

December 2007

Dear Friends and Family,

We hope this holiday season finds you and your family in good spirits and health. Welcome to the first edition of the Young family Christmas newsletter. I have enjoyed reading many of your newsletters throughout the years, and have often thought of doing one, but have not for several reasons. The first reason is the lack of time. It usually takes us most of December just to get one decent family picture, and its all we can do to get our cards out in time. Secondly, I never thought our year was all that interesting to other people. This year I have more time (more on that later), and our year was one I thought was quite interesting. Also many people have remarked to me that they actually enjoy my writing about my family. So, I thought I would give it a try. Writing a Christmas newsletter is actually harder than I thought. It is a fine line between a newsletter that is interesting and informative, and one that is just nauseating. You know the ones with hundreds of "cute" photos and stories of our "perfect" kids. After the second page, you want to toss your Christmas cookies. So, I will do my best to keep it entertaining and not cross the line to nauseating, but bear with me as this is my first attempt at this.

Vacations:

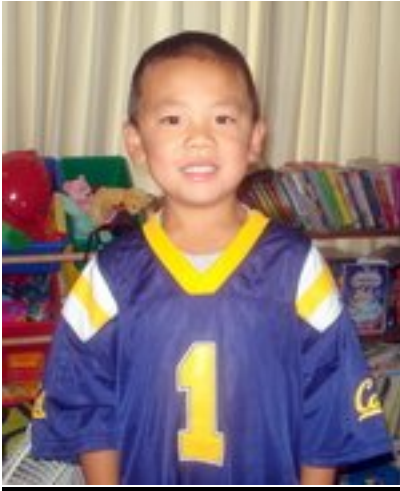
The highlight of our year this year and every year are the vacations and trips we take. Due to a much more flexible work schedule for me this year, we were able to take many more trips than we usually do. We started out the year with an extended family vacation along with Christine's side of the family to the San Diego area. We had a great time visiting the San Diego Zoo, and Legoland. Although we have been to Disneyland many times, this was the first time to the San Diego area, and the kids thoroughly enjoyed it.

Our next big trip was to the Hawaiian islands of Kauai, and Oahu. We have been to Oahu many times before, but this was our first time to Kauai, and we really enjoyed the beauty and slow pace of Kauai. We spent a week on Kauai sightseeing, and relaxing on the beach or the pool. After Kauai, we spent a few days on Oahu visiting Al's relatives. Our kids have become accustomed to traveling as this is the third time to Hawaii for Marcus, and the second for Mia, almost as many times as they have been to Disneyland.

In July, we went to Arizona in the hottest part of the year with Christine's Mom and Dad. Not exactly the best time to visit Arizona, but the kids enjoyed swimming in the resort's pool, and of course spending time with their grandparents. It was actually the second time Al and Marcus visited Phoenix this year. In February they went to Phoenix for their third annual father/son spring training trip. February is a much nicer time to visit Phoenix, but a highlight of this trip was going to Sedona. Sedona was a first time for almost everyone, and it was very enjoyable with a lot of beautiful mountain scenery, and we visited a wild animal park which was a big hit with the kids. Al was also able to reconnect with a former co-worker from BART who retired to Sedona.

With school starting in September, our opportunity to travel freely became more limited, but we were able to sneak away for a few days in November to Dallas to visit some old friends who have two boys about Marcus' age. They had a great time visiting a Dinosaur park, and just running around wildly

In addition to these trips, we were able to take many other short trips to places such as Bear Valley, and Disneyland. Al and Christine were even able to escape to Carmel for a few days alone in August. Despite a busy schedule at home, we were able to get a fair amount of frequent flier mileage this year.



Marcus

Besides the highlights of our travels this year, the other highlights of course centers around our kids and the respective milestones they reached this year. Marcus turned 5 this July, and the highlight for him was starting Kindergarten. It was an answered prayer that he was able to get into the local elementary school by our house, so Dad and Marcus are able to take a short walk to school each morning. He is making new friends, and enjoying Kindergarten life. His teacher says "he is a delight to have in class, and so helpful". We think she may have mistaken him for another Chinese boy with short hair, but we will accept the compliments nevertheless.

Marcus enjoys reading books, traveling, and watching sports with Dad. In other words, he has adapted the interests and hobbies of his Mom and Dad. Marcus really enjoys going to sporting events with Dad such as baseball games and Cal football games. He also really enjoys playing sports. This year he started swimming, tee ball, and soccer. He seems to be doing well and enjoying these sports, so we will continue to pursue them in the upcoming year.



Mia:

Mia turned 3 this past February, and she also started school this year, preschool. She attends A Kid's Kingdom two times a week. She is also adapting well to her new school, and has already made some good friends. Mia is the artist in the family. Her favorite part of school is painting which she has been waiting to do for years while she was taking Marcus to school. She loves reading, drawing, painting, and anything art related. She could spend hours on her art projects.

Although Mia enjoys playing with her friends, she is perfectly content to read, or draw quietly by herself, making her an ideal companion for Dad at the local coffee shop. Like most girls her age, she likes all things "Princess", and her American girl doll Zoe, but has not gone overboard with it. She also loves music and singing. Like Marcus, Mia is very talkative when she wants to be, although she has not mastered the art of tact in her conversations, "You smell", "You are fat". We are working on that.

Christine:

2007 marks the 5th year Christine has been a stay at home Mom and she continues to get better and more efficient in her role as full time Mom. Just when she is getting her home routine down, this year Christine has the additional challenge of having another kid in the house all the time, Al. It remains to be seen whether having Al around is a help or hindrance to her, but the combination of having Al around and the kids in school has allowed her more time to run errands, and she was able to join a women's fellowship group and a bible study fellowship during the week. She is enjoying those activities.

Christine is in charge of all the kid's schedule, and she always has some activity planned for them. When she is not taking the kids somewhere, or volunteering at school, she is either shopping at Target or Costco, or online planning a family trip. Christine is our family travel planner, and makes sure we can find a good deal to go somewhere. Christine really enjoys our family vacations, and she is the reason we travel so much.

Al:

After sharing what all the important people in the family are doing, it does not leave much room for me, even though I may gone through the biggest change this year. To summarize my year:

- Quit my job at BART to become self employed as a real estate investor and entrepreneur
- Started a personal blog (www.Mralyoung.com)
- Grew a goatee to support the Warriors playoff run and shaved it off
- Rode a mechanical bull
- Became a part time to full time stay at home Dad
- Discovered the world of Moms with parent teacher meetings, play dates, carpools, and idle gossip
- Traveled extensively for pleasure and business

This year has been a year of transition for me. After 12+ years in a safe, secure work environment at BART, it was a big change to become self employed, and totally dependent on yourself without the support of a big organization behind you. Adding to challenge, is working from home. It has been both a blessing and a challenge to be at home with your family most of the day. It's been a joy to do what few Dads get to do, such as take your kids to school, and spend time with them during the day seeing them grow up. However it has been a challenge to get work done in this environment with trying to balance being accessible to my kids while trying to be productive at the same time. Spending all day with my kids has also tested my patience. But I am grateful for this opportunity, and the new things I am learning form it.

From a business and personal standpoint, 2007 has been a year of transition and change for me. It has been a year of learning and surviving. It's not exactly the best time to be in real estate as an investor and developer, but I have adapted our business plans, and have survived thus far. I started the year with one company that I started for my real estate ventures, and started another partnership during the year. I am in the process of starting a third partnership. Hopefully, in 2008 we will see some profits from our labor. Seeing the need to diversify from real estate, I have also started a few online ventures that I am excited about and am hopeful for in 2008. What started out as a hobby of blogging for me, has opened my eyes to some online entrepreneurial opportunities. If you want to keep track of what my family and I are doing during the year, please visit my blog at www.Mralyoung.com for updates.

Lastly, we would like to wish you and your family a blessed holiday season. I hope you have enjoyed my first and possibly last attempt at a family holiday newsletter. We look forward to an exciting New Year, and hope to be able to spend time with you and your families in the upcoming year.



The Youngs (Al, Christine, Marcus, and Mia)