

THE CARROLL TIMES

Kevin & Martha Carroll

December 2009



Caribbean Princess at Port in Aruba

We count our blessings every day, but at the end of the year we like to reflect and share. We hope this newsletter finds you well and that the year ahead brings you great joy and adventure.

LOVE & MARRIAGE

After five weddings last year, we thought the matrimonial celebrations had peaked, but there were five more in 2009. I was honored to be the best man in my brother Keith's wedding and to welcome his wife Melissa into our family in June.

Martha and I also enjoyed another Hindu wedding ceremony this year when my friend Shawn got married in July. We then celebrated with friends in each of the next three months – our friend Miriam, Martha's college roommate Becky, and Martha's fellow ETC intern Belinda.



TRAVEL & LEISURE

From camping to cruising to collegiate and professional sports, we certainly were very fortunate to enjoy as many travel and leisure activities as we did this year.



CAMPING

We finally got the camper out a bit more this year. Our first trip was to Athens in July when we camped at Strouds Run State Park – a very familiar destination for me. My sister Erin brought her daughters Emma and Hannah out for dinner and we had a great time.

The next day, we drove into town get some groceries at the farmer's market. Needless to say we had a very healthy and tasty lunch.

The highlight of the trip though was visiting with Shawn & Sumir at the Baird house. I had told Martha many stories about their place and it was great to show her around. Little had changed, except for the massive

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RECREATION & FITNESS

The older we get the tougher is to stay in shape. I guess that really starts to settle in after 30. Luckily we are getting more active and staying healthier year-round. From leisurely canoeing to grueling mountain bike courses, from sand volleyball to softball, we insist on finding the fun in fitness. Of course, we do hit the gym a little more aggressively the

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workshop that David had built. Martha was an ideal guest, asking questions that only a fellow artist would know to ask.

In August, we ventured out once again to familiar territory when we camped with the Lloyds at Deer Creek State Park. We found that the campgrounds are understandably much more crowded in the summer than in November (my family stays at the lodge for Thanksgiving every year). Not even a full day of rain could chase away all those serious lovers of the outdoors. The highlights of the trip were the cooking (all sorts of gourmet campfire treats, including banana split s'mores) and chasing skunks (thankfully nobody got sprayed).

Our last camping trip of the season was in October and it was our first to Hueston Woods. When we made the plans, we didn't realize that it was the first weekend of a huge Halloween celebration that the park hosts every year. Needless to say, the campground was packed.

But we had our own agenda. In addition to going to an apple butter festival and hiking halfway across the park, we also spent some time relaxing by the nice warm fire, listening to the sweet sound of... victory! ☺ I enjoyed listening to the UC Bearcat football team – they rolled over Miami. The Lloyds equally enjoyed listening to their

OSU Buckeyes defeat Indiana.



SPORTS

Speaking of sports, the Bearcats have been fun to watch this year. My friend Jason and I enjoyed an exciting UC vs. Rutgers football game even if it was from the nosebleed section. We also recently went to the UC vs. Xavier basketball game – the Crosstown Shootout was equally, if not more exciting (double overtime), but did not have such favorable results.

My spectator sport of choice though is the Cincinnati Reds, hands down. Despite a disappointing season, I enjoyed more games this year than any other – 13 in total, including Opening Day and the inaugural Civil Rights Game.

Baseball sure brings out the kid in me and this kid was in heaven at RedsFest 2009. I think I nearly doubled my autograph collection, meeting Reds Hall of Fame legends like Clay Carroll, Jim Maloney, and Mario Soto. Marty Brennaman and

his son Thom were there and it was pretty cool to get their autograph on the same baseball card. I also met Reds rising stars like Todd Frazier, Chris Heisey, Justin Lehr, and Chris Valaika, as well as current Reds players like Ryan Hanigan, Drew Stubbs, and Edinson Volquez.

But the highlight of the entire event was the appearance of players from modern legend – the 1990 World Champion Cincinnati Reds. I got autographs from Glenn Braggs, Tom Browning, Joe Oliver, Scott Scudder, Herm Winningham, manager Lou Piniella, and my childhood idol *Chris Sabo*! What a memory!



CRUISING

This year was the first year we took TWO cruises – one in March and one in August. The March cruise was our 3rd annual Spring Break Cruise and our 4th overall to the Caribbean. This year, our friends Jonathan & Jessica AND Mark & Christy joined us on the Caribbean Princess. Although we settled for an oceanview stateroom,

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Caribbean Princess at Port in Bonaire, Netherland Antilles, Southern Caribbean

Travel & Leisure (continued from page 2)

we were blown away when we learned we were upgraded to a balcony (and so were the Lloyds).

Just as we did last year, we flew into San Juan a day early, but this time we spent the evening with a friend of Christy. She took us to dinner and showed us the town, but we crashed quickly and headed back to the hotel exhausted.

The next day we were planning to visit one of the “local” restaurants suggested by Christy’s friend Sarah, but we never made it. Some other hotel guests indicated that the ship generally allowed guests to board before the official time and so we decided to go early.

The trip was amazing. Some of the highlights include snorkeling and caving in Aruba, diving/snorkeling in Bonaire, snorkeling in Grenada, 4-wheeling and whale-watching and snorkeling in Dominica, and a submarine ride in St. Thomas! Be sure to check out the many great photos on our web site.

So what about the August cruise? We were thinking of trying to do an Alaskan cruise and visiting Martha’s brother Jake while he was working in Denali. At twice the cost of a Caribbean cruise, we decided against it. Instead, we decided to stay home and do a “clean sweep” (more on that later).

Meanwhile, cruise deals continued to flood my mail box. One night I was checking into a couple of the deals and happened upon some very attractive rates. I called Martha

down to my desk and we booked it on the spot – a three-day Bahamas cruise out of Port Canaveral.

Although the trip was short, we packed a lot of fun into three days. On the day of embarkation, we had plenty of time to relax and check out the ship. In Nassau, we took a cab to Love Beach – a beautiful, private, little known beach about 30 minutes from the port – for some snorkeling and quiet relaxation.

It was a little tougher to find peace and quiet on Royal Caribbean’s private island, Coco Cay. All the beach chairs are crowded onto one end of the island. Martha should have joined me on my trek to the other end of the island. I only saw a couple of people down there before jogging back to the main beach.

As plentiful as the people were the jellyfish – the main snorkeling area was like a mine field. Martha did a great job of dodging them just long enough to see the plane wreck with me, but then begged me to escort her back to shore. It sure was tiring dodging all those jellyfish, but overall the snorkeling was great.

On the morning of disembarkation, we were lucky to witness an unexpected site. The captain announced that we would be coming into port just as NASA was launching a rocket. It was a little off schedule and we almost missed it, but we were glad we didn’t. We got some great photos as well as video of the launch. Our web site has our favorite photos of the launch as well as the rest of the trip.



Recreation & Fitness (continued from page 1)

months leading up to a cruise. ☺

We have been most committed to volleyball and softball. Martha’s sand volleyball team continues to improve and nearly won their league this summer. I subbed for them once, but that didn’t go so well. We have decided that playing sports together is not a good idea.

So I stick to softball, sometimes two or three nights a week. My team in the P&G spring co-rec league lost a step this year, finishing second in the regular season and getting edged in the championship by the same team. My summer team fared better, winning another league championship, as did my fall team.

We also pulled together a men’s team in the fall, the first I had played on since playing on a terrible team a few years ago. This time we had an all-star lineup made up of the best players from my other three teams, as well as players from that championship team in the spring. We swept the league and had a lot of fun doing so.



Smith Bay Park, St. Thomas, Eastern Caribbean



HOME

Despite this being her last summer of grad school, Martha decided to take on two majors projects – some landscaping/gardening and a “clean sweep” of the house (followed by a yard sale).

The landscaping and gardening projects began in the spring with a truckload of super soil from Evans Landscaping and a truckload of mulch (free) from the City of Springdale. While Martha mulched and planted the front yard, I built her a 4x8 box in the back yard for her “square foot gardening”.

With the help of the music teacher at her school and the generosity of a neighbor, Martha was able to get a bunch of free spring bulbs and perennials to get the landscaping started. A few more perennials from Delhi Flower and Garden Center completed the front yard. It was so nice to have “curb-appeal” this spring and summer! Martha even cleaned up the rain garden in the back yard and re-mulched it all!

Later in the spring, Martha’s Dad and Sharon came up to help with the vegetable garden. Lucky for us, their own garden was overflowing and they had extra vegetable plant starters to share with us, including a broccoli plant, some arugula, and two tomato plants. We also had some cucumber plants from my brother’s garden.

To complete the garden, we made another trip to Delhi Flower and Garden Center. We got a couple more tomato plants, a couple of peppers, some basil, and a bunch of seeds. Then Martha, Tim, and Sharon went to work. By the time they were done, there was still some leftover dirt so they created a tomato bed along the fence behind the garden box.

After a few weeks of diligent early morning watering before heading off to her Master’s classes, Martha finally agreed to let me install a soaker hose on a timer to cover the watering cycle – just in time for our trip to Cleveland for Keith and Melissa’s wedding.

By the fourth of July, the garden was in full swing and Martha began to experiment in the kitchen with fresh zucchini, yellow squash, basil, and tomatoes. Later in the summer, we got broccoli, peppers, and carrots. We also finally got a couple crops of raspberries from the rain garden later in the fall – one year after planting some chutes removed from Jerry’s plants. We’re looking forward to a full season of fresh berries next year. Who knows what else will be

in store. Martha is already planning revisions for next spring.



Now, about that “Clean Sweep”. We were inspired by the TLC television show of the same name. The premise is to empty a couple of rooms completely and divide the contents into three piles – keep, sell, and trash. Anything that doesn’t sell in an end-of-project yard sale either gets tossed or donated to charity.

The process started late in the summer when Martha got out all of her artwork, photographed it, and uploaded it on her website (marthacarroll.shutterfly.com) to sell. She also cleaned out her office and all of her closets and clothes. Tim and Sharon then came up to help Martha clean out the Christmas decorations and the kitchen.

We ended the project with a couple of weekends of impromptu yard sales, scheduled at the last minute to coincide with other neighborhood yard sales. We still have a lot of leftovers, but we did okay for little to no advertising and I actually had a fun time meeting neighbors. The important part is that we got the house cleaned out and organized. I’ll try a couple more yard sales in the spring before we pack up the rest and take it to Goodwill.





MARTHA'S CAREER

Martha had one of the biggest years of her professional and academic career in 2009. In April, we traveled to Minneapolis, MN so she could attend the National Art Education Association's national conference. We decided to make a mini-vacation out of it and stayed with our friends, the Von Ovens. They were incredible hosts, taking us to their favorite spots around town in the evenings.

During the day, Martha rode the bus into town and spent the whole day soaking up all that the conference had to offer. She was also able to visit three local art museums. I spent the days at the local P&G office with Mark, working through our "vacation" so that I didn't have to take any days off.

Martha was so excited about the things she learned from convention that she brought back new ideas and proposals for new projects to be

implemented as soon as possible! One of the discoveries she made at the convention was a website for Art teachers called Artsonia, which offers an online art gallery for students. Martha pitched the site to her principal, who immediately jumped on board.

At the beginning of the 2009-2010 school year, she finally got approval from the Central Office. With the tremendous support of parents, who have volunteered to photograph artwork and import data, Montgomery Elementary is now an active member of Artsonia, displaying the artwork of over 300 students! See for yourself at MarthaCarroll.net/Artsonia.



This summer was also Martha's final term in her Master's program at the Art Academy of Cincinnati. Part of her thesis work was to explore the idea of the spaces in which art is experienced. When the Springdale Farmer's Market debuted in May, it provided Martha a unique space to share her art, far from the traditional art gallery.

Passers-by were intrigued by her artwork and often stopped to ask questions. She even found herself enjoying meeting the neighbors. Unfortunately, the Farmer's Market did *not* prove to be a great place to *sell* her artwork. She didn't even sell enough to make back her rent money. Don't even get her started on her experience with the politics of it all. Although she's glad for the experience, she says she will not be signing up for anything like that anytime in the near future. ☺

In July, Martha's thesis paper, exhibit, and presentation were a big success and she finally earned her Master of Art in Art Education. To see pictures, read her paper, and/or view her presentation, visit MarthaCarroll.net/thesis2009.

KEVIN'S CAREER

Work hasn't changed much this year for me. In this economy, I'm thankful for that. My official role is still North America Subject Matter Expert on Customer Portal. That means I'm still not managing the projects. Rather, I am *defining* projects and solving major design challenges. It's still fun, but I've sort of reached cruise control and am using it as an opportunity to start skill-building again. Much of my expertise is critical to a multi-year

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Kevin's Career (continued from page 3)

project that is due to wrap up in 2011, so I'll likely be in this role a little longer before looking for a new challenge.

Philanthropy continues to be a priority for me. This year I again led the Marketing Committee for the YWCPS – P&G's philanthropic group for new hires (0-10 years). We had a stellar year despite the poor economy. Membership grew by 65% to over 600 members and member contributions grew by 70% to over \$800K. I'd like to say we really hit our stride this year, but I think people's hearts really went out to those in need more than ever before. That's a very rewarding feeling. As I become an alumnus this year, I look forward to mentoring the next generation of leaders.

Much of that mentoring will likely draw on the skills I continue to teach in the Ken Blanchard certified Situational Self Leadership course. We teach employees how to be self-leaders by recognizing and pursuing the direction and support they need to be successful.

A couple of additional highlights at work this year were the two organization meetings we had. The first was a global meeting of my immediate group. We had team members in from Argentina, Italy, Thailand, and the Philippines. We had a great time. A couple of them even came out to one of my softball games. My friend Tin took pictures,

my first in my 15 years of playing softball. I guess I owe her. ☺

The second meeting was my entire department (North America only) and I met a LOT of new people since we had recently reorganized. My favorite part was joining a few out-of-towners for dinner one evening. We had so much fun that I nearly missed my bus home.

Speaking of bus rides, I'll leave you with one final thought. *Try public transportation* if it's available in your area. Even if you never do it again, at least you can say you gave it a try. It can cut down on your transportation and parking costs, it can get you a couple hours of your day back (sometimes I work on my laptop, sometimes I listen to an audio book, sometimes I sleep), it can save you the stress of rush hour traffic, and it's great for the environment.

CHIEF & KOLDER

Our Siberian Huskies have been mostly a joy this year, though Chief gave us a good scare right before our cruise in March. He managed to ingest half a carton of Sprite – not the cans, just the cardboard. A chunk of it blocked him up good and after 10 days of not being able to keep any food down he had dropped 25% of his body weight and could barely walk.

So we finally gave the go on surgery.



Dr. Sarah removed a solid blockage the size of a toilet paper tube from his large intestines. Everything started moving again and we left Chief in Dr. Sarah's care while we were gone. He healed quickly and is back to his old mischievous self.

But things are a little different now. I've spent more time with the boys than ever before. They come camping with us. They lay by my side in my home office. And I try to give them more of the exercise they need and deserve – whether by running them or taking them out on my rollerblades or on my bike.

Life is short. Live it to the fullest.

We hope you enjoyed this update and that we hear from you soon if we haven't lately. As always, you can find us on Facebook and at...

<http://www.KevinAndMartha.com>

