

WINTER IN MINNESOTA

About all we can say is that we survived our first Minnesota Winter. Yes – it was cold. But it wasn't really messy until late February when we had a two day storm that left us with close to 30 inches of snow!

As we face our second winter, though, we know that spring will come and it will be awesome! For about 7 months of 2007, Minnesota was the most beautiful place on Earth. We now understand why so many people endure the brutality of continuous sub-zero weather. (It's certainly no worse than summer in Georgia!)



A sampling of the Storm of 2007



*A boy and his dog-
Just Chillin'*

THE BRYANT REPORT

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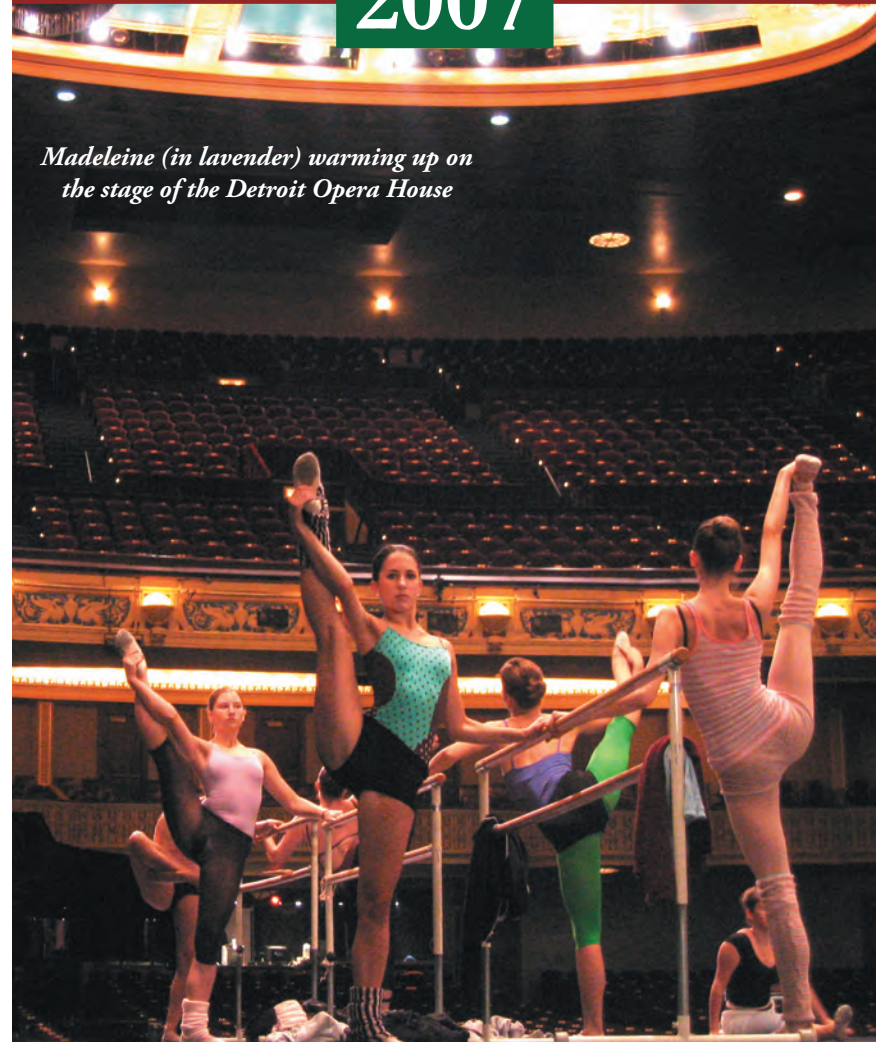
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THE BRYANT REPORT

2007

*Madeleine (in lavender) warming up on
the stage of the Detroit Opera House*



IT WAS A MADDY YEAR . . .

. . . or should we say Madeleine, her preferred moniker. This is not to say that Ned, Jack and Heidi did not have busy years—rather that our lives simply pale in comparison to hers. We really only have enough space to list the events chronologically:

- March:** Hiked the Grand Canyon with her Dad and Floyd.
- April:** Staged the choreography of the Dream Ballet for the Winona Senior High School production of *Oklahoma*.
- May:** Performed in *Pure Entertainment* with her dance studio.
- June:** Performed in *Bye Bye Birdie* with a community theater group.
- June–July:** Spent four weeks in Detroit studying ballet with the American Ballet Theatre (ABT).
- August:** Visited family and friends in Ohio and Georgia, then went spelunking with her father in Wind Cave National Park followed by camping in the Badlands of South Dakota to watch the Perseid meteor shower.
- September:** Began taking college classes at Winona State University.
- October:** Performed in a local choreographer's showcase.
- November:** Had her first lead role in a musical, playing Peggy Sawyer in her high school's production of *42nd Street*.
- December:** Had her first original choreography performed in the Young

Choreographer's Showcase at her dance school (and will test for her Driver's License on the 26th).

This long list probably brings up a lot of questions, so we will elaborate. The first very special event was participating in the ABT Summer Intensive, *thanks to the very generous support of all of her grandparents*. Maddy auditioned in January and was very excited to be accepted into this prestigious program. Then she was shocked when they placed her in the second highest level. (She was challenged in her pointe classes, having only danced en pointe seriously for a year.) But she worked really hard, got very strong, and made some wonderful friends.

After Detroit, she had an adventure in travel – on her 16th birthday. She was flying back home from Atlanta when her

HEIDI

Last summer, I saw a job posting in the paper that seemed to be written with me in mind. I applied, interviewed, and then was called back the next day with an offer. It was a tough decision because the kids were barely out of school and a lot of summer plans were already made, including taking Maddy to Detroit a couple of weeks later. Luckily, the job was willing to wait and gave me the flexibility to start at the end of July, after all of the travel plans were complete.

The job itself is graphic design related, involving page layout of textbooks and related products. In addition to working in page production, there is also product management – much of the work is subbed out to India and I maintain quality control while coordinating between the client and the vendors. The job is good because it's in Winona, it's a casual workplace, and there's flexibility when the kids need me. The bad part of the job is that it's 40 hours a week; I haven't done that since 1995 – and I'm still not used to it! Neither is the rest of the family, who are accustomed to having a mom at their disposal 24/7.

I also continued to do some freelance work this year and set up a website for myself, as well as two of my customers. Go to www.design-on-call.com to check it out. On the musical front, I've been decompressing after work by playing jazz guitar and I have made a lot of progress. In September, Ned sprung for an Anni-Birth-Mas present – a Taylor T5 guitar that plays like buttah! It's been a great source of inspiration and relaxation.

AUNT RUTHIE

In August, we lost a dear family member. Ruth Nestingen was Heidi's paternal aunt and a truly wonderful lady. The beautiful obituary detailed Ruthie's life of caring—as an active supporter of Civil Rights, Women's Rights, and a marcher for the ERA. One of Heidi's friends remarked that their own obituaries would say, "She was a caring, spastic Mom." We are both hoping to outlive that particular legacy!

The funeral celebration brought the family together. Ruthie's daughter and granddaughters traveled from England, so we had the rare opportunity to spend time with them. Three of the girl second cousins were born in 1991 and share a common fashion sense, displayed here.

Second cousins from right: Rosie, Matthew, Maddy, Jack, Lucy, and Claire, with honorary cousin Ellie



Look out! She's about to belt!

JACKSON

Jack has also started participating in several of the academic teams at school. He had his first Academic Triathlon meet in December, in which his team placed second along with recognition for best teamwork. He went with his Math Masters team to the regional competition last spring and he recently signed up for National History Day, for which the students will meet weekly to prepare a project for a regional competition. Some of his best Jimmy Jams friends also participate in these activities, so Jack is making strong friendships and really getting connected socially in Winona.

A highlight of the year came last summer when the Canadian Brass played in Winona. The concert was sponsored by RTP and Ned happened to return from the airport with the French horn player, Jeff Nelsen. He and Ned became fast friends and he came by the house to meet Jack. We all sat in the front row at the concert and met Jeff after the show, where he gave Jack an autographed CD that said:

Keegan, Chris and Jack featured in the dance "I Need a Lift"



The cast of "42nd Street"

Many of you may wonder how she turned 16 in August and started college in September. Well, that's a good question. The state of Minnesota offers good high school juniors and seniors the opportunity to take their classes at college for dual credit. The classes must meet high school graduation requirements, but other than that the students can take whatever they want. The program is completely free; textbooks are borrowed and returned at the end of the term and laptops are provided for full-time students. Maddy signed up for 18 hours – a heavy schedule for any college student. She took Calculus, Environmental Biology, German, Critical Thinking, Ballet, and Women's Chorus. Winona State University is less than three blocks from our house, so she walks to school and comes home between classes, all of which makes Thelma a very happy dog. Maddy hopes to take the remainder of her high school classes at WSU, then transfer the credit to the college of her choice. (Don't ask where that will be – we have no idea!)

And what about having the lead role in a musical! This was her first speaking role and first singing role, too. The part of Peggy Sawyer, small town hoofer who makes it big on Broadway, was a perfect fit for our triple threat. Dancing was a big part of the role and Maddy really showed what she could do. She is staying connected at the high school through the Drama Club and has a part in the One Act play that they will take to competition in February. As a performer, she's really branching out and enjoying every minute of it! (We will try to get some video of her performance posted on our website over the holidays – so check back in a few weeks.)



NED BRYANT

Grand Canyon

Last April Maddy, Floyd and I had another successful hike in the Grand Canyon, completing the Royal Arch loop. The hike was much more remote than the year before with new discoveries including: viewing rainwater puddles as water sources, a 20' repel down a cliff face, the rude surprise that some of the side creeks in the Grand Canyon actually flow with very salty water and a visit inside Mr. Bass' original copper mine on the south rim. Everyone had fun though and we are all looking forward to going again in May of 2008.



Maddy sharing her father's fashion "sense"

RAGBRAI XXXV

Another great outdoor activity that I did this year, with an old friend of mine from Kansas, was pedaling across Iowa in the Register's Annual Great Bicycle Ride Across Iowa (RAGBRAI). It took a full week to pedal the 477 miles from west to east and although I have now seen all of the corn and soybeans that I ever want to see, not to mention the Iowa headwinds, it was really great fun. One of the more interesting highlights was the showers that were provided, with the best (?) one either being the swine cleaning pen or the converted car wash, we never could decide.

Maple Syrup

Jack and I have a new project this year—we are going to tap the very large maple tree in the back yard and see just how much maple syrup we can make. The inspiration comes from attending a class last year at one of Minnesota's state parks where we tapped trees and sampled syrup from the previous year. Hopefully we'll make enough for at least one breakfast, more next year...

Appendectomy!

Well those that know me well know that I essentially never go to the doctor. So imagine Heidi's surprise when I called her at 4:30 in the afternoon to ask for a ride to the hospital to see the doctor! They inspected me at 5:30 and by 7:30 I was on the table having my appendix removed. If I had waited until morning it would have burst. That was the middle of August and while I'm all better now, it pretty much put an end to any hiking and biking for the rest of the year.

Continued Education at FIT

If all that wasn't enough, I began work on my M.S. in Project Management through the Florida Institute of Technology. The entire program is administered online. So far I've only completed 2 out of 11 classes, but I know that my graduation date of April 2010 will arrive sooner than I think.

The Commute

Well, true to my word I have either walked or pedaled to and from work virtually every day, only driving when I needed a car for some other reason during or immediately after work. Lucky for me it was a relatively mild winter, only reaching -17°F here in balmy southern Minnesota.

Travel

By the way, I'm now traveling to both Europe and Asia for work. One particular travel highlight was that I was able to attend the first couple of stages of the Tour de France that were held in London this year. Fantastic to be in London, in front of Buckingham Palace, with no car traffic, standing next to the Devil himself. By the way – he is one *really* stinky German.

*A meeting of minds at
Le Tour de France*

