

We're Alive!!!

And so... what has it been 1, 5, 25 years. Simply put – too long! The boxes have been emptied from moving. The last ribbons, bows, and paper from Christmas have been packed away. The “dye” is being cast for Easter. And since Easter is a time to celebrate new beginnings, we thought we would make some sort of effort to bring everyone up to date on the life makings of the Wells family. And, yes, let's acknowledge right up-front that now it is summer!

First the family composition: Dennis (who has at times achieved hero status comparable to the M&M guy, Buzz Light Year and Mr. Incredible, but mostly just Dad), Victoria (the true hero), Trahern (9lbs 3oz), Caroline (9lbs, 1.5oz), Meredith (9lbs, 11oz), Allison (9lbs, 6oz), and Charlotte (10lbs, 13oz). A testament as to why Victoria is the true hero. She obviously has a high threshold of pain. This year we mark our 20th anniversary (just – June 15); yet another testament to Victoria's hero status and her unparalleled threshold of pain and tolerance. Then there are the dogs: Kahlua, Bear, Fluffy, and Oreo; cats: Rajah, and Hercules. And rounding out the great food-chain-of-life: the piggers (guinea pigs) S'Mores, Vanilla, and Malt.

2004 was a year of change and transition for the Wells family (as were all the other years that we will not bore you to tears with). It was payback time for Victoria enduring the trials and tribulations of being a Navy wife. While we cherished our many friendships, we grew tired, frustrated and wary of the humidity, mosquitoes, snipers, anthrax and code red security posture that pervaded our lifestyle. In late September we stole away from the Northern Virginia suburb of Springfield and relocated to a remote third world country recognized as Oregon, in a sparsely populated, but overwhelming open and friendly village of Corvallis. Yes, this is beaver country, home of the Oregon State University Beavers. You would think everyday was Halloween, because all you see are orange and black. However, we do maintain a symbolic presence of Blue and Gold. Who was ranked 24th in the nation?

And while it seems like we just got here we are moving, again – down the street and around the corner. Make that moved, as in complete. We had two days to find a home last August and made the most of the market. Now... yeah, Victoria is controlling our destiny. Then we will embark upon a magnificent remodel that will begin to transform our little plot of paradise. So just when the kids had finally opened up and admitted that Mom and Dad had made a good decision to move to Corvallis and that they were in fact happy – change, turmoil, boxes, dust, construction. ... Yet another test of the bond and strength of the nuclear family. To reach out and touch us:

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Dennis is also once again a public servant. He accepted a position with the Oregon Department of Human Services, as the Policy and Planning Manager, reporting to the Chief Information Officer (CIO). He has a great team working for him and with him and is blessed to have this opportunity to make a difference. If you have lost track of his career path here it is in a snap shot: Navy - San Diego, San Diego, San Diego, San Diego, Newport, RI, San Diego, San Diego, San Diego, San Diego, Washington, DC, and San Diego. On July 31, 2001 the President of the United States, the Secretary of Defense, and the Secretary of the Navy bowed their heads and held a brief moment of silence (emphasis on brief) in a somber display of respect acknowledging Dennis' 20+ years of dedicated and loyal service to a grateful nation on the day on his retirement from active duty. No need to dwell on whether the nation was grateful for our 20 years of service or for our retirement. In the private sector: Washington DC, Washington DC.

Victoria is absolutely the greatest and we all love her as much as God does. There are only two amounts of love in our house – as much as God, or, more than the world has to offer. Just ask Meredith or Allison. She is the glue that continues to hold us together, keep us on task and on schedule. She has truly mastered the art and science of getting us where we need to be when we need to be there. She is also the headmistress of the Wells Institute of Knowledge and Critical Thinking Skills development. Yes, we continue to home school. The kids love it and indications are they are doing well. Both Trahern and Caroline have successfully matriculated into high school. Once we put some semblance of order around the chaos we will ship Victoria off to the pool so she can regain her rightful place among the masters swimmers.

The kids, what about the kids, you ask? They are all doing extremely well and keep us on the go.

Trahern (16) is quite the scholar athlete. An avid reader, if he is not immersed in a book, you'd better take his temperature and ensure he is not running a fever. It is his salvation! Don't try speaking to him though. Once he is "in" the book, everyone else is out. Trae's emerging passion for film and movies is competing for his time. Trahern has developed into a very good swimmer. His times have improved greatly over the year. We attribute this to his incredible focus and work ethic and the great swim programs and coaching staffs we have been associated with, North Coast Aquatics (San Diego), Curl-Burke (VA), and now Corvallis Aquatic Team. Maintaining a 4.0, he swam well at Districts and placed 7th in the 500y freestyle at States. Both Trahern and Caroline swam at Junior Nationals with the CAT swim team; swimming fast and having fun! Trahern is also active in Boy Scouts. A Life Scout, his proposed Eagle project has been approved, so he is on his way to achieving the rank of Eagle.

Princess Caroline (15)! Another scholar athlete! She, too, has discovered the joys of reading. And while not as intense as Trahern, she does not leave home without a book. Another 4.0 student, she is tenacious in her pursuit of excellence. Caroline's athletic focus has also centered on swimming. She has proven to be a powerful force to be reckoned with in the pool. Caroline, too, had a good District meet. She placed 7th in the 100y backstroke and 9th in the 200 individual medley at the State meet. Caroline had an outstanding 11-14 short course championship meet. She was the state champion in the 100y backstroke and the 200y individual medley, on her way to earning the high-point award for 14 year olds. Caroline performances include team records in the 100y and 200y backstroke events and 100y freestyle.

Federal Way, WA has become a second home for us. We traveled there for the Husky Invitational where the team swam with the "big dawgs," both figuratively and literally, for senior sectionals where Trahern and Caroline had some monster swims, and for age group sectionals where both of Meredith's relays cracked the top 8, with a 4th and an 8th place finish.

Next in line is Meredith (11), affectionately referred to as "Jaws." Yes, she is currently wired with braces, but has a smile that is only more radiant. Yet another avid reader she has demonstrated her balanced and mastery of language through academics and music. Meredith, like Caroline, plays the piano with grace and beauty. There is nothing more comforting than listening to them play, filling the house with harmony. Unless, of course, Dad is cranking some Jimmy Buffet and we are rock'n, rattl'n the windows and rais'n the roof. Meredith has an unbounded passion and compassion for critters. Sometimes it would be easier to put her in the zoo, than to build and expand our own.

Allison (8) embodies all that is the others: Budding reader, academic, emerging concert pianist, dancer, lover of all things great and small, and swimmer. She has unbounded youthful exuberance.

And finally (or at least for now), little Charlotte (3). She is the essence of all children – pure joy. Charlotte laughs. She cries and sometimes screams. She runs around beyond being tired. She ultimately gets everything she wants (or pretty darn close to it). And, she, too, has demonstrated an affinity for the water.

Just to confirm some legends, rumors and myths. 1. Santa does exist. We have come home from outings on more than one occasion to find his entire herd of reindeer feasting and nestling in the "bowl" that is our front yard. 2. Same goes for the Easter Bunny. S/he or one of his little bunny helpers raced me down the road the other day. Dang he's fast! 3. Orange and black are not just worn for Halloween. See above concerning school mascots and colors. 4. Dennis still sails. For a price he will meet you anywhere anytime for any race. 5. For a greater price, Victoria will let him go. That price has never been reached.

So, there you have it. We have found, and are making, our peace in Corvallis. Great country, great neighbors, great friendships. Our doors are always open. You are always welcome.

Dennis

Victoria

Trahern

Caroline

Meredith

Allison

Charlotte