

Wood Family Newsletter

2007 Holiday Season

Happy Holidays!

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Happy Holidays from the Wood Family! Yes, it's that time again for a holiday letter, sharing some of our 2007 adventures. This missive marks some big

changes for our household. Andy's embarked on a new job, Jenny's begun to build her vast real estate empire, and Vienna's started to

make plans for life after high school. It's been an exciting time, though not always an easy one. Yet love and laughter have helped us through it all.

Andy Update

Andy's year began with him experiencing (and learning to work through) the death of his mother, who had passed just before Christmas last year. Returning from Florida, where Sandy's funeral was held, Andy spent time reflecting upon the many happy memories he has of growing up with a person who instilled within him a spirit of independence and self-confidence.

Later in the year, Andy began new duties as director of the Peer Mentor Program at San José State University, supervising a large and growing community of students who work in classroom and in a dedicated center, helping our 32,000-student body navigate the complexities of college life. While still a member of the Communication Studies department, Andy is

excited to spend a year or so in university administration. These days, most of his duties include "management by walking around," though he attends lots and lots of meetings (for which he is less than joyful).

Our resident gentleman and scholar has also finally finished his newest book, an analysis of airport, hotel, and mall

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Andy Update Continued...

architecture. The tentative title is *Omnitopia: Architecture, Travel, and Communication in the Age of Ubiquity*. He's been working on and off on this book for five years, publishing earlier drafts of chapters in scholarly articles and presenting them at various conferences. As part of his research, he's traveled to international airports, taken cross-country road trips, and interviewed industry leaders. At last he's ready to present his findings in his most ambitious book yet. It should be released sometime next year.

Dad's probably most

proud, though, of his continuation of two family traditions this year: our annual summer trip and our Halloween porch display. For summer, Andy plotted a two-week Southern Routes BBQ Tour, where we sampled world-class brisket, ribs, and sausage from Central Texas to the Carolinas and back. For Halloween we transformed our porch into a "Psycho Circus," complete with creepy clowns, scary midway music, and a real carnival sideshow. Jenny rounded out the display by dressing up as a Bearded Lady. After the holidays, Dad will surely start planning for next year!



Top: Two-headed baby from our Halloween Display
Bottom: Andy, Vienna, and Jenny in New Orleans

Vienna Update



Vienna certainly had an eventful year, too. To start off, she joined the paid workforce, snagging a coveted job at Cold Stone Creamery in Santa Cruz. She works in a fun and fast-paced environment where employees sing from a repertoire of songs whenever a guest adds to the tip jar. Of course, to get to work, she decided that it was time to get a car, so she cashed in on a family deal that the parents would supply the wheels if she would complete her piano training. Now she's discovering the less-than-ideal tradeoff of having a car to get to work and needing to work to pay for car-related costs like insurance and gas.

Another highlight was Vienna's participation in the Santa Cruz High School production of *Brigadoon*, in which she played a female version of Mr. Lundie, complete with Scottish brogue. As usual, she brought outstanding poise and humor to the stage (which she shared with her boyfriend of now more than a year, Michael Beck). Of course, Dad's favorite of Vienna's many performances this year was her Father's Day present: a memorized recitation of *Dragnet's* "What is a cop?" speech. At present she's focusing her studies on

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Vienna Update Continued

psychology, but we could easily see her pursuing a career in the arts.

Among the biggest changes in Vienna's life, though, began with plans for college (starting in Fall

2008). She and Dad took a summer trip to visit Stanford, UC Berkeley, and UC Davis, and recently, the whole family drove north to Oregon and Washington to tour Reed College and the University

of Washington. Vienna's also looked carefully at Humboldt State University and UC Santa Cruz. Currently, Dad's favorite of Vienna's options is Reed, though Mom's a little concerned about their

unofficial motto, "communism, atheism, and free love." Vienna will probably take a few more months to make her decision. We know that she'll do well, no matter her choice.

Jenny Update

To talk about Jenny's year, we must first make a note about 2006, which just happened to be the most difficult year she has ever had. With her mom in the hospital, being elected PTA District President, fulfilling a calling in the church in the Young Women's Presidency, working a full-time job and still maintaining a semblance of a family life, Jenny's 2007 new year's resolution was to say "no" more often. Well, she has fulfilled that and declared 2007 "her year."

Even so, she said "yes" to a great opportunity from her company, Seagate Technology. Each year they send over 200 people to New Zealand (or some other exotic place) for a five-day training, culminating in a day-long adventure race. This was a new and awesome experience for Jenny. She mountain-biked, kayaked and even repelled down a cliff. But the best part for her was the team that she had which consisted of four men she never met before from around the world: Joel, Tommy Shariff



and Torsten. Together they were ToaWairua and out of 23 teams in the race actually came in first! They credit this to the fact that they bonded so well and became like family. They all worked much harder for each other than they probably would have for themselves. At least, that is true for Jenny. She considers this experience the pinnacle of her physical fitness life, one that she will never forget.

Unfortunately, shortly after Eco, Jenny's mom, Jean Boyer, passed away in March after her year-long struggle in the hospital, but the family (Jean's mom and brothers) realizes that it was the best thing that

could happen at that time. Her passing and the subsequent work with her estate ended the most difficult experience Jenny's ever faced. From this experience, though, came incredible growth for her--mostly in understanding--of her own capabilities, why these things happen, and of the spirit of God and how He works in our lives. Jenny realized that even though it was a terrible tragedy for her and her family, some good does come from every bad thing and we God allows these hard times so that we can have this growth.

Once all the administrative issues related to her mom's passing were

resolved, Jenny was able to return some of her focus to other ventures, enjoying her calling with the young women in the church and to completing her term as PTA DP. The term "Other ventures" actually refers to Jenny's new passion for real estate investing. Her mom left her a small house in Florida, which was a perfect chance to get her feet wet in the industry by helping her purchase a second property in Houston. Jenny has grown in her knowledge of real estate by leaps and bounds in the past year but still has a lot to learn. Luckily, it is still exciting for her and she has high hopes of fortune to come in the future. While she still enjoys her job at Seagate as an admin in the Tax department, she hopes to one day work for herself and experience that golden opportunity: passive income! Jenny looks forward to more adventures in real estate and other areas of life in the coming year.