

THE CLAYTON CHRONICLE

The Scottsdale Scoop

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TWO FORTY-SOMETHINGS

Ken finally joined Angie in the forties this month, and he even surpassed his 200 by 40 goal, weighing in at 196 on his birthday. We celebrated by hosting a party with friends the Reinsteins, Rosers, Egberts, Harrigans and Ellsworths. Angie prepared a large paella and way too much other food. Ken contributed with his famous Spanish tortilla.

Ken received some "Best of Saturday Night Live" DVDs: Dana Carvey, Will Ferrell, Phil Hartman, and Chris Farley. We had forgotten how funny some of these old favorites were like: The Church Lady, Massive Headwound Harry, Will Ferrell in a thong at a business meeting, Matt Foley Motivational Speaker (who lives in a van down by the river), presidential send-ups of both Bushes, Reagan and Clinton, and Dana Carvey impersonating Dennis Miller. As Dana Carvey would say (channeling Johnny Carson) "some wild, wacky stuff."

In addition to celebrating Ken's birthday, we also joined a Superbowl Party at the Harrigans'. Our local team, the Arizona Cardinals, was playing in the big game, but our contrarian kids and Angie (who was raised in Pennsylvania, preferred the Pittsburgh Steelers. We conspicuously brought Steelers cupcakes. We also attended an Oscar party at the Reinsteins later in the month the month (Angie made fresh guacamole and Oreo pizookies).



Marnie playing croquet

jet set

Chad had a rare opportunity to fly in a private airplane with his Boy Scout group. He even got to sit in the cockpit part of the time (it was on auto-pilot). The plane flew up around Winslow, AZ, then looped around to Albuquerque, NM, and then back to the Scottsdale Airport.

What was the best thing about the experience? According to Chad, it was the food: three bags of chips, two bags of fruit snacks, three Cokes and a Sprite.

sunday croquet

The Liscoms had a family tradition of playing croquet on Sundays when Angie was about Marnie's age. We decided to set up the croquet set we have and give it a try.

Despite a rather small field of play, some sub-par equipment (they just don't make croquet sets like they used to), and a bit of poor sportsmanship (apparently no one liked being on the receiving end of a croquet), we had some family fun.

blue & gold

The first assignment of Angie's new calling was to put together the Blue & Gold banquet, an annual dinner for families to celebrate cub scouting.

A small mix-up resulted in the banquet being held in the Primary room (a tight squeeze for 8 tables and about 70 people) instead of the Cultural Hall. Although Angie was not sure what "taco stack-ups" were going into the event, it all came off fairly well, and even began and ended on time.

RENAISSANCE KIDS

By Jeff & Marnie

Jeff and Marnie are taking some additional classes after school. Jeff enrolled in a Lego Engineering class, and Marnie signed up for Hip Hop Cheer (in addition to her existing Show Choir class at Kirk's Studio).

What do you like best about your class?

Jeff: I like to build stuff, like all my Lego Indiana Jones stuff and K'nex sets at home.

Marnie: I like all three teachers. I especially like Miss Amanda 'cause she has beautiful blond hair, and she has beautiful eyes. And I like my dance class 'cause they have good exercises.

What do you like least?

Jeff: I don't like running out of a certain kind of Legos. Usually when everyone in the class is making something really big, we run out of certain kinds of Legos.

Marnie: That I was sick on Monday so I couldn't go, and that I wish that it was on Wednesdays 'cause then I wouldn't have missed it.

What new things have you learned?

Jeff: I haven't really learned anything new. I guess how to make better Lego designs.



Marnie: I like the four steps forward 'cause you do a step forward, but you put both hands to the side like this, and then you do to the other leg, and you keep on doing like that.

What do you want to do when you grow up?

Jeff: I want to build stuff or maybe I just want to be a guy who makes Lego sets (designs new sets).

Marnie: I want to be a movie star. *(Starts singing a song they are learning in Show Choir)*

RENAISSANCE FAIRE

By Chad

Our family used to go to the Renaissance Faire every year (courtesy of Delta), but we did not attend this year. Chad attended with his school.

What was your favorite thing at the Renaissance Faire this year?

Chad: The Wylde Men. They do a show they call Theatre a la Mud. It's basically two guys (and another guy on drums) having a duel to the death (in mud) between the wylde man and the civilized man. They call the zone in the front the "First-Timers' Place" because they don't realize they'll be covered in mud at the end. Dylan and I sat there anyway.

What was the food like?

Chad: Turkey leg! Gigantic, juicy, succulent pieces of meat on bones. Doesn't that just sound yummy? My friends got these fries that they hated, and I wolfed down five baskets of fries.

What did you see that you hadn't seen before?

Chad: The dungeon tour. They really knew how to torture a guy. They knew the areas that really hurt, like for committing adultery they would remove your testicles over a series of several hours. Delightful!



Chad is very proud of his new shirt – a tuxedo design based on the comic book Joker

FROM ANGIE'S EASEL



I was working on this one while I was watching Irma la Douce. I love Jack Lemmon! I loved the contrasts in the twisting tree bark (the painting, not the movie).



I didn't like this one quite as much, although I did like the gold shimmery quality of the baked sand desert floor in front and to the right.



I had to rework several things at different times like the eyes (too big), the face shape (too round), the spatial distances, etc. This is from a picture of me taken on our cruise in Europe last year.

...AND KEYBOARD

- Upon What Rock?
- Zero Population Is the Answer, My Friend . . .
- Creeds of the Creedless
- Jesus for President!
- The Stories We Tell

...AND KITCHEN

OREO PIZOOKIE

The Pizookie is a cookie baked like a pizza. We've eaten many of these at the restaurant, but now we make our own at home.

For the cookie dough, mix 1¼ c. flour, ½ c. unsweetened cocoa powder, 1 t. baking soda, ¼ t. baking powder, ¼ t. salt, 1 c. sugar, ½ c. butter flavored shortening, 2 T. butter, 1 large egg. Press into the bottom of a greased pie tin or small baking dish and bake for 7-9 minutes at 375°. It should be slightly undercooked. Top with vanilla bean ice cream and Oreo cookie filling.

Filling: mix ¼ c. butter, ¼ c. shortening, 2 c. powdered sugar, and 2 t. vanilla. For color, add in one crushed Oreo cookie and mix.



BJ's Brewhouse's version of the Pizookie, which was Angie's inspiration

RANDOM NOTES

- We adopted more pets this month, but fortunately only the virtual kind. Jeff and Marnie each bought a pair of Webkinz on the 6th. Jeff picked up a gecko and a rooster, while Marnie brought home a horse and a black & white cat.
- Ken went shirt shopping that night as well. Angie objected to his shirts (or tents, as she called them) and a co-worker told him he looked like he was wearing his big brother's shirt. Since he doesn't even have a big brother, he decided it was time to "downsize."
- Marnie got to put her singing skills to use on the 7th, singing "If the Savior Stood Beside Me" at Kennedy Powers' baptism with Kennedy and the rest of their Show Chior group.
- Ken and Angie planted 3 new rosebushes to replace the ones that mostly died in a freeze and eventually went missing. The lawn crew must have decided they were fully dead. The new ones are still alive.
- Jeff went on a field trip to MusicFest, where they listened to music (go figure) and also saw some magic tricks.
- At the Blue & Gold Banquet on the 12th, Jeff was awarded his Webelos award. The only problem? Angie, Ken and Marnie were there, but Jeff was home sick. Chad was kind enough to stay home with Jeff.
- Just when Ken was starting our 2008 taxes, the IRS wrote that they are examining our 2007 return. We aren't worried - everything is right and documented. It's just a pain pulling all the documentation together to send to them.
- The weather was so nice on the 21st that we spent the afternoon playing miniature golf. Yes, it was an outdoor course. This is Phoenix.
- Marnie, who enjoys her choir and dancing classes, also wanted to start piano lessons. As a compromise for now, Angie ordered a book on Amazon and they started with home lessons on the 28th.



MEDIA ROUNDUP

AT THE MOVIES...

We didn't make it to the theater in February, but we did catch the TV version of a movie Angie had heard reference on *Veronica Mars*. That will have to do for this month.

Kiss Kiss Bang Bang

A film noir starring Robert Downey, Jr. and Val Kilmer with many twists and turns, dismemberment, and murder.

Ken ★★★½

Angie ★★★★★

BOOKS

Mr. Darcy's Dream by Elizabeth Aston

A big disappointment! I love the other Elizabeth Aston books because the characters are fully formed and interesting in their own right. Unfortunately, this one in the series feels phoned in. Insufficient adversity and intrigue, and I really could not care less what happened to these boring stock characters. Perhaps the issue is that it takes place in the country at Pemberley rather than in London.

Angie ★½

A New Earth by Eckhart Tolle

This includes many interesting tidbits from the famed enlightenment guru. Well worth a read and a re-read in sections. My one complaint was that the chapters were a bit long, and for someone who warns about ego, he seems to like the sound of his own voice.

Angie ★★★★★½

Strangers in Paradox by Margaret & Paul Toscano

This was a very interesting perspective on Mormon themes such as temple symbolism, the role of women, and polygamy. The tone was almost apologetic for its insights.

Angie ★★★

Jesus Before Christianity by Albert Nolan

This was a great read for anyone who is interested in understanding Christ more from the secular perspective of his contemporaries. It was fascinating with many great insights. A must read.

Angie ★★★★★

The Painted Bird by Jerzy Kosinski

Wow. It takes some depravity to make the Nazi death camps look like a glorious and dignified death by comparison. But that is what happens in this book about a boy whose parents give him to strangers during World War 2; ultimately, he is left to wander and fend for himself among superstitious, ignorant villagers for the next few years. Truly horrifying.

Angie ★★★★★½