

December 2011

Well, here it is again, the end of the year letter that you may enjoy, despise or throw away without reading. Either way, it gives me a chance to rummage through the last year of memories and summarize for myself what exactly took place in our lives and hopefully give you a glimpse into what we have been up to since you last received one of these annoying or enjoyable letters.

January found us in the middle of Jesse's senior year and he was raising money for his senior trip to Europe. Items were being sold on Craigslist, Half.com and odd jobs were being performed. The end was in sight, but he still needed to raise a little more money before his final deadline. He ended the month by attending his senior prom/homecoming dance. He was one sharp dressed man. (Cue the ZZ Top music.)

We celebrated both our birthdays and our 21st anniversary in February. We also visited the Los Angeles Dream Center to take a tour as Jesse hoped to intern there after graduation. On the last day of the month, a vagabond appeared on our step unannounced and declared himself home. We now have a dog named Snickers.

March was the long anticipated two week senior trip to Europe. Jesse managed to raise all the money he needed. Thanks to all who offered their support to make his trip possible. He flew to Rome, trained to Paris, took a bus to Normandy before taking the Chunnel to London. He had a blast and made memories to last a lifetime. Also in April, I was fortunate to have several of my landscape panoramas on exhibit at the Victor Valley Museum.

We took a family trip in April to Death Valley National Park. We arrived before the weather was too hot and enjoyed seeing Badwater, Scotty's Castle, and wound up at Trona Pinnacles. With the arrival of May, we celebrated Jesse's 18th birthday. He decided to wear a suit to school that day, so I got off work early and we both dressed up too surprising him when he got home. We told him we would take him to lunch and he chose Subway. So we were the fanciest looking folks they saw that day.

June was a month of great celebration as Jesse graduated from Apple Valley Christian School Cum Laude as family members watched. Mom and Dad Rezny flew in from Texas and Mom Zeliff flew in from Florida. We were so very proud that he had achieved this goal. After homeschooling a majority of his life, he walked across the stage to receive his diploma. Whoohoo!! He immediately applied for an internship at the Los Angeles Dream Center in hopes of starting in July.



As July began, Jesse waited for a call to begin his internship. So with Jesse house/pet sitting, Renee and I hopped on a plane for Texas to attend the wedding of Joni & Jarid Yankus. Joni was one of our first youth group members 15 years earlier. While in Texas, we also visited Renee's best friend, Michelle Daley, our CFNI classmates Sam & Shari Bristow, our home church Trinity Worship Center, our friends Tim & Patty, Renee's high school pal Carol Camac as well as Renee's family. We attended Mom Rezny's retirement party and snuck over to the Blue Bell Creamery in Brenham, TX. We had a great trip and enjoyed seeing so many of our TX family and friends.

In August, we attended an Angel's baseball game with Doug's company, ActioNet and his co-workers. I continued playing 9 holes after work with my coworkers in my church league and FINALLY managed my first par. At the end of the month, Jesse did receive a call informing him he had been accepted at the Dream Center, but would need to wait until November or January as there was no housing available until then.

September arrived and we joined the family and friends of Master Chief Ritch to welcome him home from his final deployment aboard the USS Reagan. Welcome home sailor! I love my brother from another mother. I reunited with my childhood friend Scott Abbott as he came down from South Dakota to attend to his father and mourn his passing. Sorry we had to do it under such conditions, but it was great to see him again. We were blessed to have Jim Ritch and his daughter Hillary spend the night on their way north too.

On September 21st, Jesse got a call that an opening was available for his internship. So on September 26th, we dropped off Jesse and two pieces of luggage at the Los Angeles Dream Center to begin his 4-month internship. We are very proud he chose to dedicate time to helping others. To be honest, we cried when we arrived home knowing that he was not there anymore. We are happy he is doing such good work, but sad that we are now empty nesters.

In October, I was down in LA for the Adobe Max conference and managed to take Jesse and his roommate James to dinner at the Universal Citywalk after delivering a small refrigerator for his room. Before leaving LA, I stopped by to see Jesse again and let him raid my shwag for any goodies he wanted. A couple of weeks later, we brought Jesse and James home for the weekend.

As November arrived, we weren't sure whether Jesse would be home for Thanksgiving or not. He called a few days prior to say that he had taken time off and was ready for a four day break. We were happy to have him home again and also enjoyed a short visit from Mom Zeliff over that weekend. As we head into December, we don't know if Jesse will be here for Christmas. He raided the decorations while home and the passing of the fuzzy dice occurred. Long story short, the dice were my tree topper on my first Christmas alone and adorned our tree every year to remind me to cherish having loved ones near.

I hope this letter finds each of you surrounded by loved ones and looking forward to a great Christmas and happy New Year. We hope to hear from each of you and might even make it by to visit you if you don't visit us first.

Merry Christmas,
Doug, Renee and Jesse Zeliff
22880 Wren Street • Apple Valley • California • 92308
dzeliff.geo@yahoo.com
www.zeliff.net