

The plaque on the grandfather clock is brass, engraved with the following: “Barbara and Craig, ‘Till the End of Time, October 8, 1988.” It was given to us by Barbara’s parents (hereafter, “the ‘Rents”) at the time of our wedding, which for those lacking math skills (hereafter, “Craig’s people”) occurred a quarter century ago. That’s a long time (25 years, Craig people, please try to keep up), something the fine folks at Hallmark like to call a milestone event – mostly because it motivates us to spend lavishly on cardboard with pretty pictures and writing. Sadly, the oft-repaired clock stopped working somewhat short of the End of Days – late September, actually. Ignoring the bad metaphor – and any associated Twilight Zone-type voodoo – the couple chanced a celebration with borrowed time, taking a romantic, out-of-town tropical getaway to be detailed later in this holiday missive. Spoiler alert: Awesome!

Picking up the yearly recap of Quintana conquests and catastrophes at the outset of 2013 seems sensible because, you know, it’s chronological and also because it makes outlining kind of a snap. The year began, as so many seem to, with January and cold. Zero-degree cold. Unfazed, Qimmiq and Kodiak grew weary of waiting on owners who fretted over things like “tread patterns” or “layering” before walks. When you have full-time, four-wheel drive and a double coat, Idaho winters are *nothing*.

In February the traditional family exercise in futility – the Inside Ride – occurred, but with a new twist. Barbara, Dylan and our friend, Elsa Cervantes, joined the rest of the BYRDS – the Boise Young Rider Development Squad, Benjamin’s bike racing team – to beat up on Craig’s work team, which was riding a multi-year win streak in the charity event. For those who’ve ignored this section of the letter in years past, the ‘Ride is a suffer-fest wherein groups of riders pedal their brains out going nowhere fast on stationary bike trainers. The team logging the most fake miles wins. BYRDS riders, generally being possessed of talent, work ethic and a distressing lack of ~~excess~~ body fat, ruled the day, with BYRDS Nos. 1 and 2 having a big gap on the Ada County Highway District team, which finished a respectable third out of six teams despite bountiful bodies.

In March, it became official, Benjamin outgrew Dylan, eclipsing 5’8” in height, an achievement that displeased the older brother until Dylan realized that only half of those seeing Benjamin would notice. As Benjamin is thin even by BYRDS standards (see lack of girth, above), he tends to disappear in profile. Craig thought the new height gap hilarious until Barbara pointed out that Benjamin became the tallest member of the **family**, at which point it was decided that such genetic mutations are impolite to discuss in mixed company.

In April, the orthodontist freed Dylan of his devices of pain and torture after 30 months of work (Craig people: 2.5 years), one oral surgery and much ibuprofen. Unfortunately, the resulting blinding smile confused Dylan’s parents into buying a really light, expensive and race-ready mountain bike for the son who decided to stop racing his . . . anyone, anyone? . . . bike. Yes, the mighty Gary Fisher Sugar, the super light, super fast machine that got Craig into serious biking and begat countless hours of spending on, washing of, and waxing over things cycling, gave up the ghost, leaving Dylan to walk his bike off the trail. Craig, who bought the bike in 2003 and bequeathed it to Dylan in 2011, put up a brave face before sobbing in the fetal position.

Benjamin continued to recover from the head injury he suffered in a racing crash in mid-2012 – improving, succeeding in school, but unable to pursue his competitive cycling career because of continued headaches whenever he goes full-gas hard. In May, we celebrated the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Rosemary Nagle (Craig’s people: a ‘Rent getting *way* up there) with an elegant party, where people dressed up and ate a catered dinner under an event tent in the backyard. In June, the Quintana Pergola was completed, proving that a capital works project can be both a big deal and fun to say. The plans and beams had to be modified to fit the porch, so the family called on friend Ken Cooney, who has a workshop, tools and is handy, to help Craig, who has occasionally shopped for tools and has hands. Given the personnel challenges, surprisingly little blood was spilled.

Also in June, Benj was able to ride in a cycling event, joining Barbara, Dylan and Craig in the Blue Cruise charity ride. A week earlier, Dylan attended Boys State, a rigorous summer camp run by the American Legion that teaches young men about politics, government and sleep deprivation. After hearing from Idaho’s lieutenant

governor, the Mexican consul for Idaho and meeting other officials, Dylan said the best takeaway was a new-found love of coffee.

The looming senior year in high school prompted a tour of Western colleges: eleven schools, five metro areas over three states in eight days (Craig people: hellacious miles). The guys enjoyed the University of Washington, University of Oregon and UC Davis, while Barbara and Craig enjoyed dropping big cash at the San Jose State University bookstore and marveled how every building on campus had changed (bigger) except for the ones housing the schools of Journalism and Occupational Therapy. For the record, one of our chosen professions is actually a growth industry. The trip ended with a Giants game, where we got to see a rare thing, a 2013 win. Following the pattern set in 2010 and confirmed in 2012, we expect to take it all next year.

Speaking of 'ball, Craig played in the ACHD softball game at the end of July, going in with the modest goal of avoiding embarrassment after having no game experience for 15 or so years. Things were looking good on the first pitch, a short toss out in front of the plate, as the bat made solid contact and weight came forward. Suddenly, the right leg burst into flame (figurative, possibly) and Craig crumpled. The doctors confirmed Craig's on-field diagnosis: dislocated hip – probably because some moron put on soccer cleats before batting. Controversy continues as to whether Craig has now had surgery; after the ER doc could not pop the hip back into place, a trip to the OR with the orthopedist was required. Barbara's case: operating room, surgeon and general anesthesia. Craig's retort: no cut, no surgery. Fortunately, *none* of this proved embarrassing.

August saw the guys start their last year of high school, and the mad dash to figure out what comes next. Dylan went to homecoming, attending with good friend, Cole. They also brought girls.

The year's crowning highlight occurred in October, when Barbara and Craig trekked to Orlando for a cruise of the Eastern Caribbean for our 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary (Craig people: a big deal, one the odds makers doubted would occur). The couple enjoyed seven days of bliss at sea, snorkeling, sea kayaking, mountain biking and seeing the sights in Coco Cay, St. Thomas and Saint Martin. The food was excellent, the shows great and the shipboard activities a blast, including the on-board surfing on the FlowRider. On first look, Craig knew he had to try the beast, entering the ride on the last day at sea with the modest goal of *avoiding embarrassment*. Several minutes later, after taking the boogie board here, there and everywhere on the slope, Craig rode the wave to the top and dismounted semi-gracefully. Who knew?

Once on land, we met up with old friends – funny, it seemed like we were all pretty youthful back in the late 1980s, what happened? – and hung out in Central Florida for a few days, seeing our old neighborhoods and haunts. Despite all of the fun, coming home was great, and if a Risky Business moment occurred, Dylan and Benjamin cover their tracks better than Tom Cruise. In November, the boys joined in on Rake Up Boise for possibly the last time, as the family participated in the event to help senior citizens dispose of past-due plant material for the eleventh straight year.

Professionally, Barbara climbed the leadership ladder at St. Luke's Regional Medical Center, becoming the Lead Occupational Therapist, a position offering more responsibility, more hours and no more money. (Craig people: yes, that's a rip-off.) At least she'll know who to blame when things go sideways.

We hope this letter finds you doing well and enjoying the blessings of the season.

*Barbara, Craig, Dylan & Benjamin*