



THE HODGE-PODGE GAZETTE



The Family Newspaper

Edition XLIX

Christmas 2008



2008 FILLED WITH HISTORIC UPS AND DOWNS

"It was the best of times; it was the worst of times." These lines from Dickens' *Tale of Two Cities*, may be a good way to describe 2008. The election of our first biracial President marks the fulfillment of an American Dream that someone is judged by the strength of his character, not the color of his skin. This renewed hope that America will reclaim its moral leadership ripples around the world. While in the throes of election fervor, there erupted a swift and shocking collapse of our economic system which also has reverberated internationally as well as personally. A time of dramatic change indeed.

The Hodges Family has also has a year of ups and downs which are not so dramatic. Ben and Wayne just returned from a trip to Paris (business for Wayne) and a first-time visit to Italy (pleasure for both). From water taxis in Venice to strolling the crowded streets of Florence and sharing a fabulous restaurant experience, and a stop in Verona and Siena, they came to our family Thanksgiving full of travel tales to make us all envious.

Beth has been worried about job security ever since Staples bought her company, Corporate Express, earlier this year. So far, so good, but the downturn of the economy adds another layer of anxiety as many friends from work are laid off. Kris, now an eighth grader getting taller by the day, has discovered that girls like him which keeps him on the phone and distracts him from his favorite computer games. He also enjoys singing in

the 8th Grade *Men's* Chorus and is in Honors Math. He's glad his dad moved back to the area after he was unable to find work in Arizona.

John and Liz are as hard-working as ever. Since their mountain log-cabin home is of historic importance because of its role in gold-mining around Central City, John has had to be creative in his home improvements. In addition to his plumbing and remodeling business,

John has worked late at night to fell and strip pine trees to rebuild his roof supports and encase three sides of the log cabin to create a green house where he and Liz will do hydroponic gardening which includes tanks for raising tilapia fish that offer nutrients to grow vegetables. (He has given up raising turkeys, chickens and rabbits—too labor intensive.)

Overwork for Liz as school speech therapist and discouragement with the education of their daughters in Gilpin County's K-

12 School led her to leave education to commute to Denver where she is now using her expertise working 30+ hours a week in a health center for elders. She and John take turns home-schooling Katelyn, age 9, who is making much better progress with her literacy, science and math skills via computer learning than she did in the classroom. Katie and her dad took a field trip this fall to experience the wilderness together, packing their mule, Sally Ann, and riding horses, McGee and Morgan, to a nearby campsite on a high ridge overlooking the Indian Peak Range. Jonna, a blossoming teenager at age 13, now attends Nederland Middle-High School and is thrilled to be in a larger school with more opportunities.

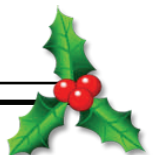
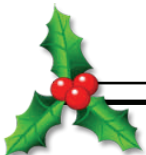
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Jean and Jack enjoy Colorado fall beauty in South Park. May you find your own kind of beauty in the coming year!

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She is doing tech for the school play, singing in a choir and expects to join the ski team. She now prefers to be called Rae at school (her middle name) and is excited about keeping up with friends on MySpace.

Jean and Jack have happily settled into city life, appreciating that they just barely escaped the real estate downturn. They walk to the grocery store, bank and medical center and have learned the bus schedule to travel downtown in 15 minutes or to the university in 5. Their on-site indoor pool beckons to them several times a week for almost always private swimming and hot-tubbing. Jean has explored walking the many creek and bike paths while Jack is preoccupied with a painfully sore left hip. He anticipates his second hip replacement surgery in February.

To see a fun photo of Ben, Wayne and Jean among the 100,000 at the Obama Rally in Denver, 9 days before the election, go to www.HodgePodgeGazette.com.



2008 Travel to Italy and England

Travel for Jean and Jack included a trip to the Amalfi Coast in Italy with long-time friends, Jo and Charley Krauskopf, where they rented an apartment perched on a steep cliff overlooking the Mediterranean in the village of Praiano. They picked lemons from trees next to their patio, shopped at nearby grocers to cook most of their meals and took day trips by local bus to nearby towns of Positano, Amalfi and Sorrento. One day-trip took them to Pompeii, fifty years after their first visit, to enjoy the expanded excavations.

Another week was spent with good friends, Keith, Karin and Amelia Bilson in England who took them to see sights they'd never visited before---the Crich Tramway Museum, the Gladstone Pottery Museum in Stoke-on-Trent, and a Children's Museum in a Victorian mansion. Several days in the seaside resort of Aldeburgh in Suffolk with Howard and Melissa Druckman took them around the countryside to explore abbey ruins and tour the Royal Family's country home, Sandringham, as well as enjoy an evening musicale by the local Gilbert and Sullivan Society.

Rocky Mountain High for PFLAG

Jean's year was dominated by overseeing the plans for the first PFLAG Mountain West Regional Conference to be held in Boulder with the theme, "United We Can!--An Intergenerational Call to Action." Nearly 200 people came together for the weekend of Sept. 19-21, including high school youth and college students, chapter leaders from 20 chapters in 8 states as well as local LGBT-related organizations and allies from our school district. National speakers, a variety of area entertainment and 70 presenters for some 22 workshops filled the weekend with inspiration, information, networking, and socializing. Jean was proud that her church offered their space at a deep discount as the venue. She was also grateful for a wonderful planning committee that worked together effectively to manage all the conference details and was relieved when it was over to know that she would never have to organize this level of a conference again.

New Energy Needed to Move Equality Forward

Beside the victorious election of Barack Obama which promises so much hope for change in the status quo and rescue from a myriad of problems that stretch from Wall Street and Main Street to Afghanistan and Iraq, the change toward greater equality for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons appears to be losing. To have same-gender marriage rights taken away by 52% of California was discouraging. In addition, voters approved similar constitutional amendments in Florida and Arizona with even the right to foster or adopt children denied to gays in Arkansas.

Not only has this generated energy to stand up and protest by the GLBT persons in cities across the country, but allies too are joining the cry for equality in a national program initiated by National PFLAG called "Straight for Equality". As a newly elected member to the National PFLAG Board as well as continuing her roles as Mountain West Regional Director and president of the local Boulder County chapter, Jean Hodges is in the midst of the fray. Go to www.pflag.org or www.straightforequality.org to sign a pledge to stand up and speak out when you feel so moved with friends, relatives and colleagues.



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