

THE YEAR IN REVIEW 2005

After the bittersweet year that we had in 2004, things had to look up in the New Year. While living in Missouri, Scott was offered a job as a web developer with Examination Management Services, Inc. (EMSI) working with some of his buddies. Kelsey thought it would be an adventure and agreed to tag along. So, in November of 2004, we packed up our apartment in St. Louis and moved to Dallas, Texas. We began to settle into life here in this grand state – far away from the family and friends we have back in Illinois, Missouri and Michigan. Kelsey was right. It's been an adventure. It's hard to believe that we've been Texans now for a whole year, but here is a look at our 2005, as we've grown and enjoyed life month-by-month:

Scott spent most of January without our brand new Mazda 6s. A "big ol' deer" decided it would be fun to stand in the middle of I-57 at 4am on Thanksgiving Day 2004 as we traveled to Michigan to hang out with Kelsey's mom and step-dad. Needless to say, we never got there. So we traveled a few miles farther to see the "Turks" (Hay and Bay) and spent Thanksgiving with our really good friends, Ben and Lisa Brooks. We made it back to Texas safely, but the car was in the shop being repaired and pieced back together for a very long time. Scott car-pooled with his buddy Randy throughout the first month or so of 2005. Meanwhile Kelsey had a blast working at Starbucks



Scott found a hockey team right away when we arrived in Dallas. First he filled in as a goaltender on the Shifters in Plano. When that team disbanded and reformed as the Plano Ice Dogs, Scott started skating out at center for the Dogs. They finished second their first session together in the spring/summer, losing in the finals. They're playing together again this winter and are currently in second place. Scott even built a website for the team at <http://www.planoicedogs.com/>.

In March, we made *another* road trip. First we headed up to Decatur/Forsyth, Illinois to visit Scott's kiddos (Hayden & Baylie) and to celebrate Hayden's seventh birthday. We all had a great time considering the horrid winter weather that kept us indoors. Hayden is growing up so fast and is just fascinated by anything mechanical! He's in second grade this year and reading everything he can get his hands on – and at a 4th grade level. We then continued on up into Michigan despite our past failure to see Kelsey's mom. We saw more deer but did not hit them with the car. We also saw cows, lots and lots of cows. Kelsey's mom has friends that own a dairy farm. We had a great weekend but wished Hay and Bay would have been able to meet Kelsey's mom and appreciate where milk comes from as much as we did.



In April, we celebrated our first (official) year together and her birthday (the big TWO-OH) by getting a puppy. Doogan, was one of only two Jack Russell Terriers in a litter from a breeder in Muskogee, Oklahoma. He and his little sister were just too adorable, but we decided on him. His colorations and face spots were perfect. He was born January 20th and we're excited to be able to celebrate his first birthday in 2006! Then, at the end of April, we traveled to St. Louis to spend the weekend with Scott's family. We took the opportunity to have a memorial for Scott's mom, who passed away a year ago on April 24th after her year-long battle with ovarian cancer. We spent lots of time together, the "Turks" came down for the weekend and we had the best time just remembering Scott's mom and everything she meant to all of us. Spending time with Scott's dad, brother and sisters was exactly what we needed.



Our first summer in Texas was HOT! Although the folks that have lived here for a number of years said that it was a "mild" summer, we'd venture to say it was NOT mild, but instead muggy and hot. But it is a small price to pay for having 70 degree weather in November and December.

In May we made a trip down to Waxahachie for the Scarborough Renaissance Faire. It was a good time and we'll be going back next year – probably dressed up in period costume. Maybe we'll dress up like dread pirates – just like Kelsey's brother William! (hehe) The summer weather allowed us to explore a little more around the metroplex, so we made trips to Cedar Hill State Park, the Dallas Zoo and a few of the other "parks" around the area. There really is a lot to offer here in Dallas and its surroundings!

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After starting work at Lowe's #3, Kelsey got motivated to start a little "side" business and got her first job painting in the office/library of some great folks (the McCalls) that she met at work – as a customer. The job turned out to be phenomenal and brought on more business. We decided to build her a website to help drum up more business. We're still working on it as of the writing of this letter, but someday Faux Aesthete will be the best faux finishing company in the Dallas/Ft. Worth Metroplex!



We started attending Celebration Covenant Church in Frisco in September. It all started when Kelsey was invited by Valerie Edwards, a member of the church while they were at the Plano dog park. Kelsey came home, and excitedly told me about her experience at the park and convinced me to try it out. We went the next Sunday and were immediately "home". The services provide amazing music and messages that touch our heart every time. Plus, we're plugged into one of the best @Home groups at the church led by Don & Jenny Edrington. We're so excited to have renewed our relationship with Christ!



In October, we visited Scott's kiddos again, this time in Mississippi at their new home. Baylie turned six and we had a long weekend visiting her and Hayden. Baylie is growing up so fast and has the best sense of humor for a six-year-old. She's constantly joking and some of her jokes are actually getting pretty funny! We stayed up at Scott's former father-in-law's "cabin" on Lake Bud Isaiah and had a great time. Doogan was astounded at his ability to "roam free". The kiddos kept him in line and you could tell he missed them as soon as we headed back to Texas. In addition to traveling (again), Scott starred as Dennis Sanders in *Smoke on the Mountain*, a bluegrass musical set in the hills of North Carolina in 1938. It was great to get back into the "theater life" with Word of Mouth Productions.



The holiday season quickly approached, although outside it certainly didn't feel like fall or winter until the last week of November. For Thanksgiving we decided to stay home, primarily because Kelsey had to work (at Pier 1; she left Lowe's in September for greener pastures). A friend of Kelsey's from work – Jennifer – invited us to have Thanksgiving Dinner with her family. The dinner was really good and we had a nice time visiting with her family. The day was nice and relaxing with the exception of worries that something "bad" would happen considering our fortune of Thanksgiving Day the prior year. All was well until Kelsey "accidentally" shaved Scott's left side-burn off. He was perturbed and Kelsey was thankful that Scott's hair grows fast.



In December, Scott reprised his role as Dennis Sanders in *Sanders Family Christmas*, the sequel to *Smoke on the Mountain*. The schedule was short, the music more difficult, but the shows were fantastic and in a *real* theatre – Plano Courtyard Theater. For those that were able to come out and see the shows over two weekends in mid-December, it was a truly cheerful start to the Christmas season!



We're staying in Dallas for Christmas Eve and Day and we plan for it to be a very special time filled with memories that will last a lifetime. Then, on the 27th of December, we'll be driving to Mississippi where we'll get the kids and then we'll be off to Palmetto, Florida to visit with Kelsey's grandparents, mother, step-dad and brothers, William and John. We're looking forward to a fantastic visit and an opportunity for Kelsey's mom to finally meet Hayden & Baylie.



Looking back at 2005, we're both glad for the new friendships that we've made here in Dallas and the renewal of friendships with those we haven't seen in a while or whom we fell out of touch with in the move from Illinois to Texas via Missouri. We're also pleased that we've been so blessed to have one another through this past year.

So, no matter how you prefer to say it -- Merry Christmas! Happy Hanukkah! Feliz Navidad! Zalig Kerst Feest! Happy New Year! We want to wish you the best for the rest of this year and for 2006. May you be blessed, safe and happy!

A very Merry Christmas to all and Happy New Year!
Scott & Kelsey