



We had a blast...

**Summer 2006 Family Update**

**Over the past year it has become apparent to me that in this life we walk around half awake—or half aware of those even closest to us. I would like to endeavor to change that with those of you whom I consider my family, whether that family be by birth or by choice. So, I would like to start a tradition of keeping you informed through periodic cards and letters. This is the first of those letters.**

Robin and I have been busy this past year with activities within our Bryan/College Station community—and mainly with work. As summer approached it was time to “retool” and concentrate energies once again on ourselves. To that end, I have pulled back from a number of my leadership commitments to focus on myself and my family.

This June, Robin and I took our weekly Sunday visit to the pet store in town. We would look and coo at the puppies. Such outings made our spirits feel lighter. On one particular Sunday I made the mistake of asking to hold a very cute, but very lonely and scared female miniature dachshund. As soon as I had her in my arms, she snuggled right down and started biting my hair and kissing my face. At that moment, I was in love. We spend the rest of the day debating amongst ourselves the logistics of caring for such a puppy. In the end, we bought her.

Those of you that know me well, know how much I wish and hope that Robin and I could have a child, and that is another story. Well, this little reddish bundle of joy was the closest thing that could come to that. In the days that followed she has spent every night in bed with us and loves to cuddle in the morning. There are moments as she lays cuddled against me that I see a baby of my very own. Yes, yes....I know she is a dog. And yet, she is more. In fact, she is not only as beautiful as her mommy (me) and as playful as her momma (Robin), but she has the stubbornness of both parents combined. She is a joy, and our daughter...

Due to complications with a landlord and a lease, Ginger got to take a short vacation with her Aunt Tammy, Charlie, and Michelle. Most of the time Ginger spent taunting and playing with Sandy—their yellow lab. At the conclusion of this visit everybody was sad that Ginger had to come home—including Sandy. It made us realize that as we planned to move into a new place, we would have to make a space for a sister for Ginger.

Late in July we took a short vacation to San Antonio. Ginger went with us and spent some time with Grandma Shirley. She loved it, we have video of her running around Granny’s garden and were kept awake at night by her fighting with one of the new pups Grandma was raising.

While in San Antonio Robin and I had dinner on the Riverwalk. Previously we had eaten at the Landing, where Jim Collum and his band usually play Jazz music. This time we ate at a Tex Mex restaurant. We enjoyed the dinner, but I missed the Jazz music. We also visited the Alamo, which





Robin had not been to since she was very young....and I had memories of working a construction job at with Raymond one summer at about the age of 11. We also were able to eat at Mi Tierra and visit El Mercado. Mi Tierra was a place I had heard raved about when I was growing up in San Antonio. Now I know why. The food is fantastic, and their lemonade is some of the best I have ever tried. Not to discount, of course, the most wonderful color and taste of the establishment...with live pan flute and and Mari-

achi bands.

We also spent some time at The Witte Museum, and I think Robin got a taste of why I am always regarding it as one of the best museums to visit. Their newest exhibit included talking mannikins and interactive displays that feature the diversity of Texans.

But most of all, we were able to spend time with family. Besides visiting with Shirley and my brother, we spent an evening with my uncle Dan and aunt Sandy. Two most giving and fun people to sit down and just spend an evening chatting with.

We came home, and on the way had an ice cream. This was Ginger's second experience with this mysterious substance. I think you can see from the cover just how much it was enjoyed.

August found us moving into a duplex. We are renting from a landlord I had years ago and who has been very open and friendly over the years. His one comment when I caught up with him this past year at a Democratic County convention was that he knew such a demure and polite young woman when he knew me last.

Now he sees a lady who spits fire and fights for justice (my words, not his). The duplex is more spacious than the cramped one bedroom apartment we were living in, and has a yard so that I can start that garden I have been yearning for.

Also, Ginger has more room for running like a horse through our rooms and fighting with her new sister—Onyx, a black lab. I think they love each other, but sometimes you cannot tell that to listen to them as you are trying to get to sleep.





Also in August, I took out a loan on my 401k to get a car. The 1997 Geo Metro hatchback I have been driving for years has finally seen its last road, and it is time to let it rest. I now own a 2005 Black Dodge Neon SXT and am totally pleased with it. With alloy wheels, it is the fuel efficient sportscar I never had.

August has also found me at Prairie View Texas A&M. As part of the Allies organization (<http://allies.tamu.edu>), I am a workshop facilitator. Prairie View expressed interest in our program. As such, Sara Bendoraitis, Patrick Paschall, Theresa ( a new graduate student in the Women and Gender Equity Resource Office at Texas A&M) visited this campus. We talked with attendees about gay, Lesbian, bisexual, and transgender issues with some concentration on transgender topics, but mostly emphasizing Priviledge, Homophobia, and Heterosexism. They were able to participate in interactive opportunities that helped bring the importance of the topics directly to them in terms of campus housing, current events, and campus climate. As a thank you gift, I received a plaque that says one word— “Believe” besides the words “Creativity”, “Transformation”, and “Harmony”....most agree that the plaque suits my character well.



With that, I will sign off for this letter—even though there are other activities I did not cover, and so much more to tell.

Please, write Robin, Ginger, Onyx and myself! Let us know how you and yours are doing.

