

# The B&D News

*Betz & Derek's Occasional Newsletter*

*June 2007*

## **Hello, friends, family, and classmates!**

We are busy as always, but summertime usually brings a decent amount of "down" time for me at work, which is ultimately why I'm writing. When things are manageable at work, that translates to more free time at home...and you get the picture. There's plenty of catching up to do at the office (large stacks of months-old paperwork to clear off the desk), but most of the students are gone, and the office pace is very manageable. It's a time when people like me can get a lot done because there are few interruptions. (I'm a rare breed; I'd be perfectly happy to close my office door and plug away all day at the computer, without losing motivation, feeling isolated, or getting sleepy). During these non-academic months, I don't have many extreme morning commitments (as early as 5AM) or late-night programs (1AM), so beyond my 40 hours—cloistered nicely in the middle of the day—my time is my own. I even take every other Friday off! Deeeee-licious!

For the last few years—since my last installment of the web-based B&D newsletter in September 2004—my free time has been dedicated to the garden, the ACUI 9-ball National Championships, my bowling league, family reunions and genealogy, high school reunions, or scrapbooking. What I have *not* been doing very much is playing pool. I just don't have the hunger to compete anymore. Frankly, I have too many other things that I want to accomplish, and those things conflict with the demanding practice schedule that would be required to play at a competitive level—for peanuts.



*200 feet and 716 steps above ground level, Castle Rock, St. Ignace (from our October visit to the U.P. for a wedding)*

I have spent many hours gathering names, birthdays, and addresses for over 450 living Sundholm cousins (no lie), and I started writing a quarterly newsletter for that whole gang in November. The writing is the easy part; it's the *distribution* that is kicking my ass. The "Meridy's Update" page of the May 2007 family newsletter is what prompted me to write a smaller version for me and Derek, which you see before you now. Everyone tends to share what's going on in their lives around Christmastime, which is nice, but the events and details of the early months sometimes get fuzzy when one sits down to compose a letter in November. So, here goes:

We visited the U.P. for a few days in December to celebrate Christmas Eve with what I call my "nuclear" family (about 25 people), and Christmas Day with immediate family (7). Mom got a small, baby-sized cake for Elayna to dive into on Christmas Eve. She turned one on January 4th, so we celebrated a little early with the family, since we were all together. Elayna is just so *precious* I can't stand it!

Those of you who know me well are probably thinking, "Betz, I thought you said you don't like kids!" Let's just say I enjoy their company in *very* small doses. I love to taunt and ridicule small humans (which they seem to thrive on), then hand them back to their parents when they fuss or smell bad. Between the ages of 4 and 15, most kids just annoy me. Then, when they hit the mid-teen years, it seems I can begin to relate to them again (oddly, at a time when most parents have daydreamed—admit it—about chucking their kids out the window). I think it's because of all the babysitting I did as a teenager—I burned out early. I absolutely adore Elayna, and I would give my life for her, but I am not emotionally or temperamentally wired for par-



*Grandma Meridy helps Elayna blow out the candle on her 1st birthday cake. She turned ONE on January 4th.*



*Derek & Betsy on Christmas Eve 2006*

enting. When it comes right down to it, I'm too selfish and impatient. I'm better suited for auntie-hood.

Derek's pool season started in October and wrapped up in March. He juggled roofing, golf, and pool as long as he could, dropping golf when the snow flew, and roofing just before Christmas. He played in tournaments in Louisville, Reno (twice), upstate New York, Sacramento, and all over Ohio and Michigan this year. He's always reluctant to stop playing pool in the spring, but after a few weeks of steady income and a healthier lifestyle, he hardly misses pool at all. He still does cue tip repairs, using his trusty lathe in the basement, and I occasionally hear him hitting balls when he goes down there to do "poop duty" for the cats. But from April through September, he is 100% committed to being a good businessman, keeping up on world news & politics, and spending lots of quality time with the critters and me. And if he gets to play a round of golf once a week, he's tickled.

I almost forgot—Derek had his first hole-in-one this year! After 20 years of golfing, it finally happened. But when he got home, and I asked my standard "How'd you hit 'em?" he didn't seem too jazzed. I could tell something was odd about today's golf round, but I practically had to drag it out of him! Despite executing the granddaddy of all golf shots, he was disappointed with the rest of the round. "Well, I started off par, birdie, par, eagle...but I shot a damn 40." (Anyone who has ever golfed with Derek, or even just *talked* about golf with Derek, is smiling and nodding). ☺

In my new role as ACUI Recreation & Leisure Activities Chair, I oversee the online training of over 100 volunteers across the U.S. for regional recreation tournaments and the National 9-ball and Table Tennis Championships. Since moving into the Chair position, no one filled my shoes as 9-ball Director, so I have still been wearing that hat too. Great news though—we posted the position in April, and one *excellent* candidate applied—a former ACUI National Champion. I can't wait for her to start!

I did a bit of traveling for ACUI, with trips to Athens, Columbus, and Bowling Green (all Ohio), and Atlanta, Georgia. The highlight of all the travel for intercollegiate tournaments was a chance encounter with Yao-Man Chan of CBS's "Survivor." He is the coach of the Cal State Berkeley table tennis team and an umpire,

so he was in Columbus for the NCTTA Championships when I was. He seems to be a really gentle, generous man. Because the castaways sign a multi-million dollar confidentiality agreement, I didn't even ask him anything about the outcome of the show (which was only in week 4 or 5 of broadcast at that point, but the filming had already wrapped, so he knew who the finalists were). But we did chat for nearly 15 minutes, and I got the sense that he's as much of a fan of the show as I am. As the season progressed, he surpassed Rupert as my favorite Survivor castaway of all time. I shamelessly asked a mutual ACUI friend, Willy, if he could ask Yao to autograph a copy of the photograph you see below. Willy forwarded the email, and within *minutes*, Yao cheerfully responded, "No problem! Just tell Betsy to send me the picture. Here's my address." I have a quasi-celebrity's home address, people! I could *totally* become a stalker! Willy also told me that Yao has been a tireless volunteer for the sport of table tennis for over 20 years. I am not at all surprised by this, but it makes me like him even more. He has a passion for working with college students, just like me!

Derek and I celebrated 16 years together on April 24th. You might want to ask Derek to be sure, but I think we get along better now than we ever have. We've found a really nice balance of shared interests and "no way—do that on your own damn time" interests. We have our comfortable little routines (The Daily Show every night, Netflix movies, hanging out on the deck with the kitties—he with a glass of wine and I with my garden journal, and sipping strong coffee together in the morning), but just enough variety to keep either of us from getting bored. I guess maybe this is what growing old together feels like?

He even watched SURVIVOR with me this season, y'all. This is the man who, from seasons 1 through 13, breezed through the living room on Thursday nights and muttered "Why are you wasting your time on that crap?" "Shhhhh....Don't judge!" I'd retort. But like me, he got caught up in the fascinating characters this season, particularly Yao-man. We worship him! His nemesis, Dreamz, however...well, he's another matter. Ewww.

Gotta run, I vowed to limit myself to two pages. Take care, everyone!

*Love,  
Betz & Derek*



*Survivor 4th-place finisher (he was robbed of that title!) Yao-man Chan, and Betsy, at TT Championships in Columbus*