



GRAND CANYON

Well, last April it finally happened, after asking to go with him since she was 4 years old, Maddy joined Ned for a walk in the park.

In early April Ned, Maddy, Scott and Anne (another father/daughter pair) went hiking for six days in the Grand Canyon. The hike delivered adventure in the form of rattlesnakes, California condors, mule deer roaming through the campsite, hiking in the driving rain, spectacular views, and a large hungry spider. Fun was had by all, with no emergencies or other problems occurring.

Ned knew things had gone well when, while

hiking out on the last day (BTW - hiking up and out is never the high point of the trip), Maddy asked "If we did go next year, where would we hike?"

This hike was purposefully designed as a mixture of solo back country camping and established camping areas; to Ned's surprise, the biggest complaint from both girls was that he hadn't taken them far enough into the back country! Too many other hikers were encountered on the trail or in camp at night wearing their obnoxious head lamps etc. Luckily, there is an easy cure for this problem and we already have the permit to administer the cure during the last week of March 2007.



THE BRYANT REPORT

is published semi-occasionally by

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THE BRYANT REPORT

2006



FIRST, AN APOLOGY IS IN ORDER

The Bryant Family deeply regrets that a false promise was made in last year's edition of The Bryant Report. In 2005 we avowed that it was the "final action packed & adventure filled Bryant Report" and assured our readers that we had finally "settled down." But just like the reported existence of WMDs in Iraq, not all printed news is true.

In May of this year we experienced first hand how brutal politics can be – office politics that is. The end result was that Ned, without any warning, was dismissed from Solvay. We found this hard to believe, as did the vast majority of people who worked with him at Solvay. But it happened, and we immediately started scrambling to find a new way to put food on the table. Fortunately for us the job market was quite good. Once the resume was on the street, the phone did not stop ringing. Two months later, and after several telephone, and a few face-to-face interviews, we accepted a job offer from the RTP Company (rtpcompany.com) in Winona, Minnesota.

And hence our broken promise... We have moved yet again... Greetings from Winona (our own little Lake Wino-begon) Minnesota. *Where the women are strong, the men are good looking, and all of the children are above average®*. The Bryant family fits right in!

Of course, other family members were also impacted by the stressful, and at times overwhelming, process of moving across the country twice in less than 14 months; but the kids have handled it better than one might expect. Both of them adjusted well when they moved to Georgia, making new friends etc., and that experience gave them the confidence they needed to start again in Minnesota.

But they did undergo culture shock. Alpharetta, Georgia, was kind of a fairytale place, with children of extreme privilege driving expensive cars and wearing



designer clothes; Winona is a much more normal sort of a place, with children from all walks of life going to school together. Both kids are enjoying new friends and lots of socializing.

Thelma and Bunny made the transition to Winona without too much stress!

JACKSON

In Winona, Jack's school is only a few years old, and because it's hard to find land for a new school in a landlocked place like Winona, it's outside of town. He is now at the Middle School, which houses grades 5 through 8. The facility is really wonderful – it has an Olympic sized pool, two gyms, and a large auditorium. It even has a Music Suite which includes a Chorus Room, Band Room, Orchestra Room, and a Computer Lab! Jack decided to switch from the Cornet to the French Horn this year. Fifth graders don't participate in band – instead they receive semi-private lessons from a band teacher so that when they do start band next year, they can already play pretty well. Jack is very good on the French Horn (no surprise) and it looks like he will have a lot of great musical opportunities in Winona. His fifth grade teacher recognized that he was ahead of the class in math and tested him for gifted services. His scores were impressive and he was promoted to 6th grade class for math. This challenge has motivated him at school and we are so glad that he has a teacher who cares so much about her students.

Unlike Maddy's new dance excitement, the move to Winona has, for the moment, stalled Jack's Black Belt aspirations. As we reported in 2005, he earned his Gold Belt just before Christmas. After recovering from his broken arm, he hit the ground running and earned a Green Belt, then a Purple Belt, and finally a Blue Belt just a few days before we moved. These belts were difficult to earn, but Jack was ambitious and motivated. His hard work had him on the fast track to a Black Belt. Unfortunately, the Martial Arts schools in Winona were not of the same caliber as Georgia's and he has understandably become discouraged. He enjoyed Flag Football after school this Fall and plans to take Tennis in the Spring.

For now he keeps himself busy practicing his French Horn and hanging out at Jimmy Jams, the comic book store that has a room in the back for trading cards and dueling.

Jackson and Aunt Kinsey at Blue Belt Testing.



HEIDI

The stress of two moves so close together was felt especially strongly by the mother bird, who works to feather a comfortable nest for her family. After getting unpacked and organized and almost settled in, the moving trucks arrived again! These movers were terrible. They stayed until midnight when the family needed to leave at 6am the next morning. In a van filled with 2 children, 3 cats and 1 dog, Heidi drove for 17 hours, making it almost to Madison, Wisconsin, on the first day. Exhaustion does not even begin . . .

Before the world was turned upside down, though, Heidi's family experienced several losses and scary moments. Just before Christmas last year, her uncle died followed soon thereafter by her grandmother. Then her sister had her first baby, who decided to come a month early just to spend his first few weeks in the hospital, undergoing two surgeries and generally worrying everyone to death. He is doing fine now, and is a healthy, happy boy.

On the plus side, last summer Heidi completed her Certificate in Graphic Design. She is currently setting up a web-site portfolio and will soon begin marketing her services to area commercial printers and graphic design shops. She also had a great time last summer at a music retreat in North Carolina, meeting wonderful musicians, playing a lot of guitar, and discovering the work of some other songwriters. Now that we live three blocks from the music building at WSU, who knows – maybe she will take a few classes for fun!

*Jackson and Maddy with their new baby cousin.
Watch Evan grow at evannelsoncashwell.blogspot.com.*



Aunt Heidi with Evan.

MADELEINE

Maddy is adjusting to the new High School with a bit of frustration. The school operates on a block system, so the students take four long classes per term and change schedules four times per year. Her favorite opportunity at WHS is studying German, which was not offered in Georgia, and is a language that she has wanted to study for some time. With all of her school changes, she will have had at least one year of French, Spanish, Latin, and German by the time she goes to college!

The move to Winona has also re-sparked Maddy's love of dance. She is studying at the Minnesota Conservatory of the Arts, which is affiliated with St. Mary's University in Winona. Her new enthusiasm seems to be inspired by one instructor in particular – the visiting artist in residence, Allen Fields, who is the artistic director of the Minnesota Ballet. His enthusiasm for the ballet art form along with his teaching style has helped Maddy rediscover her own love of ballet. In fact, she is very sad that there will be a long break between semesters and she won't be able to go to class for several weeks!

OKLAHOMA!

In the midst of the upheaval of the summer, Maddy relieved the stress by participating in a local theater production of "Oklahoma." This was her first big musical and, as soon as the directors saw her dance, she was added into several scenes as a featured ballerina. For a few weeks, she slept past noon and spent her evenings at rehearsals, coming home around midnight. She made great friends and they even threw her a going-away party!



Once we got to Winona, she signed up for a summer drama camp. While it was a much smaller final production than "Oklahoma," she also had a bigger role. She was Prince John in "Robin Hood." We laughed at the typecasting – she mostly yelled at all of the happy people while bossing everyone around. We felt that she had prepared for this role by practicing on Jack for his entire life. She had a lot of fun though, even sporting a sinister mustache. Maddy closed out the year with four performances of "The Nutcracker," dancing en pointe as a Snowflake and a Flower.

Madeleine Bryant as a Saloon Girl in Oklahoma! (left) and as a Snowflake (outline above & photo on cover).

ABOUT WINONA, MINNESOTA

Winona is a very historical town, situated on a strip of land between the Mississippi River and Lake Winona. Ned and Jack have discovered the joys of fishing on the lake. The scenery is quite beautiful. The river valley is surrounded by soaring bluffs and the landmark of Winona is Mount Sugarloaf, a sandstone outcropping that looms above the town, west of Lake Winona.

It is also a two college town. For this reason, there are many cultural opportunities that we have started taking advantage of. Our house is only two blocks from Winona State University, so we are surrounded by college students and enjoy listening to them walk home from the bars on the weekends. With our windows open in the summer, we heard many interesting conversations coming up from the sidewalk!

Winona is also a small enough town that we can walk to most of our destinations. So far, Ned has walked the 20 minutes to work every day, but, with winter really setting in, we'll see in next year's report just how long this continues. Maddy can ride her bike to school, weather permitting, and she walks from school to the dance studio a few days a week. We also walk to the grocery store, the movie theatre, our favorite pub, coffee houses, the shops downtown, the Chinese restaurants, Jimmy Jams, the YMCA, the library, Bloedow's Bakery, the Mississippi River, Lake Winona, pretty much anywhere we need to go. We could easily ride our bikes to Target!

Most of Heidi's time since August has been spent working on the new house, which is actually an old house. Built in 1900, it's quite a bit like our house in Massachusetts – old and needy. Fortunately, it is not quite as needy. So far we have

done a bit of painting. We plan to paint the exterior next year. Our house is fairly large by Winona standards. Maddy has a room with her own full bath on the main floor. We were sold on the house when we walked in and saw a beautiful staircase and newel post along with an ideal place for our piano. The foyer became the music room and we have a formal dining room along with a double parlor on the main level.

Upstairs there are two large bedrooms, a small bedroom and a room that we have dubbed the "Anne Frank Room." It's accessible either from a hidden staircase next to the kitchen or by going through the bathroom upstairs. A large hatch in the middle of the floor leads to the staircase. Ned has set up his office in this quite cozy and secluded space. Another feature we really appreciate is that the garage is behind the house, with alley access. This way the front of the house is not dominated by a large garage door, a feature of our new houses that we really did not like.



Ned atop Garvin Heights.

BATS

One thing we are not so fond of in Winona is the large bat population. During our first few weeks in the house, we were forced to eradicate seven of these creatures from our house. Trust us, there is nothing like waking up in the middle of the night and watching a bat squeeze out of a heating register and fly circles around your bed!

*A panoramic view of Lake Winona and the city of Winona from Garvin Heights Overlook.
The Bryant house is marked with a star, just a few blocks from Lake Winona on one side and the Mississippi River on the other.*

