, I had to take a picture of it.



I much prefer the pictures without flash, but this one would be too dark. I think it was 6:30AM when we started assembling the kiddos on the stairs.





I got the job of videoing the event.



Come see what Santa left!









A quick trip to Beaumont the following week, but alas, I didn't get any pics! :( But Heather did! See her blog! On New Years Eve, Aunt Alissa and her two girls, Emmeline and Hazel, and Uncle Daron, Aunt Heather and their two little ones, Esther and Nathan, came and joined us for the festivities. Nathan and Emiline loved the helicopter Sr. D got for Christmas.





The newest addition to the Janis family: Hazel Wheeler!



aje&h (2010-01-13 20:19:56)

THANK you for posting these pictures! I didn't come out of the office long enough to catch any of my girls with MY family! We had such a great time and are so thankful for you.

Amy Coons (2010-01-13 22:17:44)

How fun!!! First, I really love your tree this year (I saw another glimpse of it earlier on Heather's blog). Next, it's always fun to see the "stairs" picture. And, your anniversary trip sounded great and the cold picture is classic! That last picture of Damon with baby Hazel...although it's been a little while since babies were around in your house (not to remind you again that they are crazy big), he looks quite a pro at it still.

### Taylor's Tremendous Trim (2010-01-20 10:12)



Taylor and a friend decided to go for it and buzz their heads. It's rather shocking compared to the fluffy hair he's had lately. He said it took them a long time and there was hair everywhere. He got muchos exclamations at seminary and school. The football team all approved: "Nice cut Janis." Some others at school were mad at him for doing it. I got this picture of him Sunday morning as he was studying Preach My Gospel for a priesthood lesson he was giving that day. He's grown a foot or two (or a lot more than that) and his hair is right. A missionary he looks like I think. :)

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## 3.2 March

### Catching Up (2010-03-24 04:54)

Sr. D gave me this beautiful bouquet of roses for Valentine's Day! Awww, isn't he sweet?!



This is our Area Boy Scout Headquarters. I had to go there recently to get a few things at the shop and also to get a certain picture. There is a wall at the stairs there with the names of all Eagle Scouts from the Area engraved on it.



I haven't been back to the Scout headquarters since the boys earned their Eagle, so I wanted a picture of their names.





There they are!



Emily and I had a fun time at the mall recently. She stopped at a booth to let a lady curl her hair with a fancy-dancy curling iron. She loved it and the pressure was on to buy, but I stayed strong and stingy. :)





Pretty girl!



I had to get this for the record. Our sweet cat submits.



For Spring Break we went out on the sailboat and stayed overnight.



The bay is only about 10-15 feet deep. Doesn't look like it though, huh?





The first day was beautiful but cold.



This is the "beautiful, tropical" Redfish Island where we anchored for the night. It's a man-made wall that helps break the wakes of the huge ships sailing through the Houston Ship Channel.



Down at the back of the boat near the water is a little landing. We all enjoyed being down there, as the sun was on us and the wind was blocked. Spencer enjoyed an afternoon snooze, and unfortunately, his cell phone slipped into the depths, never to be seen again.





Another day of Spring Break we found a horse trail ranch place about an hour away and went for a trail ride.



First we got our fashionable helmets on and then they matched us with our horses.



Off we went and the boys had a blast and bonded with their beasts immediately.





The trail was beautiful. Having almost never been on a horse before, I was a little nervous the whole time, and even Emily, who canters and jumps on a horse, was scared because of the hills and walking so close to ledges throughout the trail. So Sr. D and the boys weren't able to charge their steeds as they wished. Sorry guys! But they were very nice about it.



Our trail guide took our picture. Sr. D's horse kept nipping at Emily's horse during this picture session and so the picture looks nicer than it felt for some. Also, Spencer's horse didn't want to pose, it wanted to keep going. It was a feisty guy that had an extra rope to keep its head down because it tended to rear. Spencer loved its spirit and probably would have loved to unleash. :)



Taylor went to a Buffalo Wild Wings restaurant with his two friends and took the Blazin' Challenge. On the website they say:

Think you have what it takes to succeed at the Blazin'® Challenge? We have one question for you. What's your pain threshold?

Have you ever slept on a bed of nails? Walked on burning coals?

All child's play compared to the Blazin' Challenge.

Simply eat a mere 12 wings prepared with our signature Blazin'® sauce in six minutes and you win. Easier said than done, of course.

Well, Spencer and a friend had done it just the week before. (Sorry, no pictures for that.) So Taylor was up for the challenge. The timer stopped them at 5 min. and they weren't done, but since the timer messed up, they still got the prize: a T-shirt saying they won the Blazin' Challenge. It's like that TV show "Man vs Food" which Sr. D likes to watch occasionally. :)





They said the sauce really burned and it was tough. They bought a gallon of milk and each drank 1/2 of it.



And finally, Taylor got braces on Tuesday, March 23! They are the clear kind and he's in pain.



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Shelby Bingham (2010-03-25 07:28:40)

Taylor's face in the challenge made me think of Napoleon Dynamite saying, "My lips hurt real bad!" LOL! His mouth wasn't hurting enough with the BBQ challenge so braces were there to help. ;) Glad you guys had a fun-filled Spring Break! :)

heather (2010-03-25 09:01:12)

You made me laugh several times. I'm so glad you're blogging again, I've missed the pictures and updates!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Heather (2010-03-28 14:15:56)

My dad would love that challenge - he has miracle tastebuds and rarely gets thrown by any kind of heat.

Looks like you guys have been having a lot of fun!

Love the picture of Spencer with the kitty.

John and Sue (2010-04-02 17:53:44)

A fun blog to match some fun times! All the pictures are great, especially the ones of Spencer and Taylor taking the 'challenge'. I also liked the pictures of ya'll on the horses. Thanks for keeping us updated on your adventure-filled life (ours is too boring to write about). Good luck with the braces, Taylor. You know what they say, "It's better to look good than to feel good":)

Amy Coons (2010-04-13 20:17:07)

So, I've read this post several times and it's looks like I didn't comment!

I loved seeing your family! Some good laughs! :) Hair fun? YES for me! Spicy? NOT for me.

### 3.3 April

#### Second Spring Break with the Bingham's (2010-04-14 08:50)

After our fun Spring Break, it was time for some more fun! The schools in Beaumont had their Spring Break the week after Katy. So Uncle Jeff and Aunt Shelby and family (except Brian who was on a college tour with his school) came on over. Shelby and I went to the Houston Temple one day. Another day we had a fun picnic at the park.













On another day, Shelby and I took all the kids 13 and under to Kemah Boardwalk and they got all-day passes. I think they got 30+ rides each! The boardwalk is small with only about 8-10 rides they liked, so they ran from ride to ride and only stopped for a quick lunch break.





This is Jared's first time on the Pharaoh's Fury, can you tell? He ended up riding on it many times over as well as the rollercoaster and a high drop ride. He has a steel stomach! (So does Rachel!)









Topping the day off with Dipin' Dots. It was a wonderful day, the sun was out, with a cool wind. We got some sun and the kids had fun. (I'm a poet and I don't even know it:)







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Amy Coons (2010-04-14 11:22:44)

I love the expressions of ride go-ers! I like going to smaller parks like this...it definately looked like a hit!

Julie-Girl (2010-04-16 19:33:21)

omigosh!! just look at me! i'm like screaming my head off!! i bet that wuz the most funnest time of my life!!! we have to do that again!!!

### **Third Spring Break With the Brandon Janis's (2010-04-14 09:22)**

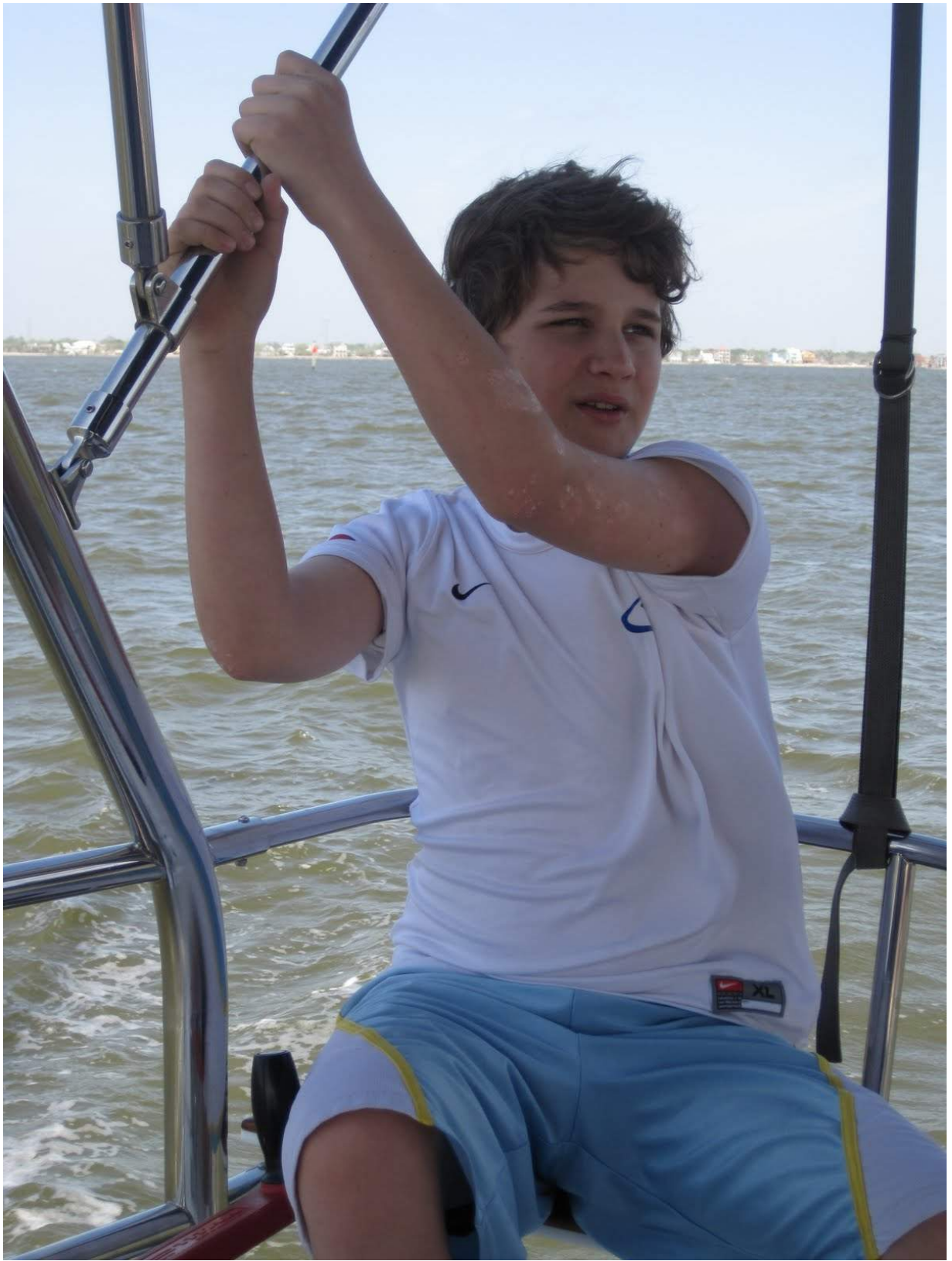
So the week after our Bingham cousins came, our Janis cousins came, marking a third week in a row of fun, fun, fun! (Although, the boys had seminary, school and work and Daenon and Emily did their math all week, while Dover studied for the ACT.)

We did get down to Kemah and got to sail on a fine windy day. Here is Dover.





Daenon



Emily



Daenon tried his hand at steering the ship and did a great job!





We also enjoyed having them with us to celebrate Passover! Here are Dover and Taylor with yarlmulkes (skull caps) on.





Aunt Mindy and Emily.



Daenon and Spencer sharing a moment.



The table before we gathered around.





I have collected little frogs for decorating our Passover table and wanted to take their portraits. The cute brown one, cousin Brian Bingham saw and bought for me in Turkey last year on a school tour! How thoughtfully sweet!





We went to Texas A & M for a Women's soccer game and watched Aubriana play with the BYU women's soccer team. BYU won the game and that made it all the sweeter!

[EMBED]

[EMBED]

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aje&h (2010-04-15 22:11:34)

soooo fun to see your families together again! it's been years it seems since the pairing...everyone looks so great! wish i was there enjoying the good times!

### 3.4 May

#### A Trip to Utah (2010-05-12 09:40)

We decided to make our seemingly annual trek to Utah in April to participate in Aubriana's wedding and to see Heather. We stayed at Aunt Allaire's home and were well taken care of. It was loads of fun to spend time with Ed, Allaire, Alora and Elijah! It snowed just for us and Emily and Taylor loved every minute of the snow while it lasted (2 hours), which wasn't long enough for them!



Ron and Auna's wedding was just beautiful and there was so much family! So good to see so many loved ones!



Alora got baptized and there was a lot of family support for her too! After the baptism, Aunt Alissa celebrated all the birthdays that were within a week from each other. She gave each of us masks and everyone sang the Happy Birthday song. I was able to see Uncle James too and that was so fun!



Pictured from left to right: Tiffany, Alora, Ryan, Daenon, Kylee, and Craig

My camera battery wasn't charged and I did not document our trip like I wished. :( But we had a wonderful vacation! Here is a video clip from the day of the wedding. We all walked across the street from the Mt. Timpanogos Temple, across a green grass and down into a stone amphitheater to take pictures. It was such a cool place!

[EMBED]

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### **The Beaumont Gusher Marathon (2010-05-12 10:50)**

Exactly a week after the wedding, we were in Beaumont, Texas where I ran in a 1/2 marathon. I had been seriously training for 9 weeks and was pumped and ready! (Although the day after we got home from Utah, I got sick and was only feeling better the day before the race.) Here is a picture of my training schedule. I have it taped to a bathroom cabinet door.



Week	S	M	T	W	Th	F	S	Total
1	Rest	2 miles, 5x1:00 AI, 2 miles	Rest	4 miles + 4 GP	Rest	3-4 miles	5-7 miles	14-16 miles
2	Rest	2 miles, 5x1:00 AI, 2 miles	Rest	4 miles + 4 GP	Rest	3-4 miles	6-7 miles	14-16 miles
3	Rest	2 miles, 2x4:00, 1:00, 2x4:00 AI, 2 miles	Rest	4 miles, incl. 4x1:00 AI + 5-8 GP	Rest	3-4 miles	6-7 miles	14-16 miles
4	Rest	2 miles, 1x3:00 AI + 8 GP, 2 miles	Rest	4 miles, incl. 4x1:00 AI + 5-8 GP	Rest	3-4 miles	6-7 miles	14-16 miles
5	Rest	2 miles, 2x2:00, 2x2:00 AI, 2 miles	Rest	4 miles, incl. 4x1:00 AI + 5-8 GP	Rest	3-4 miles	6-7 miles	14-16 miles
6	Rest	2 miles, 2x2:00 AI, 2x2:00 AI, 2 miles	Rest	4 miles, incl. 4x1:00 AI + 5-8 GP	Rest	3-4 miles	6-7 miles	14-16 miles
7	Rest	2 miles, 2x2:00 AI, 2x2:00 AI, 2 miles	Rest	4 miles, incl. 4x1:00 AI + 5-8 GP	Rest	3-4 miles	6-7 miles	14-16 miles
8	Rest	2 miles, 2x2:00, 3:00, 4:00 AI, 2 miles	Rest	4 miles, incl. 4x1:00 AI + 5-8 GP	Rest	3-4 miles	6-7 miles	14-16 miles
Taper	Rest	2 miles, 4x1:00 AI	Rest	2 miles easy, 4 x GP	Rest	2 miles	Half-marathon race	

Uncle Jeff, Rachel and Jared all ran in the Gusher 5-K race and Brian ran the 1/2 marathon like me. (He was a lot faster than his ancient shuffling aunt!:) Brian finished in just under 2 hours and I finished in 2 hours 35 min.



There were 2,600 people who had signed up to run in either the 5-K, the 1/2 marathon, and the full marathon! I

don't know how many of them showed up, but there were a LOT of people! Here I am warming up!



Here is a video we found on YouTube that shows the beginning of the race. You can see me at 1 min 11 sec. on the left. (I can't see Brian, but maybe you can find him. He's ahead of me. It gives you an idea of how many people there

were! Only the 1/2 and full marathoners are starting here. The 5-K race started a half hour later.

[EMBED]

I did really well through 11 miles, only stopping a couple of times at pit stops to stretch for 30 seconds. The last 2 miles were tough and the last mile I had to walk a couple of times for a minute. But I ran across the finish line with achy knee and hip joints. But I did it and it was really emotional. Shelby hugged me afterwards and she and I cried. I didn't expect to do that, I guess I was overwhelmed that I had accomplished a goal I never thought I'd do!

[EMBED]

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Kylee (2010-05-12 17:11:21)

Yay Tiffany! I'm so glad it went so well - what an accomplishment! Hooray!

It was so great to see you over the wedding weekend. I really love you, and talking to you and gleaning from your wisdom.

Miss Mindy (2010-05-13 13:40:31)

Wow! Tiffany that's wonderful. I'm so glad Shelby was able to be there!

### **Birthday in Beaumont (2010-05-26 09:56)**

On Rachel's birthday we woke up and I decided on the spur of the moment to celebrate with her, so I loaded Emily and Taylor into the car and we headed east! We had a fun day with family! Here is Rachel, sporting her new matching shirt and bag she received from Grandma Scott.













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### From Cumorah's Hill (2010-05-26 10:09)

Our stake put on a production of Steven Kapp Perry's From Cumorah's Hill. There were over 250 youth, and our stake center was not big enough, so we rented a local high school's auditorium for the event. We had a Saturday performance, and two performances on Sunday night there were so many people who wanted to come! It was a great experience for most. (Talk to Spencer:))Uncle Jeff and Aunt Shelby came out on Sunday just to see it, and left after the first show.



Sr. D got roped into being a prophet. He wasn't too enthusiastic at first, but I think he warmed up during the performance. The prophets were a surprise for most of the youth, and they ended up being the hit of the show. Some kids wanted pictures with them, and I think he even gave out an autograph! He played the prophet Mormon and held a really nice replica of the gold plates. In this shot I got him out-of-era, holding something a little lighter and easier to write on! (Poor Mormon! A computer would have made things much easier to abridge!)





Here is the part of the cast that I came to see! (Unfortunately, I didn't do a full body shot, or you would see Mormon's awesome legs!)



Here is Brian, Tommy, Taylor and his friend, Marcus Anderson



It was so nice that our cousins came! And I'm so grateful for the church organization and talented people who are willing to share their talents to bless the lives of my family and particularly my children!!





So if these videos uploaded successfully, you can see and hear 20 seconds of it. Emily is wearing glasses and is behind a girl with a black necklace. Taylor is at the top with a tuft of hair and his eyes showing. The second video is a mistake. I didn't mean to put this one in. It is the last line of the show, but it cuts off the very last note. Ugggh. And Blogger isn't letting me delete it. (Sorry!) So I'll put in the one I meant to do as the third video. It shows Sr. D coming out on the stage and onto the wings with his gold plates. It's a dark video, sorry. (That is if it is successfully uploaded.)

[EMBED] [EMBED]  
[EMBED]

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### **A Spencer Post (2010-05-26 11:11)**

Spencer got himself a ukulele and he really likes it. He has learned a few songs on it. It is so little!

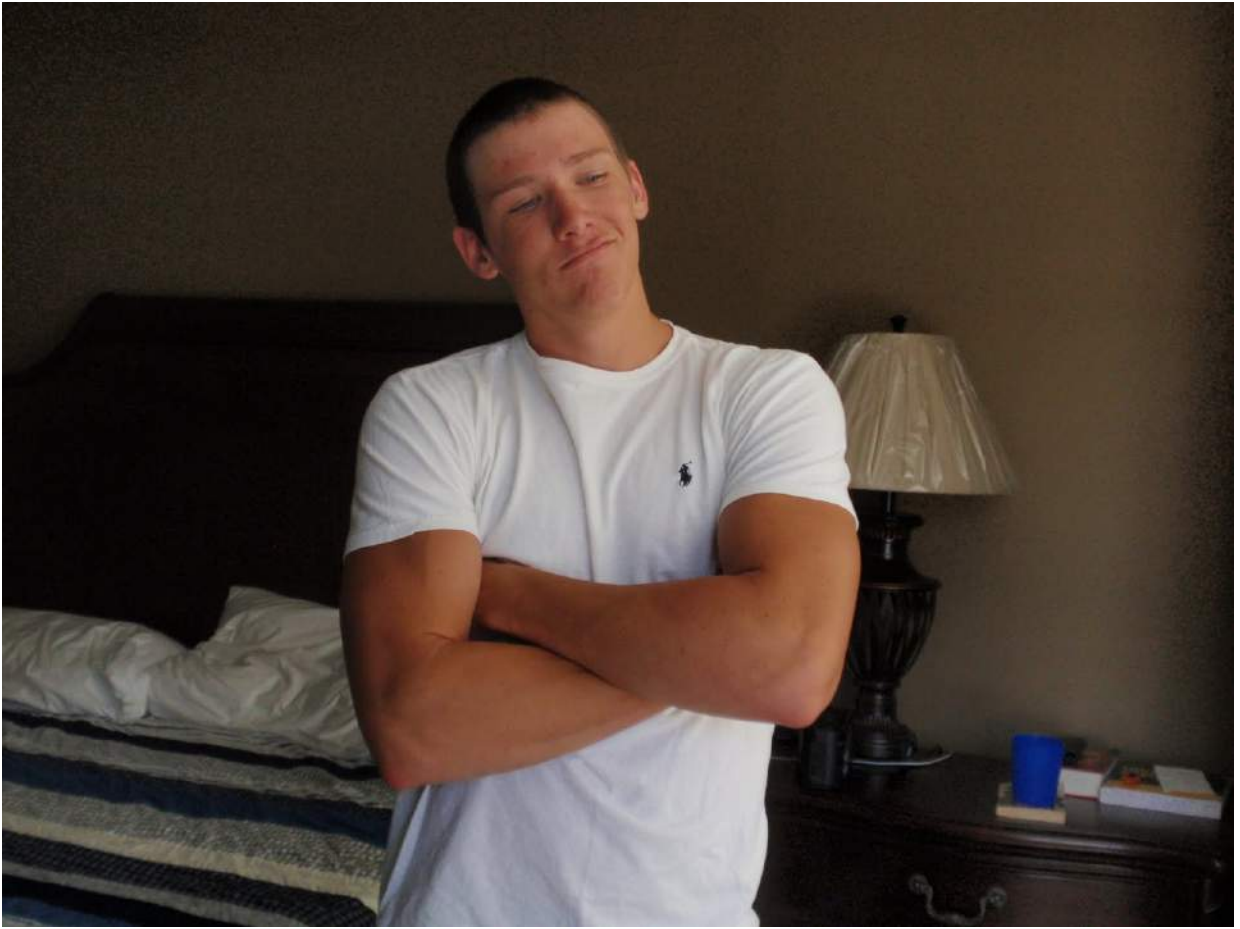






On Monday, May 24, he decided to buzz his hair. He liked it at first, but now he is anxious for it to grow a little. I wanted some pictures and he humored me with some silly, attitude poses.











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Shelby Bingham (2010-05-27 11:00:57)

Spence looks like he is a military recruit! :) I'm sure it is much cooler and easier to take care of, eh, Spencer??

### 3.5 June

#### Oh Danny Boy (2010-06-22 20:47)

[EMBED]

Emily took an 8 week group voice class which ended on May 24th with a show of all the girls singing one of the two songs they worked on individually. They also had a group song. Emily sang Danny Boy and did a great job I thought. Here is our video of it. (If you are reading this in an email, the video won't come up. Click on the link to the blog at the end of the email and you will see it.)

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heather (2010-06-23 13:13:41)

Oh my goodness Emily is BEAUTIFUL and has the voice of an angel. I miss home:/

Mindy Janis (2010-06-23 17:34:04)

She is wonderful! I'm glad I'll be here now to hear things like this in person!

John and Sue (2010-06-24 12:22:24)

One of my favorite songs sung by one of my favorite grand-daughters! It brought tears to my eyes. Emily, you did a beautiful job!

Grandma Scott

PS You looked adorable,cute blouse!

Heather (2010-07-01 15:04:12)

Esther, Nathan, and I all very much enjoyed listening to Emily's song. What a nice voice she has! I only wish I could sing so well.

### **Swim Team 2010 (2010-06-29 08:57)**

Ok, so I thought I'd walk down memory lane just a bit and show a then and now of two of my boys. These two picture were in June 2001.







This is now June 2010. (The boy on the far left below, Ben Brown, is sitting right in front of Spencer in the 2001 picture.) The four boys on the left in the picture below had just won a relay race. They have all been swimming each summer together for the past 10 years.





Waiting for their ribbons after a race



My picture taking at the meets this year was pretty sorry. My camera delayed just enough to get weird action shots. But these are what I've got to work with. Here is Spencer swimming breast stroke.



Taylor swimming freestyle



Spencer swimming butterfly



This video shows a 50 yard freestyle race. Spencer comes in first place and Taylor comes in second.

[EMBED]

This is those four boys swimming the medley relay at the Meet of Champs, the last meet of the season with all the fastest swimmers on all the teams from two out of five divisions. Marc Outlaw first swims backstroke, then Ben Brown swims breaststroke. Spencer then jumps in and swims butterfly and Taylor finishes with freestyle. They got first.

[EMBED]

This is Spencer swimming the freestyle event at the Meet of Champs here. Our children usually don't get put in the individual races because if they are in the top three, they get slated for the next day at the All Star Meet (which is always on Sunday) with the best of the five divisions. (Relays only swim on Saturday, so the kids participate in those.) And we chose as a family 12 years ago that we wouldn't swim on Sunday. But for some reason, the coach had him swim anyway, and he won! Of course he didn't swim the next day, but that was cool.

[EMBED]

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Amy Coons (2010-06-29 14:38:13)

Thanks for all the sharing! Awesome swimming. And those guys aren't so little anymore...;)

Shelby Bingham (2010-06-29 15:42:39)

Yes, the boys have certainly grown! I think Taylor is taller every time we see him and Spencer is more buff - all that protein powder, eh? I guess this is Spencer's last year on the swim team too. I'm sure the boys were glad to not be wearing the orange speedos this year!! ;)

Kylee (2010-06-30 08:53:51)

They were so little and cute and now they are so big! It's fun to see the comparison.

I'm so happy that my Mom has you in Texas - it sounds like you two are having a great time together! Thanks for being so sweet to her!



John and Sue (2010-06-30 16:20:13)  
Wow! Great pictures and videos. Thanks for posting these. Dad

## 3.6 July

### Our Fourth of July (2010-07-07 08:42)

For our Fourth celebration, we had Uncle Jeff and Aunt Shelby's family, and Uncle Brandon and Aunt Mindy's family with us. We had a great dinner: steak, potato salad, baked beans and a big yummy fruit salad. Then we gathered and Uncle Brandon taught us about three values that are on the penny: E Pluribus Unim (out of many, one), Freedom, and "In God We Trust." It was really good! Then Sr. D taught us about how Christ's atonement gave us freedom to act and not be acted upon unless we sin. And that if Christ gave us freedom, we should try to preserve it in our country. It was a very nice devotional that may not have happened if it wasn't that the 4th was a Sunday. Then we had cake!!! Shelby made white cakes, cousin Rachel made cherry jello, cousin Jared poked holes in the cake and I poured the jello in. Once it had chilled in the fridge a bit, we cut the cake, squirted whipping cream on it and sprinkled it with blueberries and sliced strawberries. Emily added a flag toothpick to finish it off. It was as delicious as it looked patriotic!



We all went out and enjoyed Uncle Jeff's firework display (with a little of my own inserted in too). In Texas we can sure celebrate. We can buy stuff that shoots up in the air and explodes and Jeff had one that shot off about 90 small colorful explosions above us for our finale! Thank you Uncle Jeff!









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heather (2010-07-07 09:38:16)

WOW! You, Emily, Shelby, and Mindy are GORGEOUS!!!!!!!!!! I love that picture of the 4 of you, you all look amazing!

Amy Coons (2010-07-07 14:10:54)

Yummy cake. I want some. Right away. Happy 4th!!

### **TIMBER! (2010-07-07 09:13)**

We have five trees in our backyard that have been nice ornamental, shade trees. They blossom each spring and look beautiful, then have rich green leaves during the summer and fall. About wintertime, it gets cold enough to have them change color and the yellow leaves are gorgeous. When we moved into our home 13 years ago, they were little and cute, but they have grown gigantic and they were taking over our yard. Soooooo..... I decided they had to go. A few weeks ago, we cut all the big branches off the first tree and broke the branches and stuffed them into plastic bags and the garbage men hauled them away. Then Sr. D gave the project over to Taylor and any friends/cousins who wanted to join him and earn some money.

Uncle Jeff heard about the project and brought his chainsaw to help out. Well, Monday, July 5th, our project went into turbo charge mode! :) He took the last three trees down, and chopped them up. We had Taylor, cousin Dover, cousin Brian, and friend Markus working on bundling.





The branches kept falling into our neighbor's yard. Luckily they weren't home, or we would have really freaked them out. Especially on the last tree. Uncle Jeff was sawing at the trunk after having removed some heavy limbs, and Taylor and Brian were pulling on a rope, but the tree went the wrong way and landed on the fence. (See video below!) Several fence boards were casualties in the crash, and we have bought new ones. Hopefully today we can get those fixed.





It looked like we had had a hurricane! I don't know how Jeff didn't feel overwhelmed at this sight! And it was 102 degrees outside, about 75 % humidity!



This is Tuesday with almost all the work done. The bundles are to the left of the picture, where we will carry out manageable piles that our garbage men will be willing to haul away. We also have a pile of bigger pieces of wood that we may Craigs List as firewood and give away to the first taker.





What a project! Thank you Uncle Jeff for being Mike Mulligan for a day!



And thank you to Taylor, Dover, Brian and Markus for all the manly labor! They got money, tans and a total body workout, so I think they came out ahead! (You can see the poor fence in this picture)





And here's the video of the last tree coming down. Wince, wince.

[EMBED]

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Amy Coons (2010-07-07 14:08:56)

Wow. That is some serious yard work. I hope you like all the room now!

### 3.7 September

#### Girls Camp (2010-09-14 10:51)

We had a wonderful, but terrifically hot and humid girls camp. This would be an ideal place in October or November, but not August. (August 9-14) I was ward girls camp director and we had 9 1st through 3rd year girls who were fantastic!

The theme for camp this year was "There's No Place Like Home" taken from The Wizard of Oz. Since the YM/YW scripture/theme for this year is Be strong and of good COURAGE, it was fun to base the camp theme loosely on that. So our ward had to think of our name and we called ourselves the Daring Dreamers and our color was the rainbow and we got rainbow suspenders and our theme was "The dreams that you dare to dream really do come true." (From the song Somewhere Over the Rainbow) We had to make a flag and this was ours. One of the girls brought the rainbow strips and another one wrote the words, and the rest of us stitched it all up!



We shared this camp site with 2 other wards. It's an official Girl Scout camp and it is awesome!



This is the bathroom. Emily and her friend, Rebecca.



This was taken before the testimony meeting.





Inside the AIR-CONDITIONED lodge. The 5th year girls are leading the girls in camp songs. Behind the girls are all the ward's camp flags. Such creativity!!! I was blown away. This was a great theme!



Here are our 9 girls plus one of their 5th year youth camp leaders waiting for more singing.





At this camp there is this great statue. We got some pics with it.



Getting props ready for our skit.



After our skit. The judges didn't get the point of it, so they gave us the "Psychotic Award", but that's ok, our girls had a blast with it! :D



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### Family Vacation to Fort Walton Beach, FL (2010-09-14 12:18)

Heather came to visit and a few days later on August 16th we headed to the east coast to a family favorite vacation spot: Fort Walton Beach, Florida. Three years ago we went there at the recommendation of our bishop and fell in love. So we decided to do it again. When we got there (a ten hour car ride), three other families from our ward were already vacationing at the same condos. So we jumped in the pool and enjoyed their company for the first few days. They left and we stayed. This is Spencer with one of our ward nursery members.





Inside the condo watching an I Love Lucy episode on tv. The couches were wet half the time. :) Almost every night we watched a Harry Potter movie, which turned out to be one of the funnest memories of the trip.





Two cool dudes.



There were good waves the first couple of days. There was a bunch of algae in the water which was gross.





Here's some of the four Katy 2nd Ward families in Florida.



Our condo is the one on the bottom with a surf board standing up on the porch.







We took family pictures, but you'll have to go to Heather's blog to see them.





Besides the pool and the beach, we went into Destin and played at a place that had go-karts and mini golf.









Beautiful art graced the playland, Heather had to take a picture.



We melted half way through the golf course and headed back to air conditioning and water!



The last two days of our trip, the water was completely clear of algae and there was smooth water, not one wave. The water was gorgeous!





Our last day in Florida we rented a pontoon boat for a few hours and zipped around.





Ahh, the life!







We motored over to Crab Island which is a submerged island about 3-6 feet under water. We rented some snorkels and fins and explored the water. It was very relaxing. Emily collected about 6 hermit crabs in a bucket. She let all but one go the next day.





What a great vacation! We highly recommend it for anyone! We went when school started for the Florida schools so that we paid off-season prices. A very reasonable vacation!





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### **Cinco Ranch Football Season Begins! (2010-09-14 13:42)**

So my boys are not going to Cinco Ranch High School this year, but they have plenty of school spirit! They were counting down the days to the first game and decided to deck themselves and their comrades out with face paint and school colors for the event. I helped them mix the maroon paint and did some of the face painting, but then I had to grab my camera as the whole gang just had a face-painting fiesta! Enjoy!





Spencer making the Cinco Ranch sign



Dover painting Coulter's face



Dover painting Taylor's face.



Josh Davies





Spencer is NOT excited. I repeat, NOT excited.











Taylor found this wig at a game last year. So vogue!



Marcus was the terrorist, I mean bedouin in the group. He finally consented to get his eyelids painted.



A motley crew!





Our neighbor who is a sports photographer took their picture at the game. You can see the 2 he took by clicking this link: [http://www.photosbymose.com/Football-Current-Season/2010-08-26-CRHS-V-vsKF/2010-08-26-CRHS-Vars-vs-KleinF/13523743\\_WD9Vm#985261842\\_GkHiG](http://www.photosbymose.com/Football-Current-Season/2010-08-26-CRHS-V-vsKF/2010-08-26-CRHS-Vars-vs-KleinF/13523743_WD9Vm#985261842_GkHiG) Silly boys!

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Amy Coons (2010-09-22 20:17:16)

Too fun! Sometimes it's the anticipation that is the best part. :) I remember in high school this group of guys that would get all ready for the rallies before big games. (I went to BEYER High). So each of the guys painted a letter on themselves. Then, they would think it was funny to have the Y sit down (ironically it was the Mormon kid) so they spelled BEER. Gee, so clever.

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### 3.8 October

#### Spencer is an Elder (2010-10-03 13:33)

The Sunday before he left for BYU -I, Spencer was ordained to the Melchizedek priesthood. Some of our family came in to town for it and I realized right before our high councilor turned the floor over to Damon to ordain him how Damon's dad and all but one brother were there. I couldn't grab a camera, so I grabbed Damon's i-phone to snap the shot. Special day. Thank you to all who made the trip! Wish we lived close to every single family member to be able to share these great days with each of you!



Went to dinner with Spencer's friend and soon-to-be-roommate, Josh Davies, and his family. Thought we'd celebrate their upcoming adventure with some good food!



Texas Roadhouse! How sentimental!





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**BYU - Idaho!!! (2010-10-03 13:50)**

Spencer was so excited to get to Rexburg, and when he got there he took it by storm. He got the hall, within his first hour, to root for Boise State in their football game against Virginia Tech and had them screaming by the end of the game. He also volunteered to be one of four resident representatives to gather the hall for hall prayer and coordinate hall activities. I took him out to Idaho and helped get him set up. I know he could have managed by himself, but I just wanted to be his mommy for a few more days! More for me than for him, I'm sure! Here are a few shots of his dorm room after we got it set up.

His closet and drawers!







His desk!



His bed!

338







Spencer and his roommate, Josh!



Spencer outside his hall.



Right before I said goodbye to my wonderful BYU-I son!





**Breakfast At Tiffany's (2010-10-05 10:31)**



Yummy, yummy! We have been drinking breakfast at our home for over 1 1/2 years now and we love it and can't get enough! I thought the blender full of fruit looked almost like a work of art so I grabbed my camera and captured the breakfast process. We have a peach, 2 bananas, an apple, plum, strawberries, and a partridge in a pear tree- just kidding- a pear in here.





I added a little water, some ice and blended it up, then added about 4 handfuls of spinach and a tablespoon of coconut oil. The spinach tones down the sweetness and we get a salad for breakfast without even noticing! It only takes a couple of days to get used to the spinach flavor.



Here is our milk making process for the past 2 years: 1/2 c. raw almonds and 3 c. water.



Blend for a minute and you have frothy white almond milk! What to do about the almond meal?



Cut a piece of white muslin, stick it in a bowl and pour the milk in. Gather it up, twist and squeeze the milk out. I feel like I'm milking. :) I usually dump it back in the blender and add some ice and blend it up to make the milk cold.





It's so great! Very fresh. And sometimes I keep the almond meal and use it as a facial scrub in the shower. It's a great, but messy body scrub too.



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Amy Coons (2010-10-05 12:26:19)

That blender full of fruit looks so good!!! And I will have to try the almond milk the next time I'm at your house. :)

**A Possum in the Garbage (2010-10-18 14:43)**



I found a possum in our garbage can the other day. It was gross. Emily was fascinated and took pictures and named it and thought it was cute. So I can post about it thanks to her. It was garbage day and I hoped to say goodbye to Freddy Freeze when the truck came by, but it was not my fortunate day. The garbage man noticed the hermit vermin, knocked the can over, "kicked the bucket" and the marsupial scuttled to our side yard. Eventually he got in our backyard and, we think, his "home" under our backyard shed. Oh goody!



So there's our "Creature Feature" for this October!

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Amy Coons (2010-10-18 18:41:03)

Ew. I think it is the tail that makes them gross. I would have probably screamed when I saw it (or a very loud gasp!) Interesting that the garbage man knew not to take him...sounds like he comes across it enough. Sorry about your new pet.

Emily May (2010-10-18 19:31:20)

you didn't say why i named him freddy freeze. well kind of like in the movie 'over the hedge', possumes 'play dead', but our possum just freezes in place, and doesn't move for ages. :>  
emily

Mindy Janis (2010-10-19 18:21:48)

He's going to eat our garden when we get it planted-should I say if we get it planted! What an adventure.

Kylee (2010-10-19 21:33:48)

Ewwwww. Emily has such a sweet heart to see beauty in freddy freeze.

heather (2010-10-21 15:32:40)

That's disgusting.

## 4. 2011

### 4.1 January

Time to Catch Up! (2011-01-07 11:46)



































































So there have been so many things going on I haven't had time to sit down and post. So just for my record, I'm blogging it all at once! Here's our mid-October through the New Year in short order. (And what my camera was able to capture: first, my camera and my photography skills are not very good, and second, sometimes I just was having too much fun, I forgot to pull out the camera. And when it was all over, I kicked myself for not pulling it out more.)

Enough brutal honesty, let's get this thingy done! I want to be caught up!!!

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### **October: A Nerd Dance and Emily's B-Day Party (2011-01-07 21:35)**

Taylor and Marcus: silly boys who went all out for a Stake nerd dance. Don't they look geeky?:D



Marcus wore a long sleeve shirt over his tank to the dance - just so ya know!



Emily made invitations, and planned and hosted her whole birthday party this year. The girls had a blast being together, watching "How to Train Your Dragon," eating dinner and playing games. Emily put on the invite not to bring presents, but they ignored her and got her many nice gifts.













Taylor dressed up as a missionary for Halloween. Doesn't he look great? Cute companion too!







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**November: Trip to Ohio! (2011-01-07 21:59)**

Amy called and asked if I could come stay with her while Greg was out of town for a week. I was able to do it and I said "YES!" So I went and it was SOOOO great!

This is a picture of a tunnel in the Detroit airport and it was cool! It had kind of eerie music going and a light show on the walls. I got familiar with this tunnel because I went back and forth in it because I missed my connecting flight and almost cried, and was put up in a hotel and had an experience to remember and write in my journal about.



Yummy grapes to eat and play chipmunk with. Pinch those cheeky cheeks!!



Ryan liked my old lady reading glasses and wore them around the house whenever he saw them.



Went to the John Johnson farm and took a tour. We were the only ones there. It was a wonderful experience. It was here, in Hyrum (not related to Hyrum Smith) where Joseph Smith received the revelation of the three degrees of glory found in D & C 76.







In the bed behind us is where Joseph was dragged out of and tarred and feathered, then right outside the door preached a sermon the next day. One of his twins died from exposure because of the event. The twins were sleeping on the trundle bed underneath.







Eric really liked playing the game "Angry Birds" on my iphone. This picture just reminds me of my three boys at that age. It took me back.



I held and loved and kissed this baby and couldn't get enough! I love him and miss him so much!!



Next door to the Johnson farm is an apple farm and a store. Amy got a bushel of apples, and she and the boys made apple pie filling to freeze. Eric helped peel/core/slice the apples and the other boys stirred in the spices. I took lots of pictures and video and wanted to make a fun movie with music, but couldn't get the technology to work for me. Rats! I think I got the boys making up a (bathroom) humorous song on video that also brought back the good old days!:)





Good memories of an A+ book report on *The Silver Chair*, a Family Home Evening playing the game *Categories*, singing 'In a Cottage by the wood,... come little rabbit, come with me, happy we will be. WHACK! Mmmm! Wabbit stew!'" Thank you Amy, Eric, Ryan, Christian and Daniel for a truly marvelous week!



Heather (2011-01-09 11:11:02)

My sister goes to church right next door to the John Johnson farm. We've been there a few times now and it just a marvelous place!

**November: Taylor the Lumberjack (2011-01-07 22:42)**

I asked Taylor to cut the trunks down in the backyard and split the logs for firewood. He got all excited when I said he needed to buy an ax. He got all dramatic, put on a lumberjack-looking shirt, donned a Grandpa Stucki hat, and posed:











He sawed the tree till it was ready to go down, but had me come out and video him chopping the tree with the ax, and then pushing it over. Silly boy! I mean, What a Man!!!! Here's a video.

[EMBED]

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heather (2011-01-16 00:38:16)  
mama your boys are so handsome!!!!  
what a goof:)

### **November: Thanksgiving (2011-01-07 23:36)**

For Thanksgiving this year, Sr. D, Taylor and Brian played in the ward's annual Turkey Bowl: Aaronic vs Melchizedek priesthood. The older guys won 9-5. Taylor played quarterback 1/2 the game, threw 2 touchdowns and caught 2. Brian converted a ton of 3rd down and 10s to 1st downs. Sr. D did some great blocking, caught an interception and didn't get hurt (his main goal of the game.) He is in black just to the right of the guy in red.





Taylor's in the middle in black, and Brian is on the left in white shirt, blue shorts.



Then it was feast time and I was too busy in the kitchen to pick up my camera and I am SO MAD!! We had Uncle Brandon's family and Aunt Shelby's family and it was a grand time! Here is the only picture I got of the day. It is this darling cutie. I took him on a walk around the lake in the stroller and we fed the ducks and had a bonding time. Love

you Tommy!!



We had a nice gathering and went around the room and talked about what we were most grateful for. Aunt Mindy was great getting everyone to play games and we had a great time learning and playing Mafia. I showed Shelby and Mindy a potato bag and they got excited and figured out how to make them and ordered the material for each of us to make several, and I almost created a million dollar potato bag business called The Three Spudetts, but in the end, didn't. Ah, the dreams we have! Anyway, it was a great Thanksgiving!

---

Mindy Janis (2011-01-09 21:22:51)  
Love you're new posts.

### **November 29 - Taylor is 17!!! (2011-01-14 15:23)**

Taylor had a pretty nice birthday if the saying goes "the way to a man's heart is through his stomach!" He got an "unusual" breakfast of eggs, ham and hash-browns plus some acai-blueberry juice. For lunch Uncle Brandon and Dover took him and Sr D. to Saltgrass Steakhouse! Yum! For dinner he asked for chicken enchiladas.

After dinner we went Christmas tree shopping, came home, put it up, strung it with lights and hung the ornaments. We ate some chocolate eclares, and then he opened presents. As you can see he got a football. He also got another workout outfit and a gift card from Grandma and Grandpa Scott. Elder Janis sent him Austin Collie's rookie year football card.



Here is Emily taking a video of the opening of presents next to our new Christmas tree. It's a little blurry, but gives the general glow and fuzziness in the room.



17 wonderful years with this boy! I love you Taylor!

[EMBED]

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Amy Coons (2011-01-15 19:24:39)

Happy Birthday Taylor! How's 17 been treating you lately? Crazy!!;

### **December: Young Women in Excellence Night (2011-01-14 16:33)**

On December 1st our ward had its Young Women in Excellence program. I had video-interviewed all our young women's mothers asking them what value she thought her daughter exemplifies most, and then created a movie adding music and pictures of the girls. It was really fun. So... since the girls were the stars of the show, we did a Hollywood theme and had them dress their fanciest. The YW secretary did all the decorations and food. It was an awesome night. 23 out of 25 girls came and all the moms but one (who lives out of state) were there!!









She even made star cookies and frosted them and the little note says "YOU are the **star** of your own PERSONAL PROGRESS"



She made this big poster that has all the values on it and the girls got their pictures taken with boas and walked the "red carpet"



This is my Beehive class. Another 2 have turned 12 since then and we have quite a big group now!



After cleaning up, the secretary gave me all the balloons. So Emily was in charge of them. We got a ride home with Taylor in the Honda civic. The balloons wouldn't fit, so he opened the moon roof and his friend, Markus held on to the balloons tight as we zoomed through the night with them flailing out the top. It was wild! He had his music on and we laughed at all the people who gave us double takes.





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Amy Coons (2011-01-16 21:17:10)

Wow! This definately turned out awesome! You always do the most amazing things Tiff. I'm sure all the YW will want copies of your movie. I can see the balloon car now...:)

Heather (2011-01-26 21:23:35)

I love Emily's outfit! And I would have loved to see the balloons in the car!

### **December: Christmas Piano Recital (2011-01-16 17:56)**

Our Christmas piano recital was really nice. It was in the huge home of a friend of the piano teacher. I had actually been there before with a stake event, but anyway, I'm diverging. The teacher broke up her students into three groups and had three smaller recitals instead of one really long recital. She's so nice! Emily played a Suzuki song called Melody, and the Christmas song O Holy Night. She did a marvelous job!



Then Taylor played the Suzuki song A Happy Farmer and the Christmas song What Child is This? He also did a fantastic job.



At the end there were a few duets and Emily and I played The Little Drummer Boy.



Emily, Taylor, and their teacher Marilyn Johnson. (Yes, this home has a raised platform with TWO grand pianos on it!)





**December: Hanukkah, Oh Hanukkah, Come Light the Menorah! (2011-01-16 18:56)**

This year for Hanukkah, we celebrated with Uncle Brandon's family! We started by watching a Youtube video that Uncle Roark sent that was really fun and tells the story. Here is the link if you haven't seen it yet: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MJSu58kznxA&feature=related>

Here's a picture of some of the yummy food we ate. The latkes are warming somewhere else. Isn't that a festive menorah jello? I made the donuts and heated a brisket, Aunt Mindy made the latkes, jello and applesauce. Thank you Aunt Mindy!









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Mindy Janis (2011-01-17 11:29:08)

Just want you to know that your pictures look great. I don't see a problem with them!

Heather (2011-01-26 21:24:44)

You always set a festive table, Tiffany!

### **December: An Epic Christmas Trip! (2011-01-16 19:17)**

We took off to California after church, Sunday, December 19th. We had to run to the house even though we had packed the car before going to church. We grabbed food and a couple of things then locked the door and climbed in the car.

As we were driving down the driveway, Sr. D. asked if there was anything else we had forgotten. Immediately I thought of something! So we drove right back up the driveway and I ran in.

As we were driving BACK down the driveway, Sr. D. asked if there was anything else we had forgotten. Immediately I thought of something! So we drove right back up the driveway and I ran in.

Then, as we were driving back down the driveway, Sr. D. asked if there was anything else we had forgotten. Immediately I thought of something! So we drove right back up the driveway and I ran in. At this point, we started laughing and this repeated itself another 2 or 3 times!

We got a couple of blocks away and were at a red light. (Still in the residential neighborhood) The light turned green and we accelerated and in the intersection, our van's back door opened up and half of our stuff tumbled out into the street. Some really good barbecue sauce in a glass jar was in that stuff and it got on some of the stuff. People at the intersection jumped out of their cars with us and helped get it back in the van. Heather and Taylor couldn't stop laughing for 10 minutes!

We finally got all back in order and de-barbecued and were off. Two and a half long days of driving. We stayed in a hotel that had a stray cat outside. I don't know how WE get so lucky! Emily is a stray cat magnet I think. She wanted to take it with us and still holds us in contempt for not allowing it.







The Grand Canyon was awesome! We stopped at one end and went out on the bridge and took some pictures. Actually, Heather took pictures and I think I took some video. If you want to see the pictures, go to her blog at: <http://athermusic.blogspot.com/2010/12/grand-canyon-overlook.html>



We got to Uncle John's home in Hurricane, Utah Tuesday afternoon and spent a wonderful evening with them, eating paninis, listening to Uncle John and Taylor jam on their guitars, be without electricity for an hour or two because of a dam breaking nearby, and all the other usual things that happen when you visit family. ;) Emily, Alison and Sarah put on a play they made up, we had gourmet cupcakes, and talked guns, food storage, investing and politics.

We had such a great time, I forgot to pull out my camera even once!!! I am so mad!!!! Thank you so much Uncle John, Aunt Val, and Alison, Sarah and Lauren for a wonderful evening! We will visit longer next time and give you earlier warning!:)

After another long day, we arrived at Grandma and Grandpa Scott's in Modesto, California!!! Yea! Spencer had flown into Modesto a couple of nights earlier and it was so good to see him again! Uncle James was also there and it was a mini reunion! "We're not all here John."

Here are Heather and Emily ready for bed. This zebra blanket was a Christmas present that day from a patient of Grandpa Scott, and it was a well used and loved blanket the whole time we were there.



We all went down to the office and got adjustments twice while visiting and it was great! The kids really liked the massage table/bed. They almost fought over it. But now they're so mature, they don't fight. :)



This game of Jenga was insane! It went about 20 rounds further than anyone would have guessed! We put two puzzles together as well. It was so fun!



Taylor getting some pointers from Grandpa the pro guitarist.





I don't think I ever see a prettier tree than my mother's. It was perfect.



I had a darling picture right here of a close-up of the tree and a cute Santa ornament, but it somehow got deleted.

Then I tried sticking a video of the kids posing in their new Buc'ees pajama pants, but it messed a ton up, and delayed this post by at least three weeks, so I'm moving forward again.

This is Christmas morning before the rush to see the presents.









Heather did a great photoshoot of Aunt Whitney's family and I had to go along to watch her in action. Uncle James came too and I captured this cute photo.





What fun to have homemade yummy cookies at Grandma's house!! They were the melt-in-your-mouth kind.



One day we went to a place to sled where they blew "snow" on the track. It was a pretty cold day. The kids had fun sledding and I had fun taking pictures and Sr. D had fun buying hot chocolate and drinking it.







It was quite the operation. Here they are getting instructions on what the process was.











You go up this escalator...



get in line on one of the tracks, then slide down for a 15 second thrill...







then jump out of your tube and get off the snow quick and get back in line.







This was a typical scene back at Grandpa and Grandma's





Another day we went to San Francisco (along with every other Californian). It was a gorgeous day! We browsed Pier 39.



Ate some clam chowder at Chowders. Yum!







Then we crossed the Bay and went to the Oakland Temple. It was still decorated for Christmas. The view at night of the Bay and San Francisco all lit up was amazing!







Fun times singing with Grandpa! I love, love, love this!



Such good times, then we had to say goodbye. We drove to Provo and had a wonderful time with Grandma and Grandpa Janis. I didn't remember to pull my camera out, and I'm so mad!!! We had a wonderful dinner with all Utah brothers and sisters.

Taylor and Emily wanted to play in the snow. Aunt Allisa let them borrow her sled.





It was so so wonderful to see so many of you! We love you all so much!

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Amy Coons (2011-02-07 19:36:19)

Oh, I loved seeing all of this!!! I loved all the random, but everyday stuff that you got pictures of. And the comment about what Sr.D. did at the "sledding" made me laugh out loud. (And the part about how many times ya'll had to keep going inside...) Yay for family trips!!

Heather (2011-02-09 13:07:06)

I went to a sledding place like that growing up. But we were a lot more bundled up than you guys because it was nighttime in MA and it was freezing. It was the closest I've ever come to having frostbite. Sounds like you had a wonderful trip!

John and Sue (2011-02-09 19:07:57)

Thanks for the memories of the wonderful time we had when you were here with us for Christmas! You made a great effort to drive all the way to California, but we are so glad you did! We miss you, but we will always treasure Christmas 2010.

## 4.2 February

### The Janis Restaurant (2011-02-21 13:56)

Our house is a restaurant. Since Spencer returned from BYU-I, he has taken over the food department for him and Taylor. They have set body building goals and are working hard to acheive them. Spencer gets a portion of the weekly food budget, plans the meals, buys the food and makes the meals for himself and Taylor. For Christmas Spencer got a book he asked for called Muscle Chow. He has made many recipes from it including a very delicious homemade granola. Another recipe was Bison Burgers. Here he is modeling himself with the freshly made bison burgers and an apron Grandma Janis gave Sr. D for Christmas. Spencer loves the apron!:D





And here is a beautiful grilled chicken salad.



Emily has also changed her eating and for about 5 weeks (with a week lapse) has eaten almost completely raw foods. Here she is with a salad she made herself that she ate for two consecutive dinners.





She is also doing a cooking class with a good friend from church who is homeschooling and wants to learn to cook healthy. So one day we made, among other things, a raw chocolate mousse pie. The crust is made of walnuts, unsweetened coconut, dates and a pinch of salt. The filling is made with dates, maple syrup, a few drops of vanilla, avocado, cocoa and water. This is topped with sliced strawberries and is a very rich, sweet, chocolate dessert.



So, many evenings when we sit down to dinner, there are three different meals.

Our house is a restaurant.

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### **A Garden is Growing in My Backyard! (2011-02-21 14:49)**

I have had very small luck with gardening in my adult life. But!!! At the beginning of November, Uncle Brandon and Aunt Mindy installed this awesome garden in our backyard. It is heavy plastic bags with holes for drainage, filled with sand and a top layer of soil and mulch. There is a small sprinkler in each bag that is hooked up to our hose with an automatic timer which waters the garden 4 times a day for 1 minute each time. Once the plants start growing, we have a nutrient spray that we spray on the leaves once every two weeks. We planted seeds and waited. This is right after installing and planting. The sprinklers are on.





Here are the radishes coming up a couple of weeks later!



And now look at it! We have had a couple of sub-freezing weeks when I had to cover it with sheets, but the plants survived and the garden is starting to really take off! All of this was started with seeds! We have planted radishes, carrots, peas, spinach, lettuce, cabbage, beans, cilantro, thyme, basil, chives, dill, marigolds and zinnias. Some are further along, obviously than others. We also have planted tomato, squash, cantaloupe, peppers and more herb seeds in little peat pods that we will transplant into the garden soon.





Just a few days ago we harvested the bigger spinach leaves in the lower 4 corner bags. In the 3rd to the right bottom bag is our cabbage.



This bag has several things growing. At the top is a pole bean and most of the greens are cilantro. There are also dill and flowers growing.





These peas took off! I harvested about 7 pea pods today. Can you see some of them? Me and Mindy are super excited about this. I will probably do more posts as we keep going.



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Mindy Janis (2011-02-22 21:40:50)  
Yeah! for our garden!

### **A Manly Day (2011-02-28 12:49)**

Sr. D bought a gun. A 270 rifle. Then he bought another one. A 22 rifle. He takes the boys to shooting ranges and they shoot and feel like men. It's a good bonding experience. They like it. This is Spencer at an outdoor range. He likes his sunglasses too. He is a good shot. The holes below the bullseye were Sr. D's. He didn't want to shoot over Spencer's.





Please staple target on bottom two boards. Thanks

### SAFETY RULES

Hearing and eye protection is mandatory.

- THESE RULES MUST BE STRICTLY ADHERED TO FOR SAFE AND ENJOYABLE SHOOTING.
1. BOLTS OR ACTIONS MUST BE OPEN WHEN YOU ARE NOT SHOOTING.
  2. TREAT EVERY GUN AS IF IT WERE LOADED AT ALL TIMES.
  3. KEEP YOUR MUZZLE POINTED DOWN RANGE (ON IN A SAFE DIRECTION) AT ALL TIMES.
  4. CHECK YOUR BARREL FOR OBSTRUCTIONS BEFORE FIRING.
  5. MAKE SURE YOU HAVE THE CORRECT AMMUNITION FOR YOUR GUN BEFORE FIRING.
  6. SHOOT ONLY AT YOUR ASSIGNED TARGET. ANYONE SHOOTING AT ANYTHING OTHER THAN THEIR ASSIGNED TARGET WILL BE ASKED TO LEAVE.
  7. NO HANGING FROM EDGES ON THIS RANGE.
  8. NO HORSE PLAY PERMITTED. THIS INCLUDES CHILDREN.
  9. NO ALCOHOL WILL BE PERMITTED ON THESE PREMISES. ANYONE SUSPECTED OF BEING UNDER THE INFLUENCE WILL BE ASKED TO LEAVE.
  10. PAID SHOOTERS WILL BE ALLOWED ON THE FIRING LINE. EVERYONE ELSE MUST STAY BACK ON THE FIRING LINE.
  11. RANGE OFFICERS ARE IN COMMAND OF ALL SHOOTERS WHILE THEY ARE ON THE PREMISES.
  12. REMOVE ALL FIREARMS FROM THEIR CASES AT THE SHOOTING BENCHES ONLY, NOT BEHIND THE SHOOTING BENCHES OR IN YOUR VEHICLE OR IN THE PARKING LOT.

RANGE OFFICERS ARE HERE TO HELP OR ASSIST YOU. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS, FEEL FREE TO ASK.

THINK SAFETY

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This is at an indoor range. They rented a pistol and really had fun shooting with it.





He has this hanging in his room now. Hmmmm.... It's a man thing is all I can say. :)















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Amy Coons (2011-02-28 19:44:16)

Hey! They are all wearing ear-puffs! I laughed at the comment about Sr.D's shots on the target. :)

Heather (2011-03-02 16:15:36)

Shooting? Yikes! It must be a guy thing. Glad to hear they have a fun hobby together, though!

## 4.3 March

### Beaumont Gusher #2 (2011-03-25 09:57)

On March 12, we participated in Beaumont's 2nd annual Gusher marathon, 1/2 marathon, and 5K races. I ran the 1/2, and Sr. D, Emily and Spencer ran the 5 K. Our beloved Beaumont Bingham relatives also participated! Uncle Jeff ran the full, gruelling 26 mile marathon, cousin Brian ran the 1/2, and cousins Jared and Rachel ran the 5 K.

We had a nice surprise too! Just as the marathon and 1/2 marathoners were about to start, I looked over and saw cousin Chad Janis all the way from Dallas talking to Spencer and Sr. D! He had come to run the 1/2 marathon! Uncle Roark, Aunt Rebecca, and cousins Laura and Sarah were somewhere along the trail waiting to cheer everyone on! When the race was over, they headed on to Florida for a fun Spring Break.

The weather was perfect for a long run: clouds and a cool breeze. I ran the whole way and felt really good afterward, recovering very quickly. Whew! Emily started running with Rachel, but turns out, Rachel seems to be a long-distance SPRINTER, so Emily opted to go at a slower pace with Sr. D 1/2 way through.

Spencer was bound and determined to win the entire 5K race, but didn't anticipate a bus load of University sprinters from Michigan joining him. He kept up for about a mile, but wasn't conditioned THAT well for 3.1 miles. The winner ran it in around 15 min! So he opted out of the race. :) :(

Brian came in 1st in his age category(1 hour 53 min. 41 seconds) and Chad came in 3rd (2:00:51)!!! Yea cousins! I beat my time last year by 20 minutes (2:20:26)! Yea me!!!

Here are some pics and videos captured by our biggest cheerleader and patient spectator, AUNT SHELBY!!!! Sr. D and Emily warming up for the 5K.





Brian crossing the finish line.





Chad sprinting the home stretch.



After the race. I LOVE the medals they give the 1/2 and full marathoners! They are so cool!



Here I am crossing the finish line.

[EMBED]

Jared crossing the finish line. He came in 7th in his age category (24:49)! Go Jared! Another long-distance sprinter! It's all that soccer playing! Rachel zipped by without getting on film. :( Sorry Rachel!! She came in 8th in her category! (29:06)

[EMBED]

Emily (35:22) and Sr. D (35:39) coming across the finish line. Emily made a sprint ahead of Sr. D on the final leg. Sr. D preferred to keep at his minimal effort output strategy to the end. :)

[EMBED]

Another one of me at the end. Our only picture of Spencer. Taylor was at an autistic camp being a buddy, so he wasn't able to be with us. We missed him, but he had a wonderful time!

[EMBED]

Yea Jeff! (4:03:24 - 6th place in his age category) His 7th marathon! (including a mega 50 mile marathon!)

[EMBED]

Here are two more videos that Uncle Roark sent to us, of us during the races. Thank you!!!

[EMBED]

[EMBED]



Amy Coons (2011-03-29 21:30:06)

Yay for my running family!!! Awesome job everybody!!

## 4.4 July

### Moroni's Quest (2011-07-15 08:16)

Ok, I'm blogging again! I'll have a few posts, hopefully to catch up really fast!

April 21st through 23rd was our stake's youth conference. They called it Moroni's Quest.

They had to make Nephite-type costumes and each ward was assigned a story from the Book of Mormon to act out.

Our ward was assigned the story of Abinidi, and Taylor played Abinidi.



They met at the Stake Center and were assigned to a "tribe" Then some of the youth in the Stake started the youth conference off with Mormon and Moroni talking about the record of the Book of Mormon and reading from the beginning of the record about Lehi's family. Taylor also was in this scene and played Laman with his good friend Marcus acting as Lemuel. (see the video)



They were then driven out to a ranch (to the Promised Land) an hour away for the rest of Moroni's Quest. I got to drive and enjoyed the first scene at the Stake Center. I heard the rest of the youth conference was just incredible!

The first night they were blindfolded and held on to a "rod of iron." When they took the blindfolds off there was this huge tree all glowing with lights and lit up white bulbs hanging like fruit from the branches.

Throughout the days they watched the ward reenactments and then gathered as tribes to discuss their thoughts and feelings. They also got to participate in about 3 wars as well.

The last night they were again blindfolded and sat on the ground while they heard the sounds of a big storm and then quiet. Then they heard a voice and when they took their blindfolds off, there was a spotlight on a man in white acting as the Savior and there was music playing as he walked around touching the hands of most of the youth. Taylor said it was an incredible feeling and such a strong spirit. I wish I could have been there!

Here is my van-full at the ranch when we arrived.



And here is the video:

[EMBED]

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### **When You Believe (2011-07-19 20:03)**

Emily was in a group voice class winter semester. The recital combined all the classes of her wonderful teacher, Debbie Siebert. Each girl got to sing a fun show number solo and then we enjoyed refreshments. Emily sang the song, "When You Believe," from the movie "Prince of Egypt." She did a great job!



Here's the video:  
[EMBED]

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Kylee (2011-07-20 20:46:58)  
Go Emily! She sounds so great! Can't wait to sing with her lots when we are in TX :)

**Happy Easter! (2011-07-19 20:16)**

So we celebrated Easter and had some baskets waiting for the teen kids in the morning. This is Emily's basket.





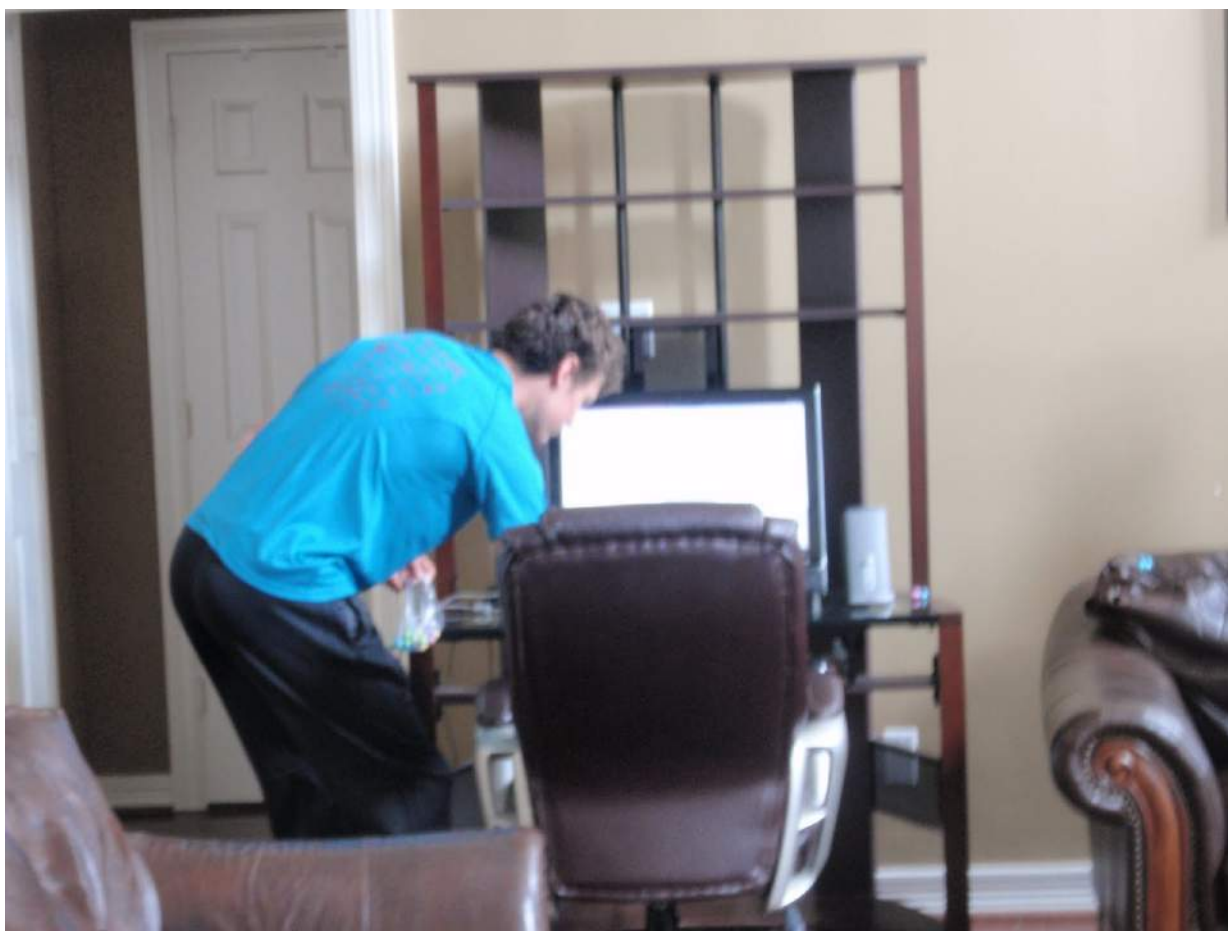
Here is Taylor's.





They were even ok hunting for peanut M &M's.:) (who can resist?)





This is Markus Anderson. His parents were out of town and he stayed with us for a couple of days and joined in our Easter morning activities.



I finally got this frame I bought about 2 years ago in St. George up on the wall with shots of our Florida trip last summer. It was a perfect ledge for the M &M's!



We went to Brandon and Mindy's for Easter dinner and they had cooked up a fancy and delicious meal for all and I really appreciated and enjoyed it!!



Emily and Daenon colored some eggs after dinner. A little late, but better late than never!





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### The Kemah Boardwalk (2011-07-19 20:28)

Before the school year ended and all the crowds flooded into the little beach town of Kemah, TX, Aunt Mindy and I took advantage of the homeschool flexibility and took Emily and Daenon to the Boardwalk. We all got day passes and enjoyed the rides. Weather was perfect and Daenon entertained us all!:)



Aunt Mindy and I went several times on this rattling roller coaster, but then gave in to the old age idea -as opposed to any "New Age" idea:- that being flung side to side and up and down in a screaming machine isn't as fun as it used to be. So we opted out and took pictures instead.





















Branson, Missouri (2011-07-19 21:43)



























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**Branson, Missouri (2011-07-20 16:58)**

On our way to the Janis Family reunion, we stopped in Dallas for a day and got to participate in Chad's ordination to an elder. Then we carpoled up to Branson, Missouri on June 6th with Uncle Roark's family and Grandma and Grandpa Janis.

This Branson place was so cool! I had never heard of it before. (Not a big traveler, me) But it's this city in the middle of nowhere that gets about 10 million tourists a year coming through.

We started June 7th, which was Grandma and Grandpa Janis' 52nd wedding anniversary, with an adventure on Ride the Duck! Here we are waiting:



These are amphibious machines crafted from the WWII DUKW transport vehicles. They ride on land and motor on the water. We got a tour through the Ozarks on them.





Emily took this picture on my i-phone and then edited it on my phone! Amazing technology! Happy anniversary!!



And everyone got a quacker. These Duck machines were all over. Each time we passed one, everyone in both ducks quacked at each other.





Then we went to Sight and Sound Theater and got a pre-show, back stage tour of the theater. They are a Christian theater and have been showing Noah, the Musical for the past 3 years. They have an elaborate stage and set! The show uses 60 live animals as well as animatronics to give you the sense of being in the ark. One scene the theater is wrapped on three sides by a 4-5 story set so that you feel like you are actually in the ark. It was cool! The production



was very Christian and ended with a missionary invitation to come and basically be born again. It was interesting to see an evangelical Noah.:)



Statue out front. Everything in the building is state of the art and beautiful!



In the behind the scenes tour, the tour guide showed us how fast they have to change and asked for a volunteer. Taylor did a great job!



Anxiously waiting for the show to begin. You can see the black curtain on the side. When we were "in the ark" that curtain was pulled back and animals are on the other side!



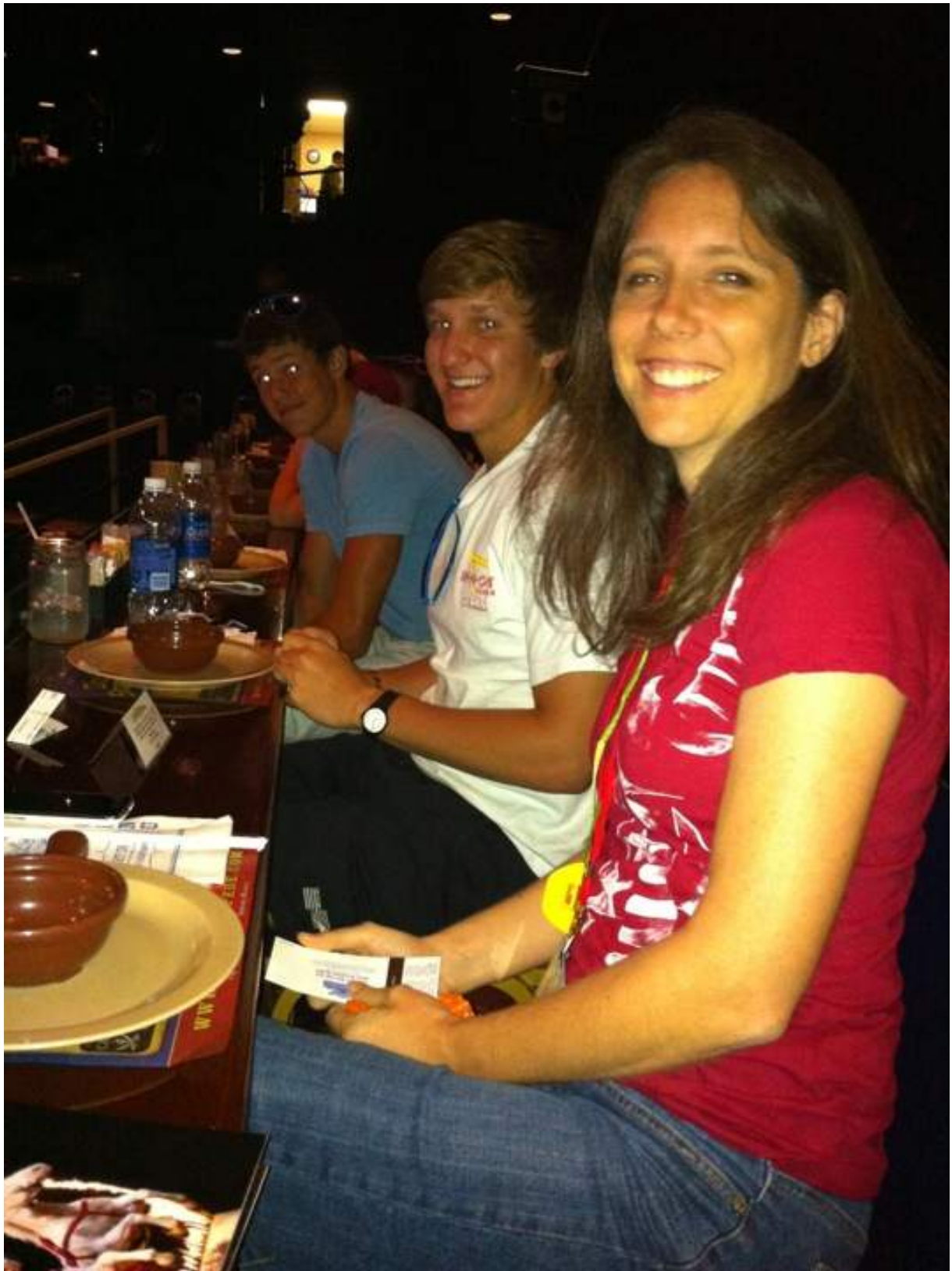


Next we went to the Dixie Stampede pre-show. We ate popcorn and were entertained by a crazy-good banjo-playing, juggling maniac! It was awesome! Laura surprised Sr. D by getting him a root beer in a boot mug when she heard him express a desire for some. So sweet!!!





Then we went into the arena for a dinner and show. While watching a singing and horse riding show with the theme of Yankees against the Confederates, we ate a great dinner. (No utensils, so we ate with our hands. We got a 1/2 chicken each and Sr. D was in heaven!) Do you like Taylor's laser-vision eyes?:)



In one part of the show, Grandpa Janis was escorted out onto the arena where he was in a "horseshoe" throwing contest (he was given a blue toilet seat to throw!) with another guy. He won the contest! Yea Grandpa! What a great day! Couldn't do that every day, but it was a BIG winner!!! Thank you Uncle Roark and Aunt Rebecca for planning such a fantastic day!

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**Nauvoo the Reunion (2011-07-26 07:05)**

Our Janis Family Reunion in Nauvoo was wonderful!!!! Here are some pics we took.



Waiting for a great show to start.





My ancestor, James McDonald on a Pioneer Memorial wall at the end of Parley Street.





We did a family 2-hour handcart trek and it was awesome!!!



A very fun outdoor pioneer play center. The kids old and young loved it!

Cousin Alora:



Cousin Emmie:  
506





Cousin Elijah:





Loving sisters!



A children's parade before another fabulous show. Cousin Sarah:





Cousin Evan:







Thank you Uncle Blair and Aunt Danae for the wonderful, wonderful reunion!!

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### **Summer Swimming (2011-07-26 07:43)**

Taylor had a fantastic Swim Team season! He started as an interim coach for the first two weeks of practice before the coaches all got home from school. He loved it and the kids loved him! He got to teach some swim lessons and pulled in a lot of money for that. He's hoping to coach next year.

His best stroke is freestyle and he got many blue ribbons this year for that! Yea Taylor!!!















Here's one video of him in the IM (individual medley) where he swims butterfly, then back, then breast, then freestyle. My battery died when he got to freestyle and I was so mad! But this shows the other three strokes really well!  
[EMBED]

Paradise (2011-07-27 07:38)

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*gads*

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