

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

We got off to a slow start this holiday season due to Daria's tearing of the hamstring in her right leg, the "good leg". Now she's limping along and not feeling very merry, ho, ho, ho... (Poor Jeffrey).

This spring we traveled to Wisconsin to see Sarah graduate from medical school at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. In June Andy completed his residency at the Medical School of Wisconsin in Milwaukee. During the winter months, she and Andy had to choose where she would go for her residency and at the same time find Andy a place for his first position as an emergency room doctor. Amazingly enough, they picked Albany, NY, for their next stage in their medical careers. Sarah started her residency at the Albany Medical Center, and Andy is on the emergency room staff of Albany Memorial Hospital. The neatest thing is that Sarah is a mile away from her hospital and Andy, four, compared to the fifty miles for Sarah and twenty for Andy while they were living in Pewaukee, WI. We've already made one trip to upstate New York from Virginia, and are planning many more – each time bringing Sarah more from her closet or furniture from our basement.

Adam and Karla, after what seemed almost a decade long wait, heard from the Washington Redskins that their time on the season ticket waiting list was over. Even Jeff managed to accompany Adam to one game at FedEx field. Of course, this year's Redskins' performance was nothing to get excited about, but a season ticket is a season ticket. In fact, this has been a year of sports activities. Last winter Daria, Jeff, Adam and Karla made their annual trip to downtown DC to see Syracuse play Georgetown. In May and September, Jeff joined Adam and Karla at Richmond International Raceway. In August, in fulfillment of Jeff's birthday promise to his nephew Louis, Adam, Jeff and Andy traveled to Manhattan where they toured parts of the city on Saturday. That evening they traveled to Flushing to watch the Mets battle the Phillies with Louis and Jeff's brother How at the new CitiField. Also in August, for Jeff's birthday, Adam and Karla took the both of us to Baltimore for a crab house dinner and an Oriole's game.

This summer was another chance to travel with our French friends, Anne-Marie and Rodolphe Ledrich. For several years, they have generously included us in their house-swapping adventures. This year it was off to Sicily! We first set off for a few days in Rome, the eternal city. We found a nice, small hotel near the Spanish steps and in the midst of a lovely shopping area. We walked all over, took an open-air bus tour and yes, Jeff even got to ride the subway. We hit the high spots and ended with a wonderful tour of the Vatican.

From Rome, we flew to Catania in Sicily. We ended up taking a taxi from the airport to Nicolosi on the slopes of Mt. Etna; it was a 45-minute ride through winding roads with a surprise: the fare of 100 Euros! While in Sicily, we drove up to view Mt. Etna, a quite active volcano that periodically spews forth. From Nicolosi we traveled to many sites all around Sicily: Catania, Siracusa (Jeff wore his Syracuse University t-shirt), Taormina, Agrigento, Palermo, and Cefalu. We saw ancient Roman and Greek ruins and MANY churches. Rodolphe drove the couple's car in whose house we stayed the first week or so. Then we rented a car so as not to use up too many miles (kilometers). Jeffrey drove the rental car like a New York cabbie that he was, and, alas, will always be. He traversed the narrow Sicilian roads, with very few accurate road signs, like a maniac. He kept up with the other drivers as he passed them and took the turns so precariously that some of us got carsick...

Then we flew to Venice. We LOVED Venice! There is something special about traveling on the water. Daria likes boat rides and Jeff, public transport. It fit BOTH of our dreams. We stayed in a little off the

track, hotel that was recommend by a friend. We walked and took the vaporetti, or waterbuses, everywhere. We saw the major sites and even ate lunch at a café on the canal. Tres romantic, even at our age! :->) Because we couldn't visit the Peggy Guggenheim Museum (we had picked the one day of the week it was closed to see it) we ended in a nearby shop and bought a Murano chandelier! Daria had wanted to buy a new chandelier and replace the one in our dining room for years but never found one she liked. She fell in love with the colors and its simplicity. To her amazement, Jeff encouraged her to buy it! She also bought a vase, which they shipped at "no extra charge." Jeff and Daria's brother, Paul, installed the chandelier when it arrived in August. It took hours since the electrical wires and hanging attachments are different in Italy (never mind the instructions). Of course they are.

Jeff was elected for his third term (and promised it would be his last) as President of the Fairfax County Federation of Citizens' Associations. Through his participation in the Federation, Jeff served on a taskforce developing a future vision of the Washington metropolitan area entitled Greater Washington 2050. Despite Jeff's vision differing from several of the other participants on the taskforce, the taskforce managed to complete a report that the over twenty counties, cities and towns that make up the Metropolitan DC Council of Governments are considering. Trying to visualize a future that cannot be a linear extrapolation of our present mode of living was an interesting experience. Jeff will be amazed if what they planned comes to fruition and more amazed if he's around to see it.

Daria finished her first year as branch manager of the Chantilly Regional Library where she learnt how to work with a larger staff and serve a larger community. She made the acquaintance of the principal of the high school across the street as well as the local police station commander as she tried to manage after school activities taking place in and around the library. In addition, as Fairfax County seeks to cut its budget, the libraries are in the spotlight as a possible source of savings, making managing her library more, as the Chinese would say, interesting.

This was a year that we both ended up on television. As part of a report by the local NBC affiliate about the cutbacks that Fairfax County is considering to balance its budget, WRC sent over a reporter and camera crew to Daria's library. They filmed a short segment on how the cutbacks would affect the library and several patrons' responses. The report named and interviewed Daria, which MSNBC then picked up and distributed nationally. Let's say that was Daria's fifteen seconds of fame (compare that to Andy Warhol's prediction that we'd all get at least fifteen minutes – she was shortchanged!).

As the Fairfax County government access channel ran a series of reports on how each magistrate district reviewed proposed land use changes, Jeff's fraternity brother John Litzenberger, the local Planning Commissioner, asked him to join another local community group leader in a 30-minute discussion which was filmed and broadcast. Comparing the two instances, if Daria was short changed, then no one but a glutton for punishment would watch the full thirty-minute show in which Jeff participated, let alone watch that same show for each of the other eight districts in Fairfax County.

We hope that you and your families find 2010 to be a happy and healthy New Year! Once never knows where your next adventure will lead...

Jeff and Daria

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