



the MACYS, et al



December 2006

I might carry the title of office administrator at Newberg Friends Church but I spend most of my time doing publications. Pagemaker, my beloved design software, and I have been joined at the hip since 1988. It took major surgery to separate us, but this year I finally broke through my ever-ready resistance to anything new and learned InDesign. So now I sit throughout my days in front of a computer that likes to perform all kinds of new tricks. One day the healthy food I've been eating lately sent a spurt of creativity to my brain. Wanting to make the most of it while it lasted I quickly designed a newsletter in full color that we could email weekly to the congregation instead of the one I diligently produced and mailed twice a month in black/white print form. Once I unveiled my idea, no one in the office dared let on that I wasn't the first person in the world to think of this. I work with very kind people. Long story shortened, we made the transition, more smoothly than I ever thought possible.

Fully inspired, I decided to go electronic with our annual Christmas greeting. I hope you like the new format enough to read it or at least look at the pictures. With all this freedom, I might tend toward verbosity, so let me apologize in advance if this gets too long. You are hereby released from any obligation to read all the way to the bottom.

2006. I started this year as a 60-year-old, which is not such a bad place in life to be. I still have most of my faculties—at least I think I do, since I don't really know what faculties are; I still enjoy a measure of good health, though swallowing prescription drugs is now part of my morning routine; I still dig sharing a full life with my dear man. In September Mauri joined me in our seventh decade. One of these days we'll have to sit down with those annual letters that come from the social security office and make some plans. But nothing about our life would lead you to believe we were thinking of retirement. Despite my grandiose efforts to de-accumulate, we keep buying stuff. Little stuff, not big stuff. We drive old(er) cars. We wear well-chosen used clothes purchased at Goodwill or New to You. We snuggle on the same old loveseat we bought when we got married 12.5 years ago. But we've rediscovered the fun of driving around town on summer Saturday mornings looking for signs with arrows that point toward someone's garage sale. You'd be amazed at what we can carry in and on a topless Jeep Wrangler!

Life did come to a screeching halt last April. It was the first gorgeous Oregon day of the season. We decided to reward ourselves for all the spring housework we had accomplished and hopped on the tandem for a spin. Out of character, I suggested we do a little climbing. But the rewarding downhill ended abruptly when we both heard a loud pop and realized our front tire had blown. On a bicycle built for two there's zero potential for remaining upright, and in an instant we were skidding on our left side down the wrong side of the road, shoes clipped to pedals. We were immediately grateful no cars were in the other lane but could see we had not come through unscathed. Mauri's clothes were shredded and he was covered in fleshy road rash. The awkward angle of my foot (pointing backward) provided my first clue that I'd probably broken something. I held it in one hand while I used the other to scoot myself to the side of the road. Before long we had an audience and in it one Good Samaritan who called for rescue transport and another who took our bike home for us. All the hours we've spent watching ER and Grey's Anatomy turned what happened next into our own drama. We got to ride to the hospital in an ambulance and have doctors and nurses attend our wounds. Yes, my ankle would require surgical repair. But what about the New England road trip I'd planned for us via priceline.com (read: pay in advance/no refunds)? Can I be walking by June?

Fast forward. We had an absolutely delightful road trip with many highlights, adding VT, MA, RI, ME, CT, and NH to my list of "been there" states (with one to go—AK). Since most of a road trip is spent in a car, I got along great in my aircast boot. The cobblestones on Nantucket Island and the slanted sidewalks in Philadelphia's Italian Market proved challenging, but I clumped along hand-in-hand with my patient travel partner. One adventure took us on a hunt for Froggy Bottom Guitars in the tiny, remote town of Newfane,





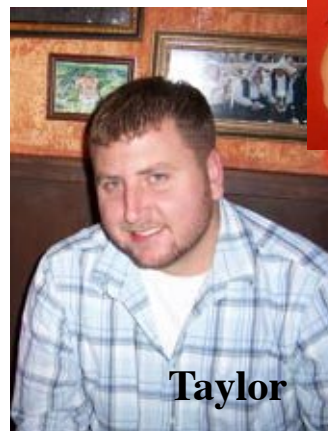
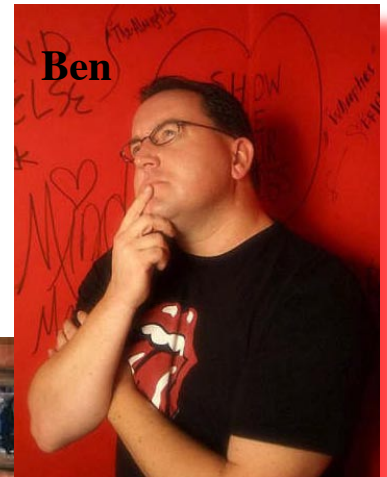
Vermont. Mauri knew of their fine work and was quite sure anyone in the area would be able to tell us the location. He kept stopping to ask until finally someone had a general idea. We wound around this road and that turn and up a gravel road and in desperation asked a woman walking her dog if she could help us find Froggy Bottom Guitars. She pointed across the road. “There!” No sign welcomed us but we had come this far and weren’t about to let a big dog in the driveway dissuade us. A full flight of stairs to the door dissuaded me, so Mauri braved a knock. The result made the whole trip worthwhile. Though the guitar makers discourage visitors (we could see that), they welcomed a traveler all the way from the West Coast and gave him a tour of their rustic headquarters. I eventually climbed

the stairs in time to take this picture of my dear man making music on a sweet little parlor guitar, crafted for an American soldier in Iraq.

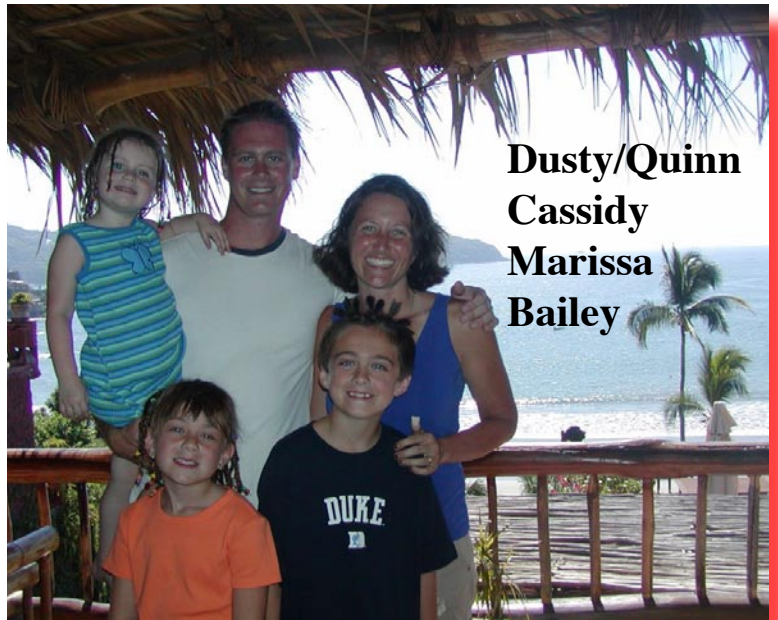
To tell the rest of that story I have to interject this statement: We have a website! and we invite you to visit us any time you think about your friends Mauri and Sherry. The address is <mauriandsherry.com> We post anything and everything—from Mauri’s music to my confessions about learning to make applesauce from the gravensteins in our backyard to the blow-by-blow account of our blowout to pictures of our road trip. And that segues back to my Froggy Bottom story. In July we were enjoying the Oregon Coast with our family when Mauri got an email from an American soldier in Iraq. He had done a Google search for Froggy Bottom parlor guitars and found a link to our site and what Mauri posted about our experience, including the photo I took. Clearly that was his guitar and he was curious about how it sounded and about its appearance. He was buying it by installments and looked forward to returning to the States and claiming his prized instrument. He wrote that a group of soldiers in Iraq gathered regularly to sing worship songs, which he led, and study the Bible together. Hearing Mauri read that note aloud to me took my breath away. It has the same effect as I write the story to you, and I can still hardly believe how small our world has become because of the Internet.

We ended our road trip in Philadelphia, with daughter Rachel and her husband, John. While we were there we got a not-so-surprising call that Dad Williams had died. At first I thought the timing was terrible but soon realized it couldn’t have been better. The presence of her beloved “Pop” helped close the distance at a time Rachel needed him close, and we helped her think through how she could attend her grandpa’s memorial service.

Please keep in mind that I’ve enlarged the font size to make computer reading easier but causing this to appear like a long letter. But I’d better move on to tell about our kids before you have to go eat supper. *Ben* manages to hold his job at Johnson Controls in Holland, Michigan, despite the many cuts in the car industry. He says the cuts usually happen while he’s in the middle of a project so timing is on his side. I’m way too far away from him and feel like I don’t know him very well anymore. Hopefully that will change when I see him in Denver after Christmas. *Taylor* graduated from his military-supplied specialized training in medical equipment repair and landed himself a job at Colorado University Hospital in Denver. I got in on a celebration of his 30th birthday (my baby!) in September because it coincided with a request from *Quinn* and *Dusty* for my “grandma” services while they made a business trip together. That turned out to be extra fun because the Andersons had just added a new puppy to the family. Of course our three grandchildren—*Bailey*, *Marissa*, and *Cassidy*—are beautiful and exceptional and their parents do a great job of providing a balanced and Christ-centered home for them. They travel quite a bit, so much so that the youngest A. just reached executive status with Frontier Airlines. The tan skin and braided



hair in the picture come from spending Thanksgiving in Zihuatanejo, Mexico. *Pete* and *Linsey*, *John* and *Erin* all work full time—Columbia Sportswear, Century 21, Nike, and George Fox University, respectively—and happily live in Newberg. The sisters-in-law say they think that even if Pete and John weren't brothers, they'd probably still be best friends. (Isn't that cool?) On their days off they're usually out at the beach or in the ocean waiting for the perfect wave. *Rachel* and *John* recently became homeowners and excitedly reported progress on settling in, which mostly happened just in time to start the new school year—*Rachel* teaching 3rd grade and *John* finishing his art degree. We were so happy to finally visit them in June and now they've moved and we're back to envisioning them in their surroundings via the pictures they send. Just a good "excuse" to plan another trip!



**Dusty/Quinn
Cassidy
Marissa
Bailey**



Pete/Linsey

Our family Christmas celebration will include fewer people this year: four. But the lower number won't lessen our joy or our focus. Our church's traditional Christmas Eve service concludes with handheld candles filling the church while we sing three verses of "Silent Night." A lump in my throat always prevents me from singing the words, but that makes them no less meaningful as my grateful heart acknowledges the "dawn of redeeming grace; Jesus, Lord at thy birth!"

We wish you a merry Christmas and a happy, healthy, productive, and fulfilling 2007!

With love from, *Sherry* (for Mauri too)



Erin/John



Rachel/John

the data

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