

Grand Canyon

The Grand Canyon this year was simply fantastic. We repeated a loop Floyd and I had tried once before...in July(!?). Back then, we measured the temperature in the shade at 117°F!! We blitzed that trip, just to get out before we were stewed in our own juices! This year we hiked in during late April, had no trailhead or weather complications and were able to enjoy a nice walk in the park. A different twist this year was to bring along a Colorado friend of mine named Scott. While he found the hike exceptionally punishing, "It's the hardest thing I have ever done," he is primed and ready to go again next year. This decision quite possibly reflects poorly on his mental faculties. He was even able to deal with all of Floyd and Ned's chitter-chatter!



Courage Classic

As part of Team Lexmark, I pedaled this year in the Courage Classic (couragetours.com). The event is a fundraiser for Denver Children's Hospital, but it really is a spectacular three-day bike ride through some of Colorado's most beautiful ski areas. And oh yeah, it's also 162 miles over 3 mountain passes, the highest of which is a lung busting 11,318'.

GABF

For the uninitiated, GABF stands for the Great American Beer Festival (gabf.org). This is an annual event in Denver and it really presents a complete view of the state of beer brewing in America. It also served as the perfect excuse for a reunion with all of Ned's Massachusetts friends.



A total of seven people made the effort to come to Colorado and we had a great time visiting and reminiscing. Special consideration goes to Derek, who flew all the way from London, England just to attend. And yes, the state of American brewing passed muster again this year.

The Bryant Report

2004



**A Milestone -
Ned Turns Forty!**

**Thanks for all
the Great Cards!**

Ned's Fortieth Birthday

Can you believe it? 40?? Ned??? The real fun is that I still get proofed sometimes when I'm in Boulder, while the people around me don't! But seriously, we had a big party with delicious food from our local Cajun restaurant. Thanks to everyone who sent all the great cards.

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Heidi - More than Just a Busy Mom

In an effort to keep up with the ever-changing lives of my family members, I have experienced and started several new things this year. A week before Maddy's surgery, I underwent Lasik surgery and threw away my glasses after 27 years! I went from about 20/800 vision to 20/20 in just a few minutes! It has made such a difference in my life - swimming, riding bikes, driving. Vision is such a wonderful thing. In late spring, I responded to an ad in the paper looking for singers to start a cappella group. After passing an informal audition, I began rehearsing with four other singers (male and female) and a vocal percussionist (the founder of the group). The group is called "Harmonix" and so far, we have had one major performance at the local coffee shop. There was a good crowd and the response was very positive. Next up - the Rocky Mountain Harmony Sweepstakes in March.

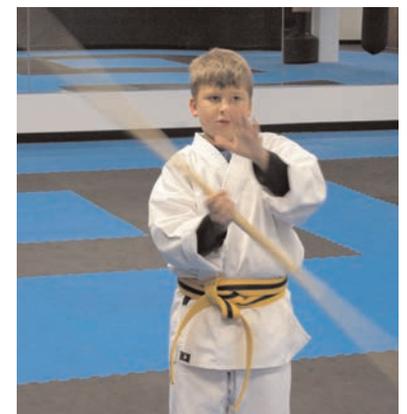
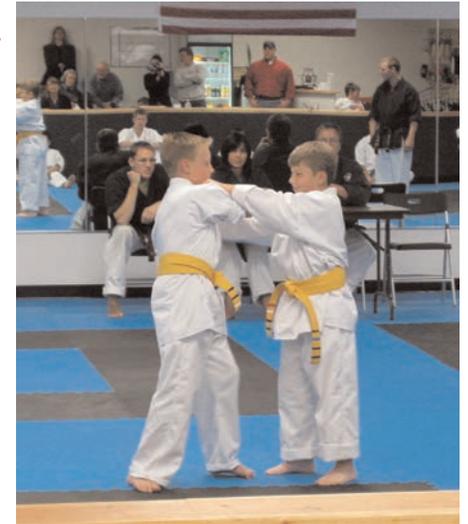
I am also involved with a couple of local groups. "A Gathering of Women" is a group of entrepreneurial women who discuss their strategies for growing their business (I am a freelance graphic designer). "Frederick Council for Cultural Arts" is at the beginning of its journey and will present a plan of action before the Town Board in early January. This group hopes to bring performing and other cultural arts opportunities to the town of Frederick.

But, the big news for me this year is that I am back in school. After much soul searching and self-reflection, I have decided that becoming a school music teacher will satisfy my ambitions and the family's financial needs (as we look to send a child to college in five years - gulp). The idea of sitting at a desk and doing the kind of work I have done since college is very un-appealing, but teaching will open up new doors of opportunity while filling a desire to serve the community. This desire has grown both out of a frustration at the quality of music educators our children have had (with one exception) as well as a new maturity that I did not have when I graduated from college. So far, I have completed one education course at the University of Colorado in Boulder and I plan to take two or three classes this spring while completing the application/audition process for full admittance this coming fall. The program is a Bachelor Plus with Teacher Licensure tract that, after student teaching for a semester, should have me in the classroom by fall of 2007. I will continue to run my freelance graphic design business in the meantime but I am very excited about the opportunity to be in the classroom full-time in a few years.

Jackson

Our Third Grader keeps very busy. When he is not running around the neighborhood looking for friends who want to trade Yu-Gi-Oh cards, he is in Tae-Kwon-Do class or at Dance. Very conveniently, a Martial Arts Studio opened up next door to the Dance Studio. Jack was interested in trying something new so we signed him up.

Tae-Kwon-Do turns out to be something that is very good for the boy. The "go at your own pace" atmosphere lifted some of the restrictions and frustrations that he was facing in dance class and the intense physical workout, coupled with the mental challenge of remembering all of the moves in each form, have proven to be the kind of stimulating activity that he really enjoys. He has already tested for both his Yellow and his High Yellow Belts, and is well on his way to earning his Green Belt, and later this winter...weapons class with nun-chucks. The boy is psyched about that - maybe not his mother, but definitely the boy.



Action Shot (above)
Catch of the Day (left)

A Trip to Washington, DC

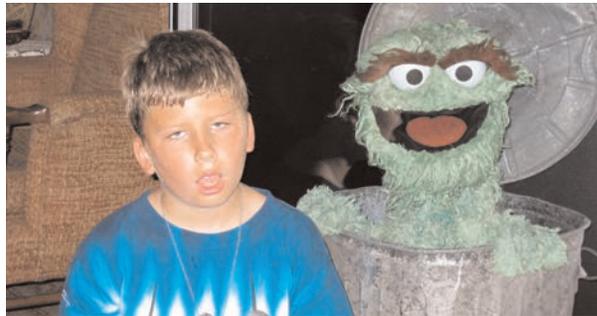
In late May, the airfare between Denver and Washington DC went down to \$104 RT and as a result, we all went to DC. This qualifies as the Bryant's version of nationalism. Despite the fact that we visited 20 separate sites in 5 days it was not, I repeat NOT akin to the Bataan



death march. Everyone really did have fun and there was still plenty of time to sit and have drinks while the kids played in the pool. We are all now experts at the DC Metro system and we were even lucky enough to tour the WWII memorial. (It was dedicated the following weekend).

A trip to the Smithsonian was the highlight for this lover of everything Ella

Another Smithsonian highlight - A Couple of Grouches



Colorado is a Great Place to Hike



"Guess what, Mom! I'm calling you from the top of Estes Cone!"

Bolder Boulder

One of the things we have wanted to do, but not been able to, was the Bolder Boulder (bolderboulder.com). This is an annual run/walk through the city of Boulder. With Maddy's ankle back to normal, Ned and Maddy celebrated by participating in the event. We went along getting soaked by garden hoses, treated to street parties with live bands, throwing water at each other and being entertained by the occasional harem of belly dancers while we walked the entire 10 km and took in the town. Who knows, maybe next year we'll run it!!



Tie Dyed & Tired

River Rafting

In June of this year Ned and Maddy were fortunate enough to be invited white water rafting with some friends that own their own boats and arrange a private permit river trip every year. We floated down (get your maps out) the Green river, through the Gates of Ledore (for the very few western exploration historians out there), past the confluence with the Yampa river and on into Utah. Beautiful sights, relaxing river, great company, what can we say - only one boat flipped in one rapid, and Maddy and I weren't even in it!

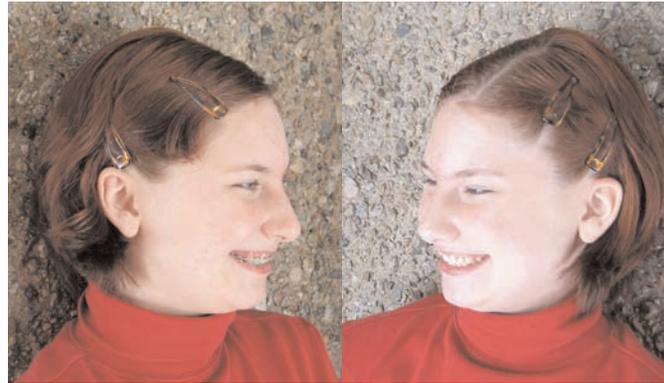


Look at who's doing all the work!!!

Maddy Girl

It is tough being a 13-year-old girl. This has been a very long year of dramatic changes for our daughter (including an extreme haircut and dye job). Some of you may remember that, for a couple of years now, Maddy has been dancing in pain with an ankle problem that was just not getting any better. After seeing a different doctor, she underwent surgery last February. The expectation was that there were some bone chips that needed to be removed. However, when the doctor got in there, he found that Maddy had an extra ligament that was in the way when she ran or jumped. The ligament was inflamed and damaged from the years of dancing. It was also extra and unnecessary so he simply removed it. She was back on her feet within a couple of days and dancing again a few weeks later - completely pain free! Even though the pain was gone, the experience, coupled with her age and the fact that she was growing so fast, caused her to rethink her commitment to dance. This past summer, after dancing for 9 years, Maddy decided to hang up her Pointe shoes. This has all the hallmarks of being a permanent decision. To the delight of her parents, she has become very interested in academic success and is focusing on pursuing a career as a Psychologist. Without seeing herself as a professional dancer, she simply could not justify the 10+ hours per week commitment to the hobby. Now she is trying gymnastics, just for fun, and working hard at school. The prize is to be admitted into the IB program at Niwot High School next year. Around here, it is kind of like applying to college even though it is a public school. Upon completion of the IB program, she will have completed the requirements for many core college courses, and should be able to exempt up to a year of college classes! We are very excited about this opportunity and glad that she is motivated and interested in this pursuit as well as having some close friends who have the same goals with whom she can share this experience.

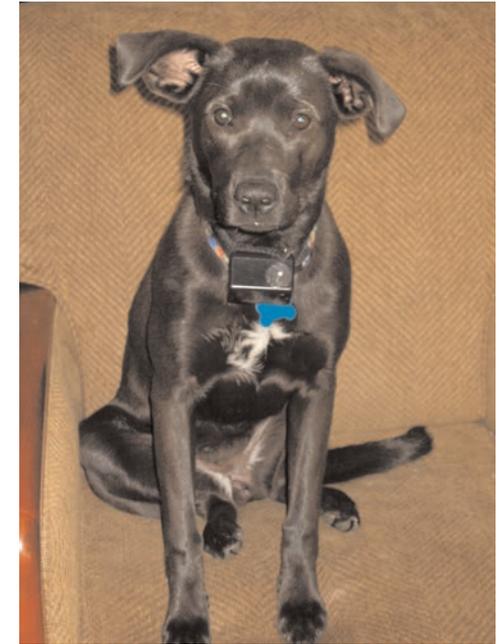
The real highlight of Maddy's year came on 12/7. On this historic day, her braces were removed after three long years. She is VERY proud of her perfect smile! A corn on the cob party is in the near future.



Before

After

Also Known as
"Crazy Ears"



Thelma Lou

After our unreported failure a couple of years ago with our beagle, Leo (a.k.a., the dog from H E Double Hockey Sticks), we decided to try again, this time with a mutt named Thelma. She came from a puppy rescue shelter that gathers stray puppies from Kansas, New Mexico and Colorado to make them available for adoption in the Denver area. Thelma is simply the best! She is part lab, who knows what else, and is very eager to please. So far, she has not destroyed anything of importance! She is also very calm, loving and obedient. She is a great companion with crazy ears and we are so glad that she has renewed our faith in our canine friends.

