

Mike & Jane's Annual Report

December, 2013



Christmas Eve in Wisconsin

When last we checked in, the four of us were going to watch a game in Green Bay in December of 2012. We “tailgated” a block and a half from Lambeau Field at Jane’s nephew Mike Kesler’s house, then attended the game, duly sporting seventeen layers of insulation. At the game, Jane’s beloved Packers, assisted by several frolicking polar bears, romped over the Titans 55-7. Fortunately, the Christmas Eve white elephant gift exchange was more competitive, setting us up for the traditional Bizarroland of traveling home on Christmas, where we spent the bulk of the day stuck in a plane on the DFW Airport runway.



“This isn’t a game: this is a pep rally.”

it wasn’t too hard to Photoshop a driver’s license and rush a tuition deposit in, so *that* all worked out.

In the Spring, Mike was in regular demand as a referee for youth rugby matches, evidently because his reputation for even tempered game management and wise objectivity has spread like wildfire through North Texas. Either that, or the fact that he does it for free.



Dave’s last Jesuit Rugby match. Mike in referee garb. Photobomb courtesy of Jack Venden.

And when Spring Break came around, Dave went off with his Jesuit rugby team for a tour of Philadelphia and Washington. This left Mike and Jane to drive down to San Antonio with Maggie, who figured it would be a real hoot to attend the National Society of Toxicology conference there. We got to meet her undergraduate mentor Justin Taft and her professor Wade Powell, who we took out to Smitty’s Barbecue in



Justin, Professor Powell, and Maggie at Smitty’s in Lockhart

Lockhart, then over to Texas’s oldest dance hall in Gruene (pronounced “Green” – Wisconsin doesn’t have a monopoly on weird pronunciation). To Justin, a lad hailing from New York City, it was like going to Disneyland: he had never even seen people wearing cowboy hats outside of a movie before.

When Dave came back from his Spring Break trip, he had already turned 18, and for a birthday party he had a big poker party with all his buddies in the Interstate Batteries condo at Texas Motor Speedway.

Mike attended his second ACTS Retreat in April, this time as staff, where he gave a moving speech about something or other religious, which allowed all participants to indulge in a well-appreciated nap.



Dave, now aged 18, having his first cigar with Dad

May was mostly centered around Dave’s high school graduation. Dave did love the camaraderie and fellowship, but the all male format, according to him, was “both the *best* and the *worst* thing about Jesuit.”

Maggie had already returned from her sophomore year at Kenyon, en route to a summer as a “SURF-er” here in Dallas, which is of course hundreds of miles from the nearest beach. In this case, “SURF” was the Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowships at U.T. Southwestern, where she got to spend even more

time in labs peering through microscopes than she does during the school year. And then she writes papers where she makes up about 80% of the words. Really: if you ask us, “aryl hydrocarbon receptors agonists” is right up there with “rama lama ding dong.”

In June, Mike participated in his, er, umpty-umpth Bar None. He has been doing this, with some breaks, since 1986. One would think that, at age 52, he would have grown out of this years ago, but no such luck. Dave and Mike also went up on a bus with a group of Dave’s 18 year old friends on a “grown up trip” to Winstar Casino in Oklahoma: they could not yet legally drink, but at least they can gamble. And buy spray paint and dry ice. And they can vote. God help us all.

In July, Mike and Dave went up with Cary, Will, and Jack Venden and Mike, Nick, and Andrew Zang for a family guys-only fishing trip to Alaska, where they spent a few days cousin-bonding on rivers and out at sea, which resulted in quite

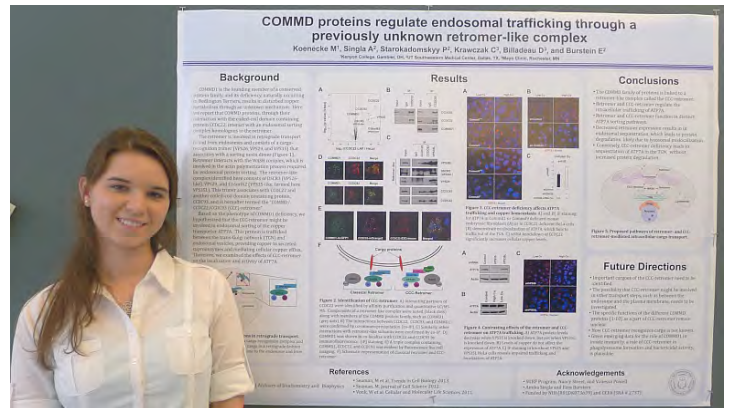


“C. Everett Pook” advertising “Medi-Zoom Do It Yourself Medical Services”

a haul of salmon and halibut. However, after factoring in the cost of the trip and particularly all the beer, we were talking over \$97 a pound for the fish, so it probably would have been smarter to just buy a whole bunch of catfish instead.

In August Mike’s sister Katie came up to visit with her sons Connor and Joseph, so we took the opportunity to get some family bowling in, and then a family poker game with Mike Zang, Connor and Joe McKane plus Cary and Will Venden. The whole family poker thing goes back to Mike’s Dad Dick Koenecke, and we felt he was there too, at least in spirit. (“I’ve got a hand like a foot!”)

Then was the big trip to take Dave out to Nashville for his first year at Belmont University. This ultimately involved buying out half the inventory at the local Bed, Bath, and Beyond and trying to find room for all the instruments and amplifiers in his three-man dorm room. Apparently everyone at Belmont is a musician, mostly with stand up basses, harps, and grand pianos. So it gets fairly crowded. We also visited the full size replica of the Parthenon there: in a remarkable coincidence, Mike ran into a friend and teammate from college he had not seen since 1981. Anyway, as Dave settled in, at first he seemed a little apprehensive about being on his own. That lasted until he met his orientation group, after which he suddenly discovered he did



Maggie and her SURF poster. We are hoping she will eventually produce something in English.



At the Parthenon in Nashville - Belmont Move In Day

not need us to show up for all the Sunday events after all. Really — we'll be in touch. Buh-bye. Don't let the door hit you... Mike, Jane, and Maggie eventually got the hint, and skedaddled on back home.



Jane at the Dover race

A bit later, Maggie bounced back up to Ohio to start her Junior year at Kenyon College. It has been a pretty busy one: she has managed to wear her own footpath between her dorm room and the lab. She says it is all very boring, but wants to assure everyone that those October news reports about Kenyon being overrun by zombie frogs had absolutely *nothing* to do with her experiments.

So anyway, with both Maggie and Dave off to college, their parents were officially back being just a couple. This felt kind of weird – for about a week. Then we looked at each other, and it was like “Hey – *I remember you!*” It was really pretty easy to adjust to being “Mike and Jane” again, after all. We like each other.

In September we got to attend a couple of Interstate Batteries-related racing events. First were drag races at the Texas Motorplex in Ennis: let us tell you, a top fuel dragster taking off is the

LOUDEST thing we have ever experienced. Really: even with earplugs, it is like being slapped in the face. Even our brother in law Cary was impressed, and *he* is used to hanging around F-18 fighter jets on a carrier flight deck. We also got to attend the Dover NASCAR race, sitting on a grass berm behind the Interstate Batteries pit. We also attended Mass at the “oldest African American Catholic Church in Wilmington,” which featured the first time



Katie, Betsy, Mike, & Trish in Gruene

since we were kids in summer camp that we have heard the song “Kumbaya” sung non-ironically. Actually, it was pretty cool.

We also got to go back down to Gruene for Mike’s sister Katie’s 50th birthday celebration. Sitting on a patio just outside Gruene Hall listening to Joe Ely was about as Texas as it gets, short of actually being serenaded by Willie Nelson. Unfortunately, Willie had a prior commitment.



Huddling under a small umbrella at the Foreigner concert

Meanwhile, Dave was going through the difficult adjustment of being off by himself for the first time ever, by joining a fraternity (Phi Kappa Tau – voted either the “most datable” or the “most outdated” fraternity at Belmont, we forget which one) and making about four billion new friends. He was having so much fun that he had no particular interest in coming home for Fall Break. What *did* bring him home was the chance to see *Foreigner* play at his high school’s alumni Homecoming festival, so in October he rolled back into town for that. At least, he did after missing four flights on stand-by. Anyway, everything started out pretty well. Then a rainy cold front moved in, and the band was only able to get five songs in before it turned into a regular monsoon and they bailed out. We did get to glimpse the lead guitarist once or twice behind a sea of umbrellas, but other than that it was kind of a fiasco.



Dave with his new group of Potter Hall brothers

By November, you would think that we would be taking full advantage of the whole empty-nester thing, but what with our various extracurricular commitments accumulating like barnacles (Jane heads St. Paul’s Communications committee and is also on a Communications advisory group for SMU; Mike’s doing ACTS,

Scouts, and Knights of Columbus, plus is on the Galaxy Counseling Center Board of Directors) we still stay fairly occupied. We suppose it is at least better than staying home watching *Wheel of Fortune* all the time.

And now it is December again. Our schedules are a bit discombobulated this year, what with Dave coming home early and Maggie fairly late: to hear her tell it, she has twelve final exams and about sixteen papers, all due by December 20. And since she has decided to take the GRE just after Christmas, she and Mike will be holding down the fort at home while Jane and Dave pop up to Wisconsin for a few days. They will repeat the whole Lambeau Field experience when they attend the Packers game on the 22nd, and will represent the four of us at the traditional Christmas Eve with our Kesler relatives in Wisconsin, coming back Christmas Day. Merry Christmas, and may you all have the happiest of New Years!

Mike, Jane, Maggie, and Dave



Graduation Day in May



En route to Belmont in August



August: Family Bowling Expedition



...and Poker on the Patio



Maggie and her buddy. He's not the "Mighty Squirrel Hunter" of old, but still hanging in there at age 18 or so.



July: Mike & Jane's 24th Anniversary