

Zeliff Family Christmas Letter 2014

We've had a pretty eventful 2014 so I'll do my best to make it interesting by hitting the highlights. We started the year by celebrating Sabrina's 19th birthday with cake, presents and Chipotle for dinner. Next came a Super Bowl party with Chris and Karen Reyes and seeing Renee's parents, Jo Anne and Duane in Las Vegas. Doug's best friend Jim Ritch hit a milestone by making Command Master Chief in the Navy and Doug made a trip to Florida to visit his Uncle Ray and cousin Patti Hostage while finalizing the guardianship for his mom, Betty.

The middle part of the year consisted of Jesse proposing to Sabrina at sunset on Balboa Beach a week before he turned 21. A few weeks after the proposal, Jesse received his termination paper from his job as cook at Lucerne Elementary. Although we were sad about Jesse's termination, we had the huge honor of attending a LA Dodgers baseball game at Dodgers Stadium while Jim Ritch was honored as the Veteran of the Game. The Dodgers organization did a wonderful job of honoring him and it was amazing to be part of this celebration.

Things began to pick up speed at this point as Doug also received notice that he was not being invited back to work on the new contract. This allowed him, Jesse and Doug's brother Chris to travel to Florida to prepare Betty's trailer to be sold. Once they returned, Jesse and Sabrina set their wedding date and we were off to San Diego for Comic Con. Doug was able to visit his classmates at his 30th Barstow High School Reunion. He and Jim enjoyed a nice, friendly rivalry as they attended back to back Angels/Dodgers games. They really enjoy their sports! ☺ While he was in Camarillo, Doug was able to stop to see Mike and Charlotte Craven, close family friends for many years.

Jesse and Sabrina got their wedding license and we had their couples wedding shower shortly after. It was also at this time that we were surprised a short visit from a snake that Sabrina found in the front yard (Doug made quick work of getting it out of the yard and into the field across the street) and a dog dug its way into our back yard. The dog stayed for about a week, but we were able to find a no-kill shelter that helped find a foster home and get it adopted.

The last part of this year has been kind of a blur as we took a trip to Northern California to see Sabrina's family and begin planning the wedding that was held at the Strawberry Lodge in Kyburz near Lake Tahoe. We then went to San Diego and celebrated Derek Arnold's 5th birthday just before Doug and Jim enjoyed their last sporting event of the year, a Chargers/Seahawks game at Qualcomm Stadium. Go Chargers!

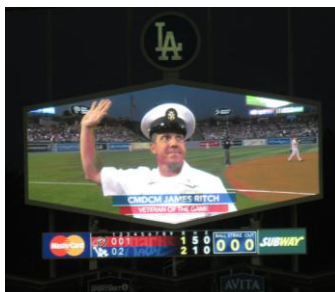
At the end of September, Jesse and Sabrina tied the knot and Doug was able to officiate the wedding. I think this was the first Dia de Los Muertos themed wedding everyone had attended and that Strawberry Lodge had hosted. Aside from a few challenges, the day was wonderful and the couple was pleased with everything! Doug was able to secure a few tickets to an Ontario Reign hockey game in the midst of job hunting and October was over.

At the beginning of November, Renee's dad took a turn for the worse and we made an emergency trip to Michigan to see him one last time and help quietly usher him into his final, peaceful rest. Doug officiated the funeral and dad was buried at Fort Custer National Cemetery a day after Veterans day. It was a fitting tribute to a man who loved his family and his service to country very much. That day, we grabbed Renee's Mom and brother Scott and headed for Texas before the snowstorm hit. We made it home to Texas in two days and were able to get them settled before leaving a week later. Renee's mom gave Jesse and Sabrina a car that she had so we spent two days driving it from Texas to California. The kids were extremely happy to get it and thank their grandmother a lot ☺ Thanksgiving came and went with a nice big meal and decorating for Christmas the next day, as tradition dictates!

As we look back on the year and toward the coming weeks of Christmas and New Years, we are amazed at the ups and downs we faced in 2014. One thing remains a constant theme throughout, God's loving kindness towards us (if you don't know Him you should, its as easy as saying "Jesus I'm a sinner, but I receive you now, come into my heart, cleanse me and be with me all the days of my life, Amen"). Also constant is the fact that we love spending time with our family and friends. We are very blessed to have so many of you standing with us through it all. Thanks for your love and your support as we look toward 2015 and the many events it will bring. We can't thank you all enough.

In closing, we have this little bit of advice: hold each other close, say "I love you" more often and cherish every moment you have with family and friends. As for this past year, we were and are truly blessed!

Merry Christmas, Happy New Year and we love you all very much,
Doug, Renee, Jesse and Sabrina Zeliff



Jim as Dodgers Veteran of the Game June 13, 2014



Jesse & Sabrina's wedding
September 27, 2014



Renee's father, Duane Rezny
passed on November 6, 2014