

2003 – year of travel

We Hesterbergs traveled all over this year. From participating in competitions to European education; from piloting a space shuttle simulator to strolling down memory lane; from a lake in Maine to the Oval Office, we really racked up the frequent flyer miles.

In May Adam made another trip to the National MathCounts competition, held once again in Chicago. Luckily, Tim, Nathan and I were all able to accompany him this year, and BOY did we have somethin' to see! In a gripping, come-from-behind-victory, Adam became the national champion. He fell into a swirl of newspaper interviews and television programs and he has far more Google hits than a 14-year-old has any right to. To top it off, he's just returned from a whirlwind trip to Washington DC which included a visit to the Oval Office to meet President Bush. Granted, my son who describes himself as "left, FAR left" would've rather a different man held the office, but is that cool, or what? Adam started high school this fall, and quickly convinced his teachers that anytime he's completed his daily assignments (usually within 5 minutes of class starting), he should be allowed to head to a math class to help out. Once a week he heads back to his middle school to coach the math team.

Nathan continues to play chess and participate in fencing. He qualified to compete in the Washington State Elementary Chess Championships in late March, came up with 2.5 out of 5 points, and increased his rating by almost 200 points. A truly spectacular feat. We used the trip to the championships as an excuse to visit Tim's Aunt Clara in Portland and Aunt Lorene near Bend, Oregon before swinging back up to the competition in eastern Washington. Nathan's already qualified to return to the 2004 state tournament. Nathan is now a 6th grader at McClure Middle School and is thriving in the larger school atmosphere. I do have some concern that he may have been taken over by alien beings because he no longer resists doing homework. Who sucked all the irresponsibility out of my kid?? Never fear, he still loves to play computer games, watch movies with his mom (though he won't cuddle up with me any more), and have sleepovers with his best friend, Jake.

It's lucky I've taken plenty of pictures of my kids, because I barely saw them all summer. Just after school was out in mid-June, Adam left for a week at Space Camp down in Huntsville, Alabama. He'd won this trip when he came in first at national MathCounts. After a full week at home, he headed down to Tacoma for a 5-week MathCamp (what is it about these math organizations that they don't put spaces between their words?). Yes, this was Adam's idea of heaven: math all-day, every-day. Next year's camp will be in Maine, and he's been counting the days since he got home. Nathan returned to Summer Scholars, the same 3-week camp he and Adam both attended last year. Also held in Tacoma, but on different college campuses, so they didn't have to chance running into each other. Whew!

While the kids were at their respective camps and Tim once again slaved away at his job here in Seattle, I headed east. I spent one very relaxing week with my friend, Maureen Tillett and her two young sons, at Kezar Lake in Maine. Ok, considering the boys were ages 6 and 4 it wasn't VERY relaxing, but I got plenty of time to lounge

around on the beach. I then flew down to Philadelphia to visit with my family, and most importantly, to attend my niece, Stacey's, wedding. She sailed down the aisle to her new husband, Nate; flashed a brilliant smile for every one of the zillion photographs; then proceeded to dance everyone under the table at the reception. Her secret? She wore tennis shoes under her wedding dress!

Adam, Nathan and I returned home within a day of each other, and spent three whole days at home before heading to Minnesota for a week and a half, this time with Tim in tow (he was in danger of losing his accrued vacation time, after all). We got to visit all of Tim's brothers and sisters, spend a day at the Renaissance Faire where I kissed a muddy man (NEVER sit on the aisle at a mud-wrestling show), go tubin' on the Sugar Lake, canoe on the Red Cedar River, play lots of bridge, eat maple nut ice cream (you can't find that in Seattle), take a trip down memory lane in Northfield, and celebrate our 18th wedding anniversary. Tim and the boys went to the Minnesota State Fair, but I took a pass, figuring that after kissing a muddy man I had every right to say no to something. The fair was great fun. The highlight for me was the high-diving exhibition. Afterward, talking to one of the divers, I learned that they were missing equipment, namely the platform they usually dive off. The guy just jumped off the tower framework. He did the full complement of flips; he was scared, but the show must go on. The highlight for the boys? The rides, of course. We returned home more than ready to settle down, start school and get back to our routines

October saw both Tim and me traveling again, although to different locations. I headed down to California for my 20th Stanford Reunion, and Tim headed to the UK on a business trip. I taught a couple of short courses, in London and Basingstoke. I took full advantage of the time there—saw a couple of plays, walked all over London, and saw a football match. No, not that silly game Americans call football. The real game, played in the rest of the world. Soccer, if you must. Quite an experience; from the time I got off the underground to the stadium 20 blocks away, there were police lining both sides of the street. I got a cheap seat near the "away supporters," so got to see a lot of taunting back and forth between the two sets of fans. Lots of singing and chanting, but no fights. Darn.

With all our love and a little laughter,