

# THE CLAYTON CHRONICLE

*The Scottsdale Scoop*

ISSUE 197

DECEMBER 2007

## WE'RE DRIVING TO A WHITE CHRISTMAS (IN THE DARK)

After celebrating Christmas Eve on December 22 and Christmas Day on December 23, we had planned to spend a leisurely day around the house enjoying our new gifts and relaxing. Our plan for Christmas Eve was to drive Salt Lake City for Christmas with the Clayton family. Unfortunately the forecast for I-15 called for a white Christmas Eve, and we didn't want to get stranded somewhere in Central Utah.

After a day of indecisiveness, we finally fled the house at 10:30 p.m. Sunday night to try to beat the storm, even though that meant driving through the night. On the upside, we made it to Salt Lake in only 10½ hours! It turns out that we can make better time when the kids are asleep (and don't need potty breaks or food).



*Jeff, Marnie, and Chad pose for Christmas Cards*

We arrived at 9:00 a.m. on Christmas Eve day, beating the storm by a few hours. It was a very white Christmas after all. We spent time with the Claytons on the 24<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>, and then joined Ken's high school friends (Chris & Angie, Joni, Carolyn and spouses) for dinner on the 27<sup>th</sup>. The kids spread out, having sleepovers with the Albans and Pendletons (Chad) and the Perrys (Jeff & Marnie). With an ever-watchful eye on weather.com, we decided to leave SLC first thing on the morning of the 28<sup>th</sup> to avoid the predicted three-day snowstorm. Unfortunately Angie missed out on lunch with friends Sarah and Jenny, and we all missed dinner with the Liscom relatives. To make matters worse, it sounds like the storm never really materialized, at least south of Salt Lake.

At any rate, we arrived back home in one piece (five pieces?) late on the 28<sup>th</sup>, only to run into a little bad luck (in the form of Marnie getting sick and house flooding). End of holidays, back to real life.

### faith of a child

It was Marnie's turn to say the dinner prayer. She asked "that the food not make us die."

Fortunately, her prayers were answered—no one died. Yet.

### birds & bees?

Jeff asked if there would be any future members of the Clayton family. Ken said that there would probably be more babies, but our family was done.

Jeff thought for a moment, then said, "Having babies is kind of like a volcano." Huh? "And our family is kind of like dormant."

Angie later added: "Our 'volcano' is extinct!"

### uranus or bust!

In the car on the way back from Utah, Marnie decided to practice her writing skills. She asked Mom, "How do you spell abducted?" Not sure she had heard this correctly, Angie requested, "Use it in a sentence."

Marnie replied, "I've been abducted by aliens!"

# TRIP TO TOMBSTONE

By Chad

DECEMBER 20

My class went on a field trip to Tombstone, AZ, December 20<sup>th</sup>. "Every tombstone has an epitaph," was a quote from the newspaper editor of the Tombstone Epitaph when it was first published. For those who do not know, Tombstone was a huge silver and gold mining town in the Old West.



The fight at the OK Corral is the thing most people know about Tombstone. We toured the corral, but it was not as interesting as the fight that took place there many years ago. It went something like this. The Clantons and Tom McLaury were provoking the Earps and Doc Holliday. Doc Holliday had almost killed one of the Clanton brothers the day before (I forget which one), but then Virgil stepped in, stopped him, and then the Clantons all got in their face like, "Oh, no you didn't." The Earps were the lawmen and told them to put their guns down. The Clantons wouldn't. Nobody knows who shot the first shot, and then everyone started killing each other. Ike Clanton ran away from the start. Two of the three Clantons and McLaury were killed, but Morgan and Virgil Earp and Doc Holliday were injured. Wyatt Earp was the only one to walk away without a scratch. We got to see their graves at Boot Hill Cemetery. There was also a fake gunfight that included a re-enactment, but mostly it was just funny.

There were also several lynchings that took place in Tombstone. They tried to lynch this one guy over and over, but he didn't die, so they had to keep trying. It took them like seven tries before the guy was finally hung. So, once they had a goal they stuck with it.

There were also Stage Coach rides with authentic horse poop!

The Birdcage Theater was a place where gamblers would go that was a combination theater-saloon. Gunslingers could gamble and watch a show while having a drink. There were tons and tons of bird cages hanging up in the theater back in the day. There were 150 bullets in the walls of the lobby. The longest card game in the Birdcage lasted over 8 years, and the house cleared millions of dollars. I don't believe in ghosts, but supposedly the Birdcage Theater is haunted. OK, my mom just explained to me what the bird cages really were. That's gross. I wonder if my Social Studies teacher knows? Moving on.

At the Boot Hill Cemetery there were funny signs for sale. One said: "Lost Dog. Please return if found. Missing leg, blind in right eye, ear cut off in fight, accidentally neutered (oops!). Answers to *Lucky*." *Lucky*, indeed. There were also a lot of gravestones. An interesting fact about Boot Hill—they would put rocks over the graves to prevent people from stealing the bodies, at least 3 feet of rocks. Also, there was a Chinese corner, a Kansan (people from Kansas) corner, and other people corners. Lots of people were unknown.



We also saw an 8000 square foot rosebush that was awesome. The rosebush museum was closed for painting, so we just went in, looked at the rosebush, and left. Yet it was awesome.

There was also an awesome candy shop, and they sold Lemonheads for like five cents a pop!

Since it's December, I will mention that I got a lot of cool things for Christmas, so keep that up! But I'm not going to write about that.

# CHRISTMAS MEMORIES

By Jeff

DECEMBER 22-25

My favorite part of Christmas was *giving* presents. I gave Marnie my Game Boy Advance, because I have a DS and because my parents said that they were thinking about buying her some games. In our extended family gift exchange, I drew my cousin, Raychel. I looked on Elfster because there was a list of gift ideas. I bought her 3 CDs: two of them were Hannah Montana and one was the High School Musical 2 Soundtrack. I also bought a present for my friend Isaac. The present was Yoshi's Island DS.

Of course, it was also nice to get presents. Mom & Dad gave me a few cool things: I like my Daniel Powter CD, and also a book called How to Draw Nintendo Characters. My favorite animal is a penguin, and I got a paint-by-number set with penguins. The next morning Santa (wink) brought me a Sony PSP with three games and a whole suitcase of Magnetix.

Later, in Salt Lake City, my cousin BJ gave me an Eyeball Stage I'm still trying to figure out. Grandma & Grandpa gave me a remote control tarantula, which I used to creep out Raychel because she's afraid of spiders. They also gave me a book called Dragon Rider, a Brain Age game for DS, and a game and clothes. They are also giving the whole extended family a trip to Disneyland in the summer.

Pretty much that is all.



*Clearly the kids from Arizona don't get a lot of practice making snowmen—this one appears to be blind, and has icicles for arms. If you notice the yellowish snow around the midsection, it also appears to have a bladder problem.*

# Q&A WITH MARNIE

DECEMBER 22-25

Q: What were some of your favorite presents this year?

A: Hmm. You know, my Webkinz.

Q: What else? What did Jeffrey give you?

A: His old Game Boy. I also got Disney Princess and Island Princess games.

Q: Are you good at the games?

A: I'm not good at them. I am good at the Princess one. You have to help Lily find the tiaras and the crowns.

Q: What other presents did you get?

A: I got a Baby Alive from Grandma, Littlest Pet Shop toys, and a Bratz doll. I got a Princess game for the Wii.

Q: Tell me about the Webkinz. How does that work?

A: There's a tag on every stuffed animal. You go online to register your pet.

Q: What can you do online?

A: You can make your pet do anything you want, like make sandwiches. And there's a blender. And you can make milkshakes.

Q: So what's your favorite thing about Christmas?

A: When you get all your presents!



*The kids sleeping while we pumped gas in Fillmore at about 7:00 am on Christmas Eve. Marnie opened her eyes briefly when the door opened and cold air rushed in. Jeff actually looks somewhat comfortable, but we're not sure how Chad slept like that.*

## FLOOD OF BAD LUCK

DECEMBER 29-30

The morning after we returned home from Utah, Marnie woke up at 6:00 am throwing up. She continued for several hours, and spent Saturday at home as a result. We decided that night that she wouldn't go to church the next morning.

Sunday morning, when Angie walked down the hall to wake the boys for church, she felt her foot "squish" in the hallway carpet. While we were sleeping, the kid's toilet had broken and flooded the bathroom, hall, and a corner of Marnie's bedroom. To make matters worse, the bathroom is on the second floor, so the ceiling and walls below the bathroom were also damaged.

For several days it sounded like an airplane was taking off in the house, thanks to four large carpet fans and two dehumidifiers. Eventually the house was dry, the pad was replaced, and the carpet was back where it belonged, although technically that didn't happen until the second day of the new year.



## GOODBYE, 2007!

DECEMBER 31

With everyone feeling better and the house still drying, we headed out on New Year's Eve to clean the church, then returned home to get ready for our New Years celebration. Despite the noise (we did turn off the fan on the main level) and a dehumidifier taking up space in the main level bathroom, we hosted the Reinsteins and Ellsworths for a little party. Sara Reinstein was very excited to play our new Singstar (karaoke) games, mostly Singstar 80's. She also did very well at Apples to Apples and *almost* beat Ken C. at a post-midnight game of Hearts.

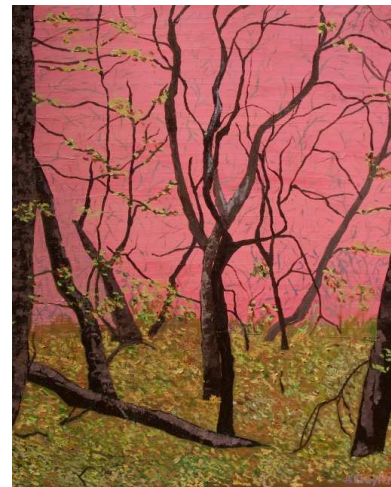
Most of the kids enjoyed some reciprocal doorbell ditching at the Duke's house, while Chad acted like he didn't enjoy being chased around by Sydney Duke, Audrey Nelson, and Olivia Nelson. Later on, Chad, Zach, and Dylan hung out upstairs watching movies (Zach had just turned 13 and before his birthday wouldn't see PG-13 movies). Finally the clock struck twelve and 2007 gave way to 2008.

DECEMBER 2007

## FROM ANGIE'S EASEL



Another dead tree in a desert! This one had interesting shadows in the foreground and light playing off the dunes. For a change I abandoned the pallet knife and did this with brushes only.



After feeling defeated by pink in October, I decided to go for it! The leaves make it cool, and the pink sky reminds me of nights in Utah when it was about to snow.



Another dead tree in the desert, but more pallet knife again (and detailing brush). The two trees split apart were interesting, one hugging the ground, one turned away, reaching toward the sky, like two lovers torn apart by indifference. Or someone laying on a bed using a coat hanger to try to wriggle into skinny jeans. Not that I've ever done that.

PAGE 4

## RANDOM NOTES

- We kicked off the month in an evening with the Egberts on the 1<sup>st</sup>. We had dinner at In-N-Out Burger and attended a play version of *It's a Wonderful Life* at Don Bluth's house, starring Zach and Ken Reinstein (in supporting roles).
- Christmas/Holiday parties galore: Angie and her committee hosted Enrichment Night on the 4<sup>th</sup>, Angie attended a dinner party at her boss Julie's house on the 5<sup>th</sup>, and the family went to the ward Christmas party on the 7<sup>th</sup>.
- On the 8<sup>th</sup>, the Egberts upgraded to a pool table and gave us their air hockey table. We also set up the ping pong table in the garage and have quite the rec center going on here.
- We invited the Knutsons over for dinner and Family Home Evening on the 10<sup>th</sup>. Ken and Angie enjoyed visiting with Tania, and Ben and Krystal played with the kids.
- Angie sponsored a toy drive for American Express. Over 1,000 toys and games were purchased and given to children in the school, 100% of whom are on free or reduced lunch. Kids got to request what they wanted, and for many, this was their only present.
- Angie's team came to town, and she hosted them at the house for a team building and training.
- The power went out on the 15<sup>th</sup>, setting off the house alarm in the middle of the night. Angie and the kids managed to sleep through the whole thing somehow.
- Jeff remembered on Saturday at 9:30PM that he had to give a talk on the savior in Primary the next day. Good thing it wasn't on preparedness! Nevertheless, he did well.
- Angie's massage therapist commented that she obviously works out (yeah, right!), which eliminated any trace motivation to ever work out for real in the future. I mean, come on, he's a professional, and she fooled him!
- Ken was called as Elders' Quorum secretary in a newly formed Presidency consisting of Matt Roser, Ken Reinstein and Chris Egbert.
- Marnie was sick on the 14<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup> and again upon our return from Utah on the 29<sup>th</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup>.
- Angie had her hair cut and colored at Lisa's (the boys even got a trim). They were also introduced by Lisa's daughter McKenna to *Human Tetris*, a Japanese game show you can watch on YouTube).
- We ate at several of our favorite Utah-only restaurants: Noodles & Company, Training Table, and Café Rio.

## MEDIA ROUNDUP

### AT THE MOVIES...

#### The Bee Movie

Jerry Seinfeld, I mean, a bee makes wry observations on mundane things and a crazy impassioned plea for bee rights, accidentally causing the downfall of the ecosystem. (Was that a thinly veiled global warming analogy? Surely Hollywood would not be that political!)

Ken: ★★★½

Angie: ★★★½

Chad: ★★★½

Jeff: ★★★★★

Marnie: "100 stars. It was great. I liked the bees."



### MUSIC

#### Beatles: Revolver (UK release)

Angie: ★★★½

This is widely considered the Beatles' breakout album, when they truly became rock stars with a new sound. They had me at Rubber Soul. Revolver includes Taxman, Good Day Sunshine, and Got to Get You into My Life (a Beatles song actually about drugs, unlike Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds which was about a picture Julian drew at school).

### BOOKS

#### The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini

Angie: ★★★½

Initially, I had a hard time because I didn't feel there was a single likeable character in the first half of the book. However, the book was redeemed as the characters began to unfold over time, and while there was no full redemption, maybe there never is. A must read.

#### I Am America (And So Can You) by Stephen Colbert

Angie: ★★★½

Frequently hilarious, sometimes even weird, this was a great read, but in doses no more than a chapter at a time. Almost as good as America: The Book (by Jon Stewart and crew, including Colbert).

### INTERNET (YOUTUBE)

#### Flight of the Conchords

The self-proclaimed "fourth most popular folk-parody duo in New Zealand" is very funny. They also have a series on HBO. Our favorite song/routines include:

- Robots (aka The Humans are Dead)
- The Most Beautiful Girl in the Room
- The HipHopappotamus and the Rhymenoceros
- Business Time
- Albi the Racist Dragon (the kids like this one)