

THE CLAYTON CHRONICLE

The Scottsdale Scoop

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LIFE SLOWS DOWN AND HEATS UP

July was busy, but in August, life slowed down a bit.

We went from thirteen houseguests in July to none in August, celebrated no birthdays, and nobody in the family was baptized. Angie, who had traveled to a host of cities on four separate trips in July, made only one overnight trip to Tampa, Florida. And while we had spent 10 days on a family vacation in the prior month, we only left home once, at the very end of August, to make our annual trip to the Utah Shakespearean Festival.

In contrast to July, then, August might seem somewhat boring, but it was also relaxing to get back into more of a routine.

Speaking of routines, the boys returned to school and started new routines that include far more homework and learning than video games and television. Later on they will write about their first impressions of the school year.

We had returned from Pennsylvania and Washington, DC right at the end of July to find that we had a malfunctioning air conditioner. Fortunately for us, most two-story homes in Phoenix (including ours) are equipped with an A/C for each level of the house. Since the main level system wasn't working, we spent a lot of time upstairs for a few days. Ken did everything he could think of to fix the problem, but that didn't take long. Four days and a service call later, we were finally able to rest easy in our kitchen and living area. Thank goodness for home warranties, because the total cost only came to \$45.



We were back in Cedar City for the Utah Shakespearean Festival at the end of August

crystal

According to tradition, after 15 years of marriage, couples celebrate the Crystal Anniversary. On August 16, Ken and Angie reached the 15 year mark and celebrated by going out to dinner at Pepin, a local Spanish restaurant. Little or no actual crystal was involved in the celebration.

travels

As a family, we discovered that it is much more difficult to reach Cedar City from Phoenix than it was from Salt Lake. From the north, we only traveled 240 miles, all on I-15. From our new home, it was 420 miles, with less than a third on interstates.

Angie had a light month as far as travel was concerned, only spending one night in Tampa.

weather

After July, August was a regular walk in the park. The high for the month was only 106° (ten degrees less than the month before). The temperature still hit 100° 21 times for the month, but the nights started getting cooler.

We had just over an inch of rain in August, which isn't much except that it all came in one day.

THERE ARE TWO WAYS TO TELL ANY STORY

THE FABLE OF THE MORAVIAN STAR

(Best if read with a sophisticated-sounding accent...think of Captain Picard or David Ogden Stiers narrating the start of *Beauty and the Beast*.)

Once there lived a girl who had long dreamed of possessing a beautiful Moravian Star, which had adorned many a home in the land of her youth. At long last, she made a pilgrimage to that land, and was determined to seek out this great treasure, that her own home might be similarly beautified. She inquired about and eventually arrived at the door of a kind-hearted peddler in Lititz, whose handmade stars were like those she knew, but of a different material. She purchased this star, as well as some of the peddler's other wares, but the price she paid was great.

Soon, it was time to return to her home, but the girl feared for the safety of her valued treasure. She had indeed traveled a great distance to arrive here, and worried that the journey might be too perilous for the fragile and unwieldy ornament. She determined to seek out one who could transport the package for her that she might travel less encumbered. She soon found such a one who could provide an enchanted case in which her star would be magically protected from any damage on its journey home. She entrusted the star to this courier and continued on her way, but again, the price was great.

Many days later she arrived home and eagerly awaited the arrival of the mystical case and its enclosed bounty. While she waited, she thought of purchasing second star, hoping to light the way to her home so that all might feel welcomed. The girl found another peddler, this one a peculiar merchant who magically sold his wares through an illuminated portal. This merchant's stars were made of better material and were offered at a price that was much lower than she had sacrificed for her original star.

Excited briefly by the prospect of a less expensive star, she soon found herself disappointed and disillusioned by the first star.

Moral: When you reach for a star in Lititz, sometimes you get burned. Other times you just pay too much.



THE MORAVIAN STAR DEBACLE

(Best if read with the voice of a thirty-something, Utah native who might be married to the heroine...if that sounds confusing, try to imagine Ken telling the story.)

So, while we're on our trip to Pennsylvania in July, Angie got the idea that she wanted to buy a Moravian Star, a porch decoration that is common in Lancaster County. A friend told her to look in the town of Lititz, so we drove up there shop for stars. Seeing a store called *Weave Got Class*, Angie entered and came back out with a star, a decorative plate, and a watch. The star was made of PVC and held together awkwardly with brads, and the three items combined cost \$125.

As we got ready to leave for home, she was concerned that carrying the star on the plane would be inconvenient, and there wasn't a good way to send it as checked baggage. We made a second stop, this time at the post office, where we spent \$40 on a box, packing material, and shipping costs to send the star home.

We arrived home, and in early August the star still hadn't arrived. Angie started thinking about buying a second one for the back. A quick check on eBay revealed that Moravian Stars were readily available and there were several that appeared to be made of more authentic material than PVC. Many of them were also less expensive.

By the end of August, she had quit looking at Moravian Stars on the Internet. And the star we bought in Lititz? It hasn't been hung over the porch yet. It sits in the corner of the dining room, and Marnie likes to plug it in.

Moral: Check eBay first.

School started for the boys on August 14th, so by the end of the month they had three weeks' worth of first impressions about how the new school year was treating them.

BACK TO SCHOOL -6TH GRADE

By Chad

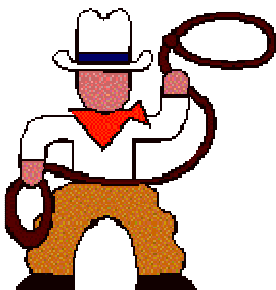
My teacher is Miss Engelking, and she is 25 years old. She looks young enough that she could still be in high school. Her class is OK, but most of the time I'm in Honors or electives.

In Miss Engelking's class I have Language, Science, and Social Studies. My favorite class out of those is probably Language because we get to be on our laptops a lot. Each student in the older grades gets their own laptop assigned to them, but we can't bring them home. It's OK having my own laptop, but we have to keep the same background, so I can't put an Internet picture for my wallpaper.

For Math and Reading, I'm in Honors, so I take my laptop and go to Mrs. Brown's room. This year we're doing pre-Algebra and Mythology.

Other classes are Art, PE, Computers, and occasionally Library.

Overall sixth grade is OK. My best friends in my class are McKay, Dylan, Murad, Christian, and Colton. They are all in my homeroom class, and McKay also goes to Honors with me.



BACK TO SCHOOL – 3RD GRADE

By Jeff

My new teacher is Mrs. Bjerkestrand. At first I didn't know how to say it with that B-J combination at the start. I kind of like her because she's a good teacher and at first we didn't get a lot of homework. Like the first week, all I had to do one night was put 20 sheets of paper in each of my folders. Later the homework got to be a big mess, but I still like her.

I have a folder for each subject: Reading (my honors binder), Language, Math, Spelling, Science, Social Studies, and Spanish. Of all those subjects, spelling is my favorite, because when there is homework, there isn't very much, and you just have to listen to know how to correct. You don't even have to turn it in. The hardest thing is probably Spanish, because it's kind of hard saying the Spanish words, but at least I don't have homework very much.

In the second week of school, I was chosen to be the first Scientist of the Week. I had to find a science project and write a paper on it. Then on Friday I showed my experiment to my class. It was about centrifugal force keeping water in a bucket when the bucket was upside down. My class liked it, and every one took a turn with the bucket.

For Reading, I go to a different class and my teacher is Mrs. Brown. I like her too, and so far her homework has been pretty easy. Mom and Dad keep warning me that it will get harder.

So far, I'd say third grade is pretty good.



AT THE MOVIES...

We didn't spend nearly as much time at the movies this month, which is crazy because it's actually cool in most theaters.

X-Men: The Last Stand

The good mutants and the bad mutants are at it again. Can't they all just get along?

Ken - ★★½
Angie - ★★
Chad - ★★½
Jeff - didn't see
Marnie - didn't see

...AND THE THEATRE

August 31 was our first day at the Utah Shakespearean Festival in Cedar City, Utah. Here are the first two plays, with more to come in September.

Room Service

Theatre about the theatre (and how to dodge a hotel bill).

Ken - ★★
Angie - ★★½
Chad - ★★
Jeff - ★★
Marnie - At the Festival child care

On Golden Pond

Theatre about the theatre (and a tutorial on several methods to dodge a hotel bill).

Ken - ★★
Angie - ★★
Chad - ★★
Jeff - Hanging out with Uncle Dan
Marnie - Hanging out with Uncle Dan



Q&A WITH MARNIE

Q: Do you remember when we went camping in Cedar City?

A: We didn't!

Q: When we went and got our tent trailer?

A: In Utah?

Q: Yes. So do you remember?

A: No. Oh yeah, I do remember.

Q: Who camped by us?

A: I don't know. Grandma and Grandpa. I keep forgetting.

Q: Who came with them?

A: Dan. Kim. And Trevor.

Q: Did you guys go to the playground?

A: Yeah, I liked that.

Q: What DVD did we buy in Cedar City?

A: *HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL!!!*

Q: Is *High School Musical* your favorite?

A: YES!!!

Q: Who is your favorite?

A: I like Gabriella and Troy the best. Sharpay is cute too.

Q: What are your favorite songs?

A: I like the sad song and "Soaring, Flying" the best.

Q: What do we call Sharpay's brother?

A: FREAK SHOW!!!

