

# Mike & Jane's Annual Report

December, 2014



Here's Dave at the New Year's Day "Lobster Throw Down 2014" at Mike's sister Betsy's house, which was a pretty fun way to start the year with family, friends, and neighbors. A safety tip for future reference: if you want to avoid splashing smelly boiling water all over you are not supposed to actually *throw* the lobsters *down*.

From there, we launched into a year full of travel, some visitors, and endless church and work activities. Phew – some of this stuff feels like it was three or four years ago already...

In February, Jane's sister Katie visited, which gave us an excuse for doing grownup things like looking at art and seeing live music. Which is not the main reason we like seeing Jane's siblings, but it is an added bonus. We had gotten used to seeing

her brother Jim fairly regularly, but he has changed jobs and does not travel nearly as much. Either that, or he has already seen all the interesting stuff in Dallas and is too polite to say.

Although Dave has a pretty early school year, and Maggie a somewhat later one, by some miracle they had the same week of spring break, so we were able to get away for a few days in Puerto Rico. We had a great time touring El Yunque (which is actually a rain forest, not a salvage yard), the Bacardi rum factory, various castles in



*Son on the Beach. Daughter, too.*

San Juan, and the beautiful beaches. Dave, however, far preferred the blackjack tables at the hotel casino, where he actually wound up a bit ahead at the end. Fortunately, he still consistently loses in our family poker games at home, so has not gotten too unrealistic about the whole gambling thing.

This year also saw Maggie commencing her senior year at Kenyon College in Ohio, while Dave is now a sophomore at Belmont University in Nashville. After finishing his first

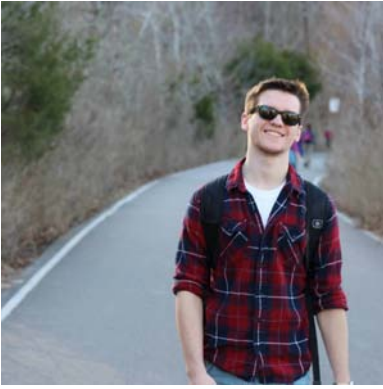
year, Dave was back home for the summer and landed a job at Shady's, a neighborhood burger joint. Maggie, on the other hand, had to spend her summer up in Ohio, mainly in the biology lab. She figures to have spent well over 1,000 hours in or around that lab this year, which explains why her three best college friends are all tadpoles.



*August: Family Poker Party on the Patio*



*Maggie and Xenophilus the Tadpole*



*Way too cool for the rest of us...*

After a summer of restaurant work, Dave was really happy to get back to his roommates and frat buddies in August, which turned out a bit more involved than we planned: Jane and Dave left early one Saturday morning for the ten hour road trip, only making it two hours until the car broke down. To make a long story short, the car wound up stuck in Texarkana for *four months* waiting for a part “on back order.” Just last week, Dave was finally able to pick it up on the way back for Christmas break, but barely made it back to Dallas before the “service engine soon” light popped back up. It is now sporting a rebuilt transmission, and we are hoping he can get back to Tennessee in January without having to hitchhike.



*Rocking some hairnets*

April brought Interstate Batteries’ semi-annual convention, held in San Francisco, including an excursion to the U.S.S. *Hornet* aircraft carrier and a session preparing meals for tsunami victims in Asia.



*On the Via Dolorosa: either where Jesus rested His hand or got His last t-shirt, I forget which*

Jane is very happy to work for a company that makes those sorts of things a priority. After the convention, we got to spend some time in Sausalito with Kerry Dahm, a college friend of Mike’s, and then we traveled to Sonoma for a wine country expedition.

Oh, and remember the “ice bucket challenge” craze this year, promoting donations towards a cure for ALS? Mike’s friend Paul has ALS, and in May, Mike was able to accompany him on a trip to Tel Aviv for some experimental treatments not available here



*The Giant Puppet Rabbi of Jerusalem*

in the States. They spent a couple of weeks in Israel together, which was mostly hotel- and clinic-centered, but did allow for some looking around. Mike got to spend a day touring Jerusalem, which was fascinating, especially with his tour group being followed everywhere by a bar mitzvah party with cheering revelers, balloons, a full band – and a *giant puppet rabbi*.



*Perhaps going without seatbelts was not the smartest move*

June was pretty busy. Mike returned from Israel, only to launch into yet another round of the annual Bar None show (number 29, if anyone is counting). Then we flew off for an Interstate Batteries leadership team retreat at a resort in Cabo San Lucas, which involved a number of fun activities, though four-wheeling around the peninsula turned out a bit more dramatic than Mike had bargained for. Jane will be celebrating her 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary at Interstate Batteries next month. She has participated in a year-long course in leadership, and had a couple of trips for training, the first of which was at Sundance in Utah in June.



*Bar None: the Return of "Luigi Vittorio"*

In July a couple of Mike and Paul's college friends visited: Mariann from Philadelphia and Rob from New Jersey, neither of whom we had seen for years. It is kind of surprising how easy it is to get along with old friends, and is a good excuse to get out and see stuff in the area we have been ignoring for years.

July 1<sup>st</sup> also marked our 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. We were kind of hoping to do something out of the ordinary to celebrate, but Jane could not decide between getting matching tattoos or running off for three weeks to Antarctica. So we wound up going out to dinner instead.

Maggie did get to come home for a couple of weeks in August before returning to her lab, and Dave of course returned to Belmont, although with less mobility than he had hoped for. Mike felt honored to be asked to accompany Maggie for her senior year move in, until he learned that her bedroom is on the third floor of a duplex apartment and that his job was to haul all her stuff up the stairs.

In September we managed to go to an actual live play for the first time in years, and in October attended the "Bloomin' Bluegrass Festival" in Farmers Branch, which sounds like it should be somewhere near Luckenbach but is actually a Dallas suburb. Also in September, we were able to catch up with Jane's cousin Steve and his wife Kim, who came to stay and attend the Red Bull Air Races held at Texas Motor Speedway, though watching a bunch of



*Kayaking on "Lake Nebagamon."  
Yeah, like that is a real place...*

Piper Cubs taxi around the race-track wound up being kind of disappointing. Jane did get to see her cousin John and his wife Kris in the Des Moines area soon after that. Also in October, Jane attended her second communications training retreat, this time in very northern Wisconsin. She brought back a picture of herself in a kayak, but Mike still thinks she made the whole thing up and was probably in Atlantic City or Vegas.

November saw a visit from Jane's cousin Jim, who attended the fall NASCAR race at Texas

Motor Speedway with us, and got to meet Joe Gibbs and Kyle Busch, who, despite the handicap of not being from Wisconsin, were still pretty cool guys.

As we have mentioned, Maggie is quite the lab rat, and is currently applying to various Ph.D. programs around the country. Dave is in his sophomore year at Belmont, and is very involved with his fraternity. Maybe a little bit *too* involved: in November he broke his pinky during a *double secret* initiation ceremony which Dave cannot disclose to anyone or he has to wear the special Phi Kappa Tau dunce cap for a week. The pinkie required surgical repair, and he is still in a cast.



*Maggie and Robin - er, her roommate Jamie*



*Molecular Biology. All this and mutant tadpoles*



*Mike & Paul, toasting Paul's birthday with El Toro tequila (harking back to an episode at college in 1977), and on our last night in Tel Aviv*

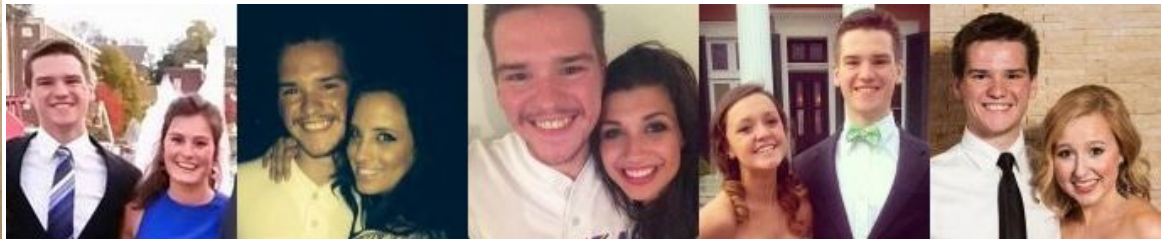
Other general things... Jane attended a church retreat (an "ACTS" retreat) in the Spring, and was on staff for a second one in the Fall, and often wonders why getting closer to God involves so many meetings. Mike staffed the men's retreats in the Spring and the Fall, which resulted in twelve men

switching to Scientology, so he is re-thinking that whole talk on Theology... Seriously, it has been a real honor to be a small part of these events, which mean so much to so many.



*Maggie and Michael*

Let's see... Maggie is still happy to be with Michael Colonna, whom she first met when they were both staffing a Boy Scouts summer camp when she was 15. Dave, on the other hand...



*Dave and Kaylin. And Cat. And Jeannette. And Elizabeth. And Ari...*

For the first time in many years, we will not be able to make it up to Wisconsin for Christmas Eve, so will probably just exchange white elephant gifts between the four of us, which will not be nearly as entertaining or as funny. We are looking forward to a big family get together there in July.

We are blessed with lots of love, hope and adventure in our lives and all in all, it's been another pretty darn good year.

*Where Dave learned to make "Bro-jitos"*



*Mike, Jane, Maggie, and Dave*