The Beinlichs' 2013 Year in Review Special "4 in 1" Edition



"Well, well, well, look at this... if it isn't a holiday letter from the Beinlichs. We haven't heard from them in years, it seems."

"Yeah, I figured they gave up on us ... maybe we just weren't good enough for 'em or somethin'."

Not true, not true. You haven't received a holiday letter from us since 2009 because we haven't written one since then. So we have four years of news to recap, but we'll try to make it short... this is 2013, after all, and everyone has very short attention spans. Wait... what? So hang on while we crank up the way-back machine and set it to...

2010 (OR "THE YEAR OF THE HOUSE")

B.O.B.'s Nothin' On You (or something similar) was on the radio and Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 1 was in the theatres. Mason continued his piano lessons, played spring baseball with North Plains and finished 5th grade at Childpeace Montessori. He started 6th grade in the fall and played fall baseball with Hillsboro. Brian assisted the coach for both teams.

Brian's mother Ann passed away on June 20th. She had been living with Brian's brother in Florida for the last ten years. We were fortunate to have visited her in March of 2009. Brian says, "My Mom was quick to laugh and made friends everywhere she went. She was an inspiration to me, and I still think of her and miss her."



Ann Beinlich 1917-2010

Sharon's mother Susie came to visit us in August, which was an excuse to have a big picnic with many members of Sharon's family. Sharon and Brian also celebrated their 15th anniversary in August.



Sharon and Mariona

Sharon has a long-time friend, Diana, who lives in Barcelona. In July, her daughter Mariona traveled to visit us. We took her to the beach, went sightseeing, and camped with Fez Fatale (the band that Brian has worked with for 15 years). Mariona was born in Portland and celebrated her 16th birthday with us.

One of our neighbors ran for County Commissioner and Brian worked on his campaign through the spring and fall elections. Sharon was the room

rep for Mason's class, grew another big garden, and canned lots of her harvest.

And then in September.... there was The House. One look at the kitchen and Sharon was sold. So in December, in the pouring rain, we moved from Dos Sequoias Farm to Mason Hill Road. Mason thought it was pretty cool to live on a road that bears his name! Packing and moving was an ordeal, especially in the rain. As Brian says, moving in the cold rain in December



Our house on Mason Hill Road























is enough to put Scrooge into anyone's blood. The holiday letter was just one of many things that fell off the plate that December, and we turned the calendar over to...

2011 (A.K.A. "THE YEAR OF THE GARAGE PROJECT")



Mason on the zip line in Costa Rica

Adele's Someone Like You was on the radio and Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2 was in the theatres. It was a year of trips for Mason. In April, Sharon went with Mason and his class to the Olympic Peninsula in Washington State, and in May, Mason and his cousin Sean went with their classes to Costa Rica. Mason graduated from 6th grade, then started middle school at Metro Montessori Middleschool (MMM), which is operated by Childpeace. The middle-schoolers take a 10 day "Odyssey" trip through southern Oregon at the beginning of the year where they camp, work on a farm, attend a theatrical performance, and go sightseeing. They have quite an adventure.

Mason's baseball "career" hit a high point in 2011 when he qualified for Hillsboro's Federal team. Federal is the highest level of play in Junior Baseball, and Hillsboro is the largest city in our County, so it was quite a privilege. It was a big challenge for him, but he played well and will always have that season to look back upon. Sharon was the team's scorekeeper. Mason also played fall baseball with Mound Time, a private baseball training organization.



Mason and Maizy

Our Golden Retriever Maizy tore her ACL in July, which required expensive surgery. She emerged from her 8-week recovery with a new lease on life.

Mason spent the summer house-sitting and mowing lawns for neighbors and saved enough money to buy himself an iPod Touch.



Mason, Lukas, and Jordi

July wouldn't be complete without a visit from one of Diana's children. This year it was Jordi, who is Mason's age (12). He had a great visit, and was especially fascinated by our chickens. We also spent time with Sharon's brother Troy and his wife Kim, who came to visit us and their brother Michael.

Our Big New House™ didn't have a garage, so we added

one during 2011. We also

decided to add an office above it so that Brian didn't have to work in the windowless basement. It turned out that much of the infrastructure (such as the water holding tank and the electrical transformer) was either in the way or needed major rework. What a mess!



Our Even Bigger New House

The whole ordeal took about 7 months and was completed in late December. Brian very much enjoys his new office, and it also serves as our media room. One of the best parts of the project (and the year) was getting to know our new neighbors.













One of our neighbors was the project contractor. We have some of the greatest neighbors in the world, and we hang out together all the time!

The garage project made it somewhat harder for Sharon to focus on her garden, but she still managed to cultivate and preserve a large variety and quantity of fruits and vegetables.

In December Sharon's mother Susie underwent surgery to treat colon cancer. The surgery went well, and we were all optimistic for her recovery.

We almost wrote a holiday letter that year. Mason started one, and began it with a very clever poem. However, Mason was not quite as clever with the computer, and while "trying something new", managed to delete it before it had ever been saved. Dad tried valiantly to recover it, but to no avail. That took the wind out of the whole project and so... no holiday letter in 2011 either.

2012 (OR "THE YEAR OF THE BEARD")

The way-back machine tells us that Maroon 5's One More Night was on the radio and Skyfall was a top movie. (We even took several of Mason's 7th grade classmates to see it. We are huge James Bond fans!)



Mason receives his yellow belt from Master Garrison (June 2012)

The year started off on a low note when Mason announced that after 8 years he no longer wanted to play baseball. We were heartbroken, but we have somehow managed to move forward. We insisted that he not substitute video games for sports, so he switched to Martial Arts. He now attends classes 3 times per week at Pacific Rim Martial Arts Academy. The owners are very highly ranked in the field and the training and discipline are excellent. Mason studies both TaeKwonDo and Judo, but he really likes Judo.

With Save Helvetia winding down after 3 years, Brian went back to work for his long-time friend Rob Duncan, who runs Airbase1.com. Brian helps Rob maintain and enhance his 250+ aviation-related web sites.

In July, Diana's son Jordi returned for a second visit to the States. Mason and Jordi had another great time together and we all enjoyed his company.

Mason continued house-sitting and mowing lawns for neighbors this summer, and this time he saved enough money to buy himself a laptop.

Following the ritual Fez Fatale camping trip in August, Mason returned to MMM as an 8th grader. You probably know (or remember) what a tough time middle school can be, and it was no exception for Mason. The small class size really seemed to magnify the drama. But Mason generally did well.

We haven't said much about Save Helvetia (see our 2009 letter). In September, Save Helvetia and eight other groups appealed the Metro decision designating urban and rural reserves to the State of Oregon Court of Appeals. The case was heard before the Court in January 2013, but a ruling has yet to be issued by the judges.



In November we learned that Sharon's mother's cancer had spread to her liver. This time the diagnosis was not so favorable, and she was given about a year to live. She visited us again in December, and celebrated her 65th birthday with us.



Susie celebrates her 65th birthday (with Ouen, Michael, Sharon, Jadyn, and Mason)

You might be wondering about our two cats, Murray and Moxie. Moxie is an outdoor cat, and Murray comes in at night. But one night this summer Murray didn't come in, and a couple of months later Moxie disappeared. Moxie was reclusive, but Murray was a very special cat to us and we miss him dearly. We found ourselves catless for the first time in years. So on Christmas Eve, Brian took Mason to the animal shelter where he picked out a new family cat, who became Sharon's Christmas present. She really brightened up our holiday. We named her "Mia", and she wasted no time in endearing



Moxie



Murray



herself to all of us. She is a bundle of fun, and definitely is a big part of the family now. She and Maizy are good buddies and play all the time.

Oh yeah, about that beard... When Michelle (one of Fez Fatale's singers) and her husband Graham left to spend a year in Argentina, Brian decided to grow a beard during their absence. (Graham has a beard, and Michelle also has a band of her own - Michelle and

the Beards – so the beard thing is very much a theme.) Brian's beard grew... and grew.... and well, you can see the ultimate result in the family photo to the right. Brian shaved off his beard in January 2013 after they returned and Christmas had passed.



Michael, Fernando, Summer, Brian, Sharon Ouan, Sean, Susie, Jadyn, Mason (December 2012)

So now that you're all caught up, it's time for...













2013 - THE YEAR THAT WE ARE GLAD IS OVER

2013 has been somewhat of a rough year for our family. Two significant events occurred this year, and these are short versions of what in both cases were very complex situations.



Bruce wins a pie at the Culture Fest

In April, Brian's 67-year-old brother Bruce, who has lived in Panama for the last 9 years, was diagnosed with esophageal cancer. He came here for treatment and stayed with us. Having an extra "roommate" really changed the dynamics of our home, not to mention the time taken up by doctors' appointments. After 5 weeks of tests, it turned out that he didn't have cancer after all. The Panamanian doctors had it wrong he "just" has esophagitis due to chronic acid reflux. He received treatments and returned to Panama in November. He is not fully cured, but he returned in far better shape than when he arrived.

As we mentioned earlier, Sharon's Mother's cancer returned in late 2012. During the summer (while Bruce was with us), Sharon traveled twice to Susie's home in Payson, helping her put her affairs in order. Those visits, along with many lengthy phone calls throughout the year, helped them to make the most of their remaining time together. Susie passed away on November 18th, and Sharon spent the rest of that week with her family in Payson.

And the circle of life continues. In October, Summer and Fernando welcomed Ashlyn Faith into the world. (Summer is Sharon's niece). Ashlyn is their second daughter. Older sister Jadyn is very excited to



Susie Pudlas 1948-2013

have a new baby sister!

This year it was finally Mason's turn to visit Diana's family in Barcelona. He spent two weeks in July with Diana and her children Mariona, Jordi and Oriol. They went sightseeing, visited the beach, savored the local cuisine, and helped Mason practice his Spanish. Mariona, who visited us in 2010, now attends college at the University of London.



Mason at Park Guell in Barcelona

We did manage to do some fun things as a family this year. In March we took a day off from technology and hiked to the top of Saddle Mountain. It was a gorgeous spring day, and the 360-degree view at the 3300' summit was inspiring and humbling.

In June we traveled to Seattle to see the Mariners play the New York Yankees (yes, we're Yankees fans). At one point during the game, Mason and Brian walked completely around the upper decks and saw firsthand how large a Major League Baseball field really is. Hillsboro also became home to a Class A baseball team, and we managed to make it to a couple of those games.

We also had the pleasure of seeing Brian's long-time friend Chris DeVita and his family as they passed through Oregon on vacation.

We've been on many a Caribbean sailing trip with the DeVitas, and it was like time had stood still... we just picked right up where we had left off. Really good friends are like that...



Mason started this fall as a freshman at Lincoln High School. Mason has completely embraced the high school experience, is working very hard and getting good grades. His positive experiences and attitude this fall were a very bright spot during a difficult time of year for his parents, and we were very grateful for that. He has really matured in the few months since he graduated from middle school, and is thriving in the larger social environment at Lincoln. We are very proud of him. And yes, he is nearly as tall as his father!

As 2013 draws to a close, we are exhaling now that our family situations have been resolved, but are still very much feeling the loss of Sharon's Mother. While the year has felt difficult to us, we know that most everyone has – or will – feel the same kinds of challenges that we've experienced this year. We are very happy to be our own family again, and are grateful that we have each other, our good health, and our personal strength. We are looking forward to 2014, and to a new set of adventures – whatever they may be.





Thanksgiving 2013

We hope that our letter finds you and your loved ones in a peaceful and positive mood, enjoying all the joyful times and experiences that this time of year can bring. We send you our very best wishes for peace, happiness, and comfort during the rest of the holiday season and throughout all of 2014.

Love,

Brian, Sharon, Mason, Maizy Mae, and Mia















