



It seems that time is moving much quicker now that the girls are all busy in school and out doing activities. Our weeks are all planned out from Sunday-Friday. Saturday is spent going to games and other assorted activities.

Much of our spring and fall were spent going between softball practices and games for Victoria

and

Isabella, horseback riding for Alexandra and piano lessons, as well as Young Women's for Alexandra and Activity Days for Victoria. Isabella has been playing on her drum set this year, and Alexandra and Victoria have spent some time with the bass and guitar, but we still have a lot of work to go before the girls are ready to hit the road and perform. Life was much simpler when the girls were younger and we only had Alexandra's activities to coordinate. We know that many of you

can relate!

On Valentine's Day we surprised the girls with Spiderman! Not the comic book hero or the movie, but rather our Appaloosa pony. We are leasing him thanks to our dear friends, the Gerald's.





He gets to live at their home, Gray Wolf Acres, and we are able to go visit him often. Alexandra has taken up riding as her main activity. She usually rides two times a week. She also participated in her first dressage show this year and came home with her first ribbon. She is a natural rider. Victoria and Isabella both love the pony as well and have done some riding, too.

Each of the girls is doing well in school. Alexandra is in seventh grade and is getting high school credit for her Algebra class. She elected to take art and is turning out some fabulous projects. We all envy her artistic talent!



Victoria is in fourth grade, has gotten onto the "A" honor roll and is enjoying switching classes. She got to go with Melanie on a field trip to Jamestown, the first English settlement in America. It was monumental as Jamestown is celebrating its 400th year. It's amazing how much history is available to us in this area. Isabella is in second grade, is doing great with her reading and was a finalist from her class and made it to the



school's spelling bee. The girls also got a chance to go ice skating this year for their cousin's, Kristyna's , 18th birthday party. Each of them loved the experience and wanted me to mention that as a highlight for this year. I guess we need to go and do that more than once every ten years!

We also lost a lot of teeth between the girls this year. When I asked all of them to tell me what happened

this year, they all mentioned dental work. Alexandra and Victoria both had teeth extracted and got appliances in their mouths. Unfortunately for my kids, they did not get their mom's teeth. Isabella avoided dental extraction, but lost four teeth of her own.



To kick off the

crazy summer, we went on our annual beach camping trip for Memorial Day.

We were able to convince several families' we know to come with us.

Next year if you are not busy Memorial Day weekend, come and camp with us at Virginia Beach. Melanie was gone most of June, flying out to California twice to attend Brady's and Jacob's weddings. When she returned she packed up and went to Girls Camp with Alexandra. It was great that they were able to go together. Luckily for them, NOT, it was in





the one of the hottest and most humid weeks of the year! They survived and returned home with lots of good memories and pictures with bandanas on their heads.



When they got back from Girls Camp, the family headed out to Lake Tahoe for the Campbell Family Reunion. We loved the reunion, except for the part when Alexandra got pneumonia and Loretta broke her wrist. Luckily, those both happened on the last day and we look forward to the next one in 2009! We were also able to go and see the "big trees" of Calaveras.

Melanie and I went camping on the James River for our 14th Anniversary. The Yettters came and watched the girls for us, while we went and camped with Kat and Keny Rader. Keny and



I enjoyed playing Xbox in the back of the van while the girls safely drove us 3 hours to our destination. Traffic, what traffic? We were completely oblivious to anything outside our game zone.



While on the trip we were able to do some tandem Kayaking and tubing down the James River. It was a beautiful area and we have resolved to go back again, perhaps even taking the kids.

A lot
of families

around us seemed to grow or get started this year. My Nephew Beau had his first daughter, my next door neighbors had a baby girl, and two door s down they had a baby boy, and two of our ex-neighbors had girls (and came back to introduce us to them). How does this matter to the Whitesides?



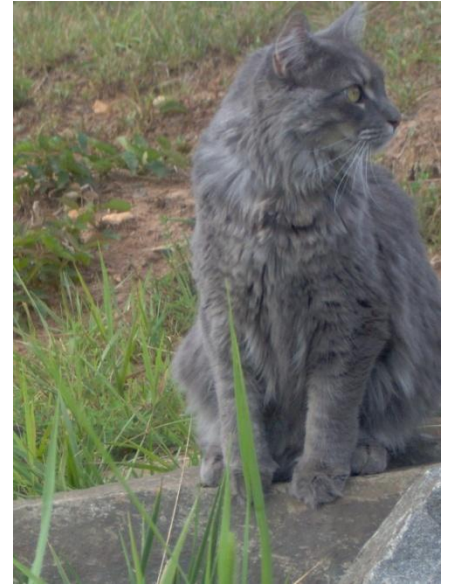
Well it helped us to get our fill of

babies, and because of all these great people, we were able to keep our family at three 😊. My girls also love holding and playing with the little ones, perhaps no one as much as Victoria.





Our awesome dog, Marcie, died this year from cancer. We had her for almost 9 years and she became an indoor dog when we moved to Virginia, so she really left an empty space in our home. Alexandra created a slide show of Marcie that comes up on the computer as a screen saver. We all really miss her.



As I look through the pictures of the year, there are pictures of horse shows that we have attended, county fair animals and hundreds of pictures of our pets. In particular our addition from last year Quincy. Turn s out

he is a mane coon. He is as long as Isabella is tall (almost) He is very playful and spends most of his time outside. He has become Alexandra's favorite subject for pictures.



Melanie is busier now than she has ever been. She is serving in the presidency for the Relief Society at church. She is actively involved in the community. She was the vice

president of the home owners association and stepped down from that just in time to start her summer of travel. Her company has gotten very busy this year, and it has



been fun seeing her use her many talents. She just completed working on the redistricting committee for the school board out here as our county gets ready to open a new high school and elementary school. Of



course she spends most of her time taking care of the girls and moving them from activity to activity.

I had a second surgery this spring to pull a screw out of my knee (one they put in in '06), and finally this winter, I think

(almost two years removed from the injury) I am getting back to being able to play sports again and trust my knee again. After working at my current employer for nine years, I was made a partner, and I am really grateful for the job I have, the people I work

with and the opportunities it has provided for my family.





We were lucky enough to have some visitors come and see us this year including Melanie's mother, Loretta, Judy, Tamera and Oneil, my Uncle Val and Aunt Ruth Ann, Larry, Brady, and Cierra. We also had friends who left the area come back and visit as well. We almost got to see our nephew, Parker, who was in the area, but on a tight tour leash. We are always up for company and would love to

have you. Please coordinate your bed situation with Melanie prior to arrival. Check in as at 12: on Sunday... Check out is negotiable.



We hope that you all had a great year. Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!! For next year, I hope to actually have this letter done BEFORE the cards go out, and make at least 1 update on this website before Christmas 08. For those we didn't see I hope you feel like you spent some time with us this year by seeing the pictures and reading this letter.

