

2007

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times... (I never claimed to be original) This year has definitely been a roller coaster ride. I'll start with the "ups" – and there were many...

Christmas 2006 was better than we could have ever imagined it would be, exchanging gifts, eating barbecue, and playing ping-pong at Mom's house. Who'd have dreamed she'd be cooking our Christmas dinner a year after her lung cancer diagnosis? We entered 2007 thankful for another Christmas with her.



The Whole Family



Bob - Mom - Bev
Christmas 2006



Brandon, Mom, Rhiannon & Robbie

Brandon certainly had a memorable year! In January, he enrolled as a junior at the University of Louisville, majoring in Communications. He's still working at UPS, but had an unexpected 3-month "vacation" when he injured his knee playing football with friends in March. He had surgery on April 20 to replace the ACL with cadaver tissue, followed by 3 months of physical therapy. He finished the semester on crutches and was able to return to work in mid-June.

He still dreams of a career in film and toward that goal, he wrote, produced, directed, and starred in a movie that was released on DVD in June. Music in the movie was provided by a rock group from New Zealand who performed at the premiere. In addition, since the group participated with other bands in a nationwide stadium concert tour (the "Warped Tour"), they let Brandon set up a booth at their concert in Cincinnati. In July, Brandon got to go to St Petersburg for a week with friends and enjoyed jet-skiing in the Gulf. In November, he traveled to Las Vegas with his Uncle Bobby and cousin Robbie to celebrate Robbie's 21st birthday. December brought another "first" for him - U of L published the premiere issue of RED Magazine which not only contained the first article he's ever had published (an interview with quarterback Brian Brohm), but it also became the cover story.



The DVD



Brandon & Robbie in Las Vegas – Nov 2007



RED Magazine

I had a pretty exciting year myself. In February, I became engaged to Jeff Shontz, a computer technician I had met in October 2006. We considered getting married in Gatlinburg sometime in Fall 2007, but one night in June we decided “why wait?” Two days later, on June 22, we were married in Nashville, TN and then spent the evening at the Grand Old Opry. We came home the next day and started the task of combining two households. Moving was delayed when Jeff had to be hospitalized for kidney stones twice the following week – the second time resulting in surgery. This wasn’t quite the way we’d planned to spend our “honeymoon”! He had been living in Mt Washington, KY and managing some apartments there and wasn’t able to give up that position immediately, so he didn’t get completely moved in until the end of July. Even after two yard sales and a huge donation of extra furnishings to charity, there is still a lot of stuff to put away – and nowhere to put it! Giving up the apartment manager position hasn’t left Jeff with any spare time though. When he’s not working on the computer help desk at Norton Healthcare, or working at his own computer repair business, he’s been busy fixing everything in the house – and believe me, there was a lot to fix. He spent the second half of 2007 rewiring the house, installing ceiling fans, fixing doors and windows, resolving electrical and plumbing issues, building shelves, repairing appliances, tearing out carpet, etc. And he’s a good cook too!



June 22, 2007



Jordan Jeff Allison Jason

When I married Jeff, I also acquired 3 stepchildren. Jason, 22, goes to Sullivan Business College & works at a computer company. He and his fiancée Jennifer (also a Sullivan student) plan to get married in November 2008. Jordan, 20, attends U of L, works in security at Sears and is in the Army Reserves. We went to Ft Campbell in August for his graduation from Air Assault school. Allison, 14, is in the 9th grade at Mercy Academy where she plays on the soccer team.

I spent most of October traveling for work. Jeff was able to accompany me to Nashville and Atlanta, so that served as a delayed “honeymoon”! And we extended it by driving to Tupelo, MS and Memphis, TN from Atlanta instead of coming straight home. I also worked in NJ, Denver and Oklahoma City, and as in the past 2 years, I spent the weekend between the NJ and Denver jobs at my friend Pat’s home in Fair Lawn NJ. During that time, we attended a Bruce Springsteen concert at Madison Square Garden, took a day trip to Philadelphia (including a bus tour of the city), and saw 2 Broadway plays - Mary Poppins and Xanadu. We had “stage seating” for Xanadu, but instead of sitting in the wings, we were in the center of the action and became part of the show. Before the show started we were told that during the finale, we would be expected to dance and wave glowsticks (which they provided) with “joy and enthusiasm”. When I participated in my high school plays, I fantasized about performing on Broadway some day. Now I guess I can say that I have (sort of) done it!



Bev & Pat in Philly



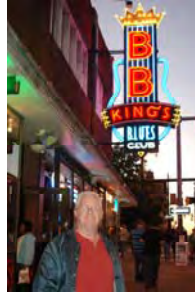
New York City



Sunset over Lake Hefner – Oklahoma City



Bev at Elvis' Birthplace – Tupelo, MS



Jeff on Beale Street – Memphis TN



Graceland

Unfortunately, the good times didn't last through the end of the year. On November 19th, Mom passed out at her home. She called me when she came to and I called EMS to take her to the hospital. She spent 9 days there and chose to go to a rehab facility for a couple of weeks upon her release to try to regain some strength in her legs. On December 7, she was taken back to the hospital because she was having trouble breathing. Her condition deteriorated rapidly and on December 13, she passed away with my son and my brother at her side. She was 77. Though we will miss her terribly, we are thankful that her suffering is over and that she is finally out of pain. We're confident that Dad met her at the Pearly Gates when she arrived so that the two of them could take off across Heaven on their Harleys.



1932



In 1952 with Dad – and yes, SHE won that Motorcycle trophy herself!



1979 with Dad



1990 with Brandon



2005

Christmas will be a lot different this year, but we still look forward to getting together with my brother's family and celebrating. We all know we have a lot to be grateful for and we look forward to a bigger, better, brighter 2008. And we wish you the same!