

December 24, 2007

Dear Family and Loved Ones,

I apologize that we haven't done one of these for 3 years now. If you haven't heard by now, life is busy, busy, busy. If you ever want an update on how we are doing, you are welcome to visit my bebo.com account. Find me with my email address – berkybarn@hotmail.com. (You will have to register first though. I don't update it too often, but I do post pictures and blog upon occasion.)

Dave always has a new project up his sleeve. We are still ever thankful for the continual consulting/programming job he has with Guckenheimer in California. We got this when we first got married – 12 years ago now! It has been, and continues to be, a blessing. His latest and most promising side project is with my dad, Find-a-code.com. Dave is a genius in database design. Through my brother, LaMont, Dave has found a whiz college programmer that can get Dave's design programmed *fast*. This design and project is so huge that even the designers/programmers at American Medical Association couldn't figure out how to do it. When my dad approached the AMA for approval for use of their CPT codes in this new subscription website, they said yes (for their fee of course), but added that they would want to be a reseller since they haven't been able to figure out how to do it. Even the AMA in their backwardness (sorry about that jab – lots of long stories there) understands how the world is moving toward instant access to information.

It's said that boys are busy. Well, they certainly are, and do keep me busy. Since our last letter we have added 2 more boys to our family. Samuel was born January 2006 after a very exciting and complicated delivery. He has been a complete joy and loves to talk in complete sentences in his baby talk. I wish I knew what he was saying all the time. Although last month he said a clear, complete sentence; I want a coat. It was so exciting! He's getting more and more vocabulary as he is nearing his 2nd birthday on January 13th. He's one of those children that you can just sense is an old soul. He loves books, trains, cars and dogs. He has to have one or all in the crib with him when he goes to sleep.



Our other addition is Alexander Rodriguez-Vargas. He arrived in August. Alex is the son of my 1st cousin (Karma and Antonio). He is 17 years old and has been intrigued with how different the USA is compared to Germany. He is here completing his Senior year to get his High School diploma. The German school system is VERY different – you graduate from High School at age 21. (Though you have an equivalent of an Associates Degree.) Alex plays violin, is doing 3 AP classes, one college class and does some work in the office for Dave, including translations for a couple of Dave's websites, teamsizzle.com and giveandearn.com. One thing that I think was the most shocking for

Alex was to see the lack of respect among his peers towards adults. And also strange to experience was going from being one of few LDS in his school (he and his siblings) to being one of many. The lack of instant camaraderie has been different for him. We have loved having him live with us this year.

James turned 8 years old this year which means his most exciting news is that he was baptized, confirmed and received the best gift of all, the Gift of the Holy Ghost. He has also enjoyed being in Cub Scouts and doing weekly activities. His favorite book is, "Dangerous Book for Boys", which at first I was nervous about getting, but after looking through it I decided that it's just a scout book hardbound with pretty pictures of how to do cool projects. He likes to build his own website (berky.org/james - with the help of Dad) that he gives out to his friends. It even has a Choose-Your-Own-Adventure story! James is taking piano lessons from a family friend (Meika Boogert), and cello lessons from one of my former students (Jennie Chandler). This was something that he decided he wanted to do on his own. I asked him many times if this is what he really wanted, because I was not pushing

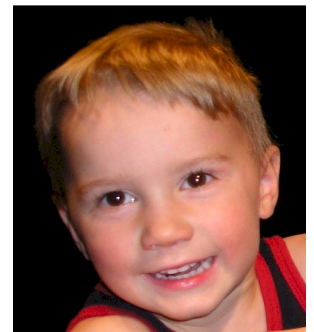


him at all. So now that he's decided, I just have to push him to practice. I need to get the book, "How to get your kids to practice without resorting to violence." Yes, it is a real book, and quite good from what I hear!



Anthony turned 6 in October and is now a kindergartener! My, oh, my how time flies. Despite some concerns at the beginning of the year he is doing very well. In fact, the first thing he likes to do after school is to do his homework! I hope that lasts. He has an engineer's mind and loves to figure out how things work. He's a quick learner in most everything. Anthony learned to ride his bike in one day and was doing "tricks" that same day (as shown here). He told me not too long ago that he wants to be a rock star. I told him that if he really wants to be a rock star that he has to sing and learn music. Ever since then he has been singing when it's time to sing. (He used to be stubborn on this.) He's mastered rhythm, though he is still working on pitch – he's pretty close though. He has an astute mind. A song he's heard once or twice, he'll be able to sing it back to you. I credit that with doing Music Together with him and my other kids since they were babies. He's now graduated from Music Together (it goes from age 0-6), though on occasion he has to come with me and his 2 younger brothers. He gets defiant and says that it's just for babies, but when he gets there he gets into the spirit of music and fun and joins in.

Benjamin is 3 (turning 4 in January), but acts as though he were 6 or 8. He builds Bionicles with his brothers (a Lego product that creates these 'robots') that on the box says is for 8-16 year olds. He's always had a high level of speech development so was easy to get through the "terrific two's" (what Samuel is quickly approaching). And he is able to articulate his needs (most of the time). Benjamin mastered potty training a few months ago – oh what a happy day that was for mom and dad! He loves his brothers and whenever they go to a friend's house he is just as welcome to come as his brothers are. When his brothers tease him, he chases them around the house in a fun manner. They love to tease, chase and wrestle. Dave says that when we finish the basement we should make one of the rooms a padded room where they can rough-house without damaging the walls (or themselves). Benjamin has wisdom beyond his years. Children are so spiritually in tune. No wonder it is said that "a child shall lead them." He has told me many profound truths regarding our eternal home. Indeed, we all are children of God.



As for myself, I'm super busy, but quick to add that I'm not a supermom. I'm passing on chairmanship of the Utah Valley String Festival which significantly lightens my load. I am training my replacement, which still does take some time. I still teach and perform on occasion. At the beginning of 2007 I became the Primary President in our ward. It has been a challenge overseeing 100+ children, their teachers, cub scouts, 11 year old scouts, music & Girl's Achievement Days. However, I have 2 wonderful counselors and an on-top-of-things secretary that has lightened the load. I have been trying to find balance, been unsuccessful, but have been given a "peace that passeth all understanding." The love of our Savior is all-encompassing and leaves me in awe.

Recently a dear friend said to me, "Love is the most profound and lasting gift of all." That is truth. Only can this change our lives, families, and world. May the love of Jesus Christ, our Lord, Savior, and Master, fill your hearts and homes.



LaReita & David Berky

🏠 ✓ ! 📺 ? (James)

he has discovered fonts and wanted to sign his name in WebDings.

Anthony, Benjamin, Samuel and Alex