

Happy Holidays,

I can't believe 2008 is almost over. Once again it has been a very busy year. This was our first full year in Austin. We are fully in the house, although the garage is still full of boxes. We really need a basement or attic. We have been unable to sell the house in Mass, and have now found a tenant for the next 2 years.

Lina completed her freshman year and entered her sophomore year and Jessica started High School. Each is doing well and has found a sport they like. Lina has increased her commitment to swimming by joining the UT swim club. The club is a group of swimmers that are coached by the UT swim coaches and former Olympians. Lina swims 6 days a week from an hour to 3 hours a day. Boy is she toned. I am very proud of her. Her times continue to improve and she is the fastest girl competing in the breaststroke on the high school team. She has a little ways to go to be invited to the regional competitions but each month she gets a little better. Lina got her drivers license and my parents PT Cruiser is serving as her car. Larry loves not having to get up to drop Lina off for 6:30am swimming. She has even started picking up the chauffeur duties for Jessica.

Jessica on the other hand has found the joys of Lacrosse. Right now they are in practice season and she really enjoys it. In a few weeks she will try out of the varsity and Jr. Varsity team. As a freshman we are hoping for the Jr. Varsity team. Jessica's friend Jessika and her new friend Ashley are also trying out for the team.

As for Larry & I, we are now both looking for work. I lost my job in September and I'm looking for a new position. I have been on a few interviews and one looks particularly promising. Hopefully, I will find something shortly. Larry has been doing some consulting work while he continues his search. After almost a year without a full time gig, Larry is getting stir crazy. He has greatly expanded his search to include all types of computer work including telephone support. For some reason he is just not getting any traction here in Austin. We continue to be hopeful and have a lot to be thankful for.

For those of you who may not know, my Mommy had her artificial valve replaced. After over 20 years of service her valve needed to be replaced. We were very fortunate once again and found a leading cardiologist, heart surgeon, and hospital that specialize in heart surgery. Austin Heart Hospital is one of the country's top rated heart hospital. After getting short of breath in Colorado, my Mom came to Austin to meet with a cardiologist. After a brief consultation and several tests, my Mom went into the hospital to have her valve replaced. The surgery was successful and she is recovering wonderfully. Surgery was on Aug 28th. She was discharged to my house less than a week later and has been steadily been improving ever since. She has ended up needing a graft from her leg which has taken a long time to heal. Other than the leg she appears almost completely healed. She & my dad have left our house and have gone back to RV. For the time being they are sticking close to Austin to continue to see doctors. My dad has taken advantage of the time they were at the house to see some doctors while he was here. Which is a good thing, we have found that he has a little heart trouble of his own. We are still waiting to determine exactly what is wrong.

Over the summer the girls went with my Mother, their Aunt Holly, Allison, and John to visit the Marshall Islands and see their birth parents. They spent almost a week in Majuro. They went to several parties where they meet a lot of relatives, mostly Lina's birth family but some of Jessica's and John's. They had a great time and were very glad they went. After Majuro they spent a week cruising around the Hawaiian Islands. They took surfing lessons, went on a helicopter ride to see a volcano and had a great time.

We are also very glad to announce that we adopted two Cocker Spaniel puppies; a blonde girl named April, and a pure black boy named Quinn. One day in the spring, we were out getting dog food for my parents' dogs when we stumbled across the Austin Cocker Rescue adoption day at the pet store. We sat on the floor and played with all of the various dogs, but 2 caught our eye. They were very quiet; she was very shy, only visiting for a few moments then hiding behind a dog kennel; he was braver willing to sit on my lap for a few minutes as long as I continued to pet him. The foster mom said that she would place them only as a couple, since they had been together at their previous home. We thought about it but, decided to wait. Home we went. We called the foster mom and tried to set up a meeting to see the dogs, but the timing was just not right. Then out of the blue, we got a call the she could bring the dogs to our house for a home visit that day. She came, and we fell in love. That was that; they have been with us ever since. They are no longer quiet, barking at all comers, they are no longer shy with us; Quinn in fact is Larry's shadow, following Larry everywhere. They have been a wonderful addition to the family. To see the puppies playing check out the www.theungars.com

Larry and I were fortunate enough to go on a 2 week Panama Canal cruise. Now that I have taken 2 weeks off at once, I will definitely do it again. I have promised that I will do it at least every 2 years. After 4 days into the vacation, I had totally relaxed. At this point a normally start to tense up again thinking that vacation is just about over and work is right around the corner. This time I realized that I had 10 more days to go. By the end of the vacation, I was more relaxed than I had been in years. The trip was wonderful. Larry & I were able to talk and reconnect.

So once again it has been a strange and wonderful year. We hope you had a wonderful year as well.

Happy Holidays & Best Wishes
The Ungars
Kristin, Larry, Lina, Jessica, April & Quinn

