

# Mike & Jane's Annual Report

December, 2016

Well, it has been *quite* the year. In fact, for some time now we have been calling 2016 **The Year of Transition**, as we have been seeing some changes all around, the main one being acquiring a new son for the first time since Dave showed up in 1995. Anyway, the first major event for 2016 (actually, the first event period) was the annual New Year's Day "Lobster Throwdown" at Mike's sister Betsy's, which is only a block and a half from our house, allowing us to walk the lobsters over there on adorable little leashes.

In January, considering that Mike got to drive up with Maggie for the beginning of her graduate program in September, Jane flew up to see what all the fuss was about in New Jersey. She promptly found herself in a Wisconsin-esque 27-inches-in-one-day snow storm. So Jane's first experience of Princeton mainly consisted of spending her entire birthday holed up in Maggie's apartment watching a Harry Potter movie marathon and various cable cooking shows. And teaching Maggie how to clean all her car windows with a credit card and a Kleenex. This helped Jane remember why we moved down to Texas in the first place.



New son Michael with his bride Maggie



The Nashville Party Bike. The [video](#), on our Web site, is better..

crazed Emily Post. During Spring Break, Maggie was able to come home, which was very helpful for planning numerous essential details such as deciding on whether the napkins at the reception should be ecru or ivory. Fortunately, she gets to work out most of her frustrations on hundreds of innocent fruit flies in her lab, so the "Bridezilla" alter ego never showed up and the whole process went pretty smoothly. Meanwhile, Dave was off in Alabama with friends practicing his dance moves. That paid off later ([video here](#)).

May involved bouncing back up to Nashville to see Dave again before he headed off to Germany

While Jane was off in New Jersey, Mike took his sister Betsy to see one of the best concerts in his life: Joe Ely by himself with a guitar on stage at the Kessler Theater in Oak Cliff.

A little after that, Mike and Jane road-tripped up to Nashville to visit Dave, whose beer money fund was evidently running low. We got to have lunch with a friend of Mike's he had not seen since college, went to a Belmont basketball game, and toured Lane Auto Museum (making all of Jane's brothers instantly jealous).

During all this, of course, the Wedding of the Century (at least for this family) was approaching like a speeding catering truck driven by a



Here's Dave, learning we have been missing an umlaut since 1824

for Belmont's "Maymester" study program. We got to see the Avett Brothers in concert and tootle around downtown Nashville on a Sprocket Rocket Party Bike with some recent grads, propelled by pedaling, in turn fueled mostly by margaritas. Dave then flew off to Germany, allegedly to take some classes and learn about the culture, but the only German he actually ever learned was "noch ein Bier, bitte."

Jane also had a jaunt up to South Dakota to hang out with her brother Jeff, who moved there because he thinks he is a boy named Sioux.

[*Rimshot*] Although the trip was mainly to help out while he was having some surgery, Jane really enjoyed the chance to spend some one-on-one time with him. That is a pretty rare opportunity, as the Kesler clan generally congregates in packs, usually in the nearest bar that offers Leinenkugels or Spotted Cow.

And then came June, and Maggie and Michael's wedding (video [here](#)). This involved a girls/guys night out on Thursday night, where the guys played poker, smoked cigars, and swilled whiskey at our house, while the ladies went out for a responsible night of manicures and drinking tea. Or so they claim. The Colonnetas threw a really terrific Texas-themed rehearsal dinner Friday night,



*Rehearsal Dinner, and the debut of the "Shotterhorn"*

where Mike was able to introduce to all his *magnum opus*, a Texas variation on the "Shotski" (video [here](#)). The wedding and reception itself was on Saturday, June 18. All kidding aside: each event surpassed our fondest expectations. Many family members and friends were able to join us: the only negative was that we wish there had been room enough for more to attend. Anyway: the details are a bit hazy, but upon video review we think the Most Fun



*Jane with high school pals Beanie, Mouse, and Lisa*

Award was a three-way tie between Dave, Jane's sister Katie, and Michael's sister Lucy. All the rest tied for a close second. Dave, still flush with having turned 21 in March, was all fired up to paint the town red after the reception, but to his chagrin fell asleep in the Uber on the way out and wound up being dropped off at home. It was all a lot of fun, and we simply could not be more thrilled with our new in laws, the Colonneta family (Joe and Kimberly, and their children Michael, Lucy, Damon, and Jack) – especially our new son in law Michael.

July: Mike and Jane went up to Wisconsin for a wedding in Green Bay. They got to spend some time with old friends of Jane's in Door County, where we were puzzled to find there really is not much special in the way of doors. But at least you can drink really cheap in bars. Our nephew Mike's wedding was wonderful. It was actually very sweet, as Mike married not only Jill but her children Talen and Ashlyn. Thinking about the future of this family inspires us and it was an absolute blast celebrating them. The whole weekend was fantastic! We danced a bunch and were really impressed that even after the reception, the bride and groom stayed out so late that the bartender had to give them a ride back to the hotel!

In August, Dave came home for a visit before commencing his senior year at Belmont University, whose Bruins broke the family tradition of pathetic college



*The Shotterhorn now abides on the Patio... for now*

team names (Mike: the Haverford “Fords.” Jane: the UW - Eau Claire “Blu/Golds.” Maggie: the Kenyon “Lords and Ladies.” Oy.) Dave’s visits involve things like brewery tours, patio poker games, and catching up with friends, as we try to convince him that the Dallas area is not entirely hopeless. So Dave drove back up to Nashville, where he embarked upon his current internship, that being with the Barbershop Harmony Society, promoting and publishing barbershop quartet music throughout the nation. He been known to sing a few bars with his customers, but to our eternal disappointment has not yet grown an awesome handlebar mustache. *Lyda Rose, I’m home again Rose...*



*Jane, Mike, & Mariann in Philly*

Also in August, we got to visit the newlyweds Michael & Maggie in their apartment in West Windsor, New Jersey, also connecting with Mike’s friend Mariann in Philadelphia, playing a game of *Bards Dispense Profanity* in their apartment with their friends, and then meeting up with Joe and Rony for walking around Lambertville, NJ and New Hope, PA and their 1,789 antique and curio shops.

Another major 2016 transition: Mike’s great aunt Angela Widi, known as “Auntie,” passed on in October at the age of 101. Mike has been visiting his grandmother’s house in St. Peter, which has been in the family since 1936, since he was born. Auntie was ready to go, but it was still a pretty big change. Mike and his sisters, plus Katie’s son Joe, drove up for the funeral, and Mike walked down to spend one last evening in The Flame, which was the bar his Dad worked in during his college years at Gustavus Adolphus. At which he nearly wound up in a bar fight. Perhaps it is best that we do not go back there for a while.



*Unchanged since 1954*

As for Michael and Maggie, after their honeymoon they launched in to their new life. Since Michael’s apartment in Manhattan cost more per square foot than most antique Persian rugs, West Windsor turned out to be a better value, even considering Michael’s hour-and-a-half commute into town. Michael works for a company called Protiviti as a “risk assessment modeler,” which apparently involves lots of math and martinis. Maggie mainly hangs out in a lab at Princeton, working on a Ph.D in molecular biology and thinking up cute names for the thousands of fruit flies she wants us to adopt as pets. There are a few perks, though: while they were not able to make it back home in November, they did get to spend it with Uncle Joe and Rony in New York at the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade. Maggie duly sent Dave a picture of the Thomas the Tank Engine balloon passing by, even though Dave has not been playing with his little wooden train set for... uh... at least a year now.



*Maggie in her Lab. All the fruit flies were hiding.*

About the whole “transition” thing: early in the year Jane finished up her long-time career with Interstate Batteries, and started on a quest to “find herself” for her next adventure. Mike was concerned that this would involve a considerable amount of incense and chanting, or maybe even Scientology, but fortunately the only drugs involved have been her regularly overdosing on caffeine from too many networking meetings at Starbucks. She has been polishing her resume regularly, so if anyone asks you about her Nobel

Prize... just play along, okay? And she has been avidly accumulating LinkedIn connections. In fact, she actually wound up connected to Janine Turner, of all people, but has not been brave enough to invite her out for coffee (yet).

Speaking of celebrities, Mike had a unique experience in September: after a hearing in a probate case, the bailiff motioned him to join her in the hall, and asked him to take a picture of her with his client. “Why didn’t you *tell* me who your client was?” This client was a famous fellow who has had



*Canine Surveillance*

his own, apparently quite popular, reality TV show for years. The bailiff was almost *giggly*... This has, so far, failed to develop into any sort of grand endorsement deal or significant fame and fortune for Mike, but we keep hoping.

Anyway, Jane has some possibilities percolating, and hopes to part of a team again soon. She has also been able to spend more time volunteering with a veritable alphabet soup of organizations. As Mike continues to work out of our home, we wind up spending quite a lot of time together, though it is mostly staring into separate phone screens, like everybody else,

and texting what we need to pick up at the grocery or hardware store. ISWYDT. LOL. 😊

As for the news everyone is waiting for: our 19-some-odd year old Jean Claude, though slowing down gradually, is still doing okay, though with the way he keeps tabs on us, we are starting to think that he is an FBI plant.

In other travel chronicling, Jane did get another visit with Dave in Nashville in November, where she and her friend Beanie got to root for their beloved Packers as they, er, did not do exceptionally well against the Tennessee Titans. At least the tailgating was good.



*Bringing the Brats & Beer to Tennessee*



*Mike's Political Bumper Sticker*

Miscellaneous bits: In April Jane's friend Alex, whom we got to stay with on our trip to Germany last year, swung into town for a visit, occasioning a wild night of playing Loopin' Louie. We got to go swing dancing at Sons of Hermann Hall in October with Mike's nephew Will with a refreshingly young group.

Dave got Mike involved in a fantasy football league, which has been a humbling experience, as Mike is 2-12 on the season.

Which is not exactly a shock, seeing as how his team is named "Squirrel Power."

As we all know, November occasioned the election. Our favored candidates lost. However, considering that they were fictional characters, and dead ones at that, it was not much of a surprise.

And now it is December again, where we have a brand new family dynamic for the Christmas season. Which is pretty awesome. We send our best wishes and love to you and yours.



*Mike and Jane, with Maggie, Michael, and Dave*