

Mike & Jane's Annual Report

December, 2017

Okay, so we wound up 2016 by bouncing up to Wisconsin for a double header, that being Jane's niece Becky's wedding to her fiancé José and the Kesler clan combination Christmas gathering and Packers pep rally. The wedding, in Appleton, was charming, as were the martini bars afterwards. And the next day Dave, capitalizing on his worldwide network of frat buddies, checked an entry off his bucket list and went to Lambeau Field to watch the home team totally clobber the Vikings. Mike, a Minnesota native, hid in the bathroom bingeing on pickled herring and muttering "Oof Dah" the whole time. So, back home to Texas, and to the annual New Year's "Lobster Throwdown" at Mike's sister Betsy and her husband Cary's.

And as Dave returned to Tennessee and Maggie and Michael to New Jersey, one would think that Mike and Jane would be settling back into a lot more free time and leisure. But one would be wrong. Various extra-curriculars expanded with amazing rapidity to occupy most available time, as Jane and Mike scrambled around to meetings of various committees, Boards of Directors, and random social organizations. We spend a fair amount of time volunteering, including participating in church retreats and remodeling a donated building (from ripping out flooring, hauling trash, and scraping to painting) to help open a home for homeless pregnant women. It is also quite interesting to get to know people we

have only seen in passing for years and years. Some of them are pretty cool. Or at least they seem so after multiple glasses of wine at the monthly "Wineaux Society" gatherings.

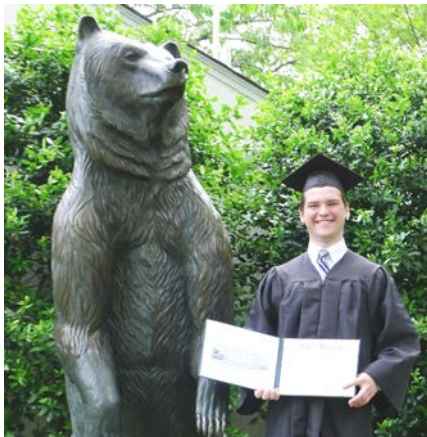
From a professional point of view, it has been an interesting year. Jane took a new job in March, and was very excited for the chance to be part of a team again. Unfortunately, it turned out not to be an especially good fit, and was a bit of a roller coaster ride, which she exited in October. So Jane is now back on the hunt. Mike has been giving estate planning talks and handling some fairly interesting cases, though talking about them still puts Jane right to sleep.

So anyway, come 2017 Dave returned to Nashville for his last semester at Belmont University, and made the most of it. Maggie and Michael were able to come in for his graduation, and the post-ceremony party at Tailgate Brewery, where Dave got his first taste of real beer. Or so he tells us.

We asked Dave to choose a post-graduation trip. He weighed the options, and chose England and Scotland. On the plus side, no foreign language to pretend to understand. On the minus side, driving on the wrong side of the road. Whatever... on May 16 all five of us flew into Heathrow and met up with Maggie's Kenyon roommate Jamie for a one day tour of London. From London we headed North towards Liverpool, with a lunch stop in Rugby, where Dave and Mike got to see where it all began. It was not all that different from the last time Mike visited there, with the Austin R.F.C. on tour, a full 33 years ago. Liverpool... Liverpool is to England as Salzburg is to Austria, except the Mozart museum in Salzburg



Dave at Greek Sing...



...and after graduation, with the Belmont Bruin



Dave and Mike (in his original Austin tour jersey) at Rugby School

is not quite as psychedelic. It's all Beatles all the time, which was actually pretty fun. After a day trip to visit some Welsh castles, we took the train from Liverpool all the way up to Edinburgh. In Edinburgh we attended a Ghost Tour, down in crypts under the bridge, which would have been considerably more spooky had there not been a raucous wedding reception going on just next door the whole time (*Ha-vah... Nagila!*)

Our son in law and resident golf expert Michael was in charge of the day we ventured out from Edinburgh, so naturally aimed us toward St. Andrews. We wound up



Alistair

with the best tour guide in the known universe: an older gentleman named Alistair, who was a native of St. Andrews whose proudest moment was being the Links Champion of 1970. Alistair would walk a few steps and go into great detail about how that was where Tom Watson (or Byron Nelson) made a brilliant shot. And then, five feet to the left, there would be another story about how Ian MacLeigh Featherstonehaugh nailed a birdie from just off the Isle of Wight. This continued for a couple of hours. We walked about fourteen feet the whole time, but it was... *awesome*.

That night we pulled into a place called the "Culloden House" near Inverness, and were surprised to learn this was one of only five official "whisky embassies" in Scotland. Our host, a whisky ambassador, was absolutely delightful, as was the whisky.

From there, our son-in-law Michael got a bird's eye view of how squirrely some of our family trips can get. Probably the best example was when we had settled in on the Isle of Skye. We had retired to our rooms in this quaint hotel (which was remarkably like

Michael & Maggie on the St. Andrews stone bridge

"Fawlty Towers" – we kept expecting Manuel to show up carrying our bags). About 10 minutes after retiring for the night, Jane sat up straight and asked,

"Mike, where are our passports?" Whereupon we realized that we had left them somewhere. Probably at one of the hotels we'd stayed at.

Maybe Liverpool or Edinburgh. There was no telling: all we could learn from frantic telephone calls was that they were all shut down for the night, and were not taking messages. So we returned to our room and no sleep at all that night... Eventually the next day, after further comical attempts to communicate, we confirmed they had been left in Edinburgh. We worked our way down to our next stop in Glasgow, and finally were able to reclaim the passports with only an hour and a half or so of extra driving.

Yes, we are totally knuckleheads. Fortunately, that does not get in the way of having a wonderful time traveling.

Back to regular life. The newlyweds, Maggie and Michael are doing just fine, and have a nice group of friends out in New Jersey. Michael is doing quite well in his financial consulting role at Protiviti, and has already gotten a promotion. Maggie continues her journey toward becoming a Phony Doctor (Ph.D), and managed to con the National Science Foundation into awarding her a fellowship that pays for the



Somewhere in Scotland. There may have been drinking involved.



rest of her quest. So, on the one hand, she is now no longer funded by Princeton; on the other, her fruit flies are showing disturbing signs of mounting a political coup in the lab.

As for Dave, he started working in June as a Digital Marketing Specialist for Tractor Supply Company. So

if you see a Tractor Supply ad online, Dave is probably the guy behind it. It did not even take him long to get used to wearing overalls and a straw hat to work every day.



Post-Wedding Rave in Waupaca

In June, Mike had another round of Bar-Nonedom on stage with his lawyer friends, and also had his 40th high school reunion around the same time. All those guys looked really old.

In September we traveled to Madison for our nephew's wedding, then enjoyed the rest of the weekend in Waupaca at a beautiful cottage on a lake with Jane's family.

Since starting his work life, Dave has become Fantasy Football Commissioner extra ordinaire. He started a family league that has presented some hilarious match ups and increased our communication through the season. Maggie is now texting late nights about the waiver wire, trades, and obscure slot receivers who might possibly wind up on injured reserve. This really irritates Dave and Michael, particularly because she is currently ahead of them in the league standings. Dave has been lucky to keep a few close friends in Nash-

Our little (now departed) friend

ville with him, who play Settlers of Catan most Sundays, which evidently is an effective hangover remedy.

In August we had to say goodbye to Jean Claude. Our little buddy was part of our family for over 16 years, and he was about four when we acquired him with a draft pick, so we are really lucky he had such a long life. We still feel saddened every time we walk into the house and he's not here. For all of you who have lost a pet, you know how it is.



Dave and his new best friends

In October, Dave came home for the weekend. He and Mike enjoyed a tour of "Jerry World," a rally for the Cowboys, and the game between the Cowboys and the Packers. At least, until the last minute or so. Jane's birthday gift to Mike was that she stayed at home wearing the old green and gold, and kept the gloating to a minimum when they got home.

One Thursday in October, on a whim, we jumped on the DART train and went down to the State Fair, which we had not done for some years. We need to do more of that sort of thing.

So, fast-forwarding to Thanksgiving, we all flew out to New Jersey where Michael and Maggie hosted the celebration at their place in West Windsor. Jane's brother Joe and his partner Rony were able to join us from Manhattan, so it was really special being with family we don't normally



State Fair coupons burning a hole in Jane's purse



At Macy's with Joe and Rony

get to see for the holiday. We enjoyed time around Princeton, where our friend Mariann Smith also joined us for a bit, particularly because she bet Mike a dinner on the Cowboys-Eagles game, and Mike lost. Fortunately, Mike figured out a long time ago that expertise and/or luck in gambling is not one of his strengths, but he is still a sucker for betting on the Cowboys. We also visited Joe and Rony, spending a day in Manhattan and getting rather overwhelmed by the 9/11 Memorial and Museum. We also got to see pretty nifty and unique Christmas windows and holiday sites around town. Crowds notwithstanding, it was way too long since we visited New York.

So, for this Christmas we are really happy our family will get to be together again. We will fly up to Wisconsin to see our extended family right before Christmas, and come back in time to see even more family and friends in Dallas for Christmas and the next Lobster Throwdown on New Year's Day. We hope 2017 has been a fulfilling year for you and that 2018 will be even better!

Mike & Jane



At Loch Ness in Scotland. We had no idea why the guy taking the picture was all excited.