



The Tilden Chronicles: 2011

Merry Christmas from our family to yours!

Highlights of this year:

January:

- Another session of Soma School brings guests (who become family) for a week.

February

- A week warming up with neighbors in Hawaii.
- Valentine's Day Men's Asian "Cook off"

March

- Selene Rendezvous in the Bahamas

May

- Katie leaves for Thailand
- The 2nd of 3 sessions of Soma School

June

- David Youngblood's wedding
- Titus' 1st Birthday
- Sister's reunion in Juneau

July

- An unexpectedly short cruise with our neighbors

August

- Miller & Tilden Family reunions

September

- Laura Janicke gets married
- Quickie cruises with neighbors and friends

October

- Our second grandchild (Ksenia) is born!



Cruising with Youngbloods in Bahamas!

Did you know that Christmas was never supposed to be a "religious" holiday? Certainly the crass commercialism that permeates our holiday now has very little in common with the original Christmas story, but I'm talking about something even deeper than that. You see, all "religion" is about keeping a set of rules that attempt to earn us favor with God. Religious wars are usually rooted in arguments over which sets of rules and traditions are most important, and therefore, who is acceptable to God and who is not. That's where the true story of Christmas is different—I'd even say "anti-religious". It's not about a new set of rules that we wouldn't be able to keep anyway. It's about God becoming human to come rescue us from our vain attempts to please him through keeping rules. Jesus came to pay the price for our inability to keep (or even agree on) the rules and give us the gift of a restored relationship with God—in spite of our inability to live good lives—not because of it. All we have to do is accept his gift. Now that's a great reason to celebrate! We've been offered a gift that is infinitely more valuable than any gift we'll find under a tree!

Strangers & Friends

2011 started with another session of "Soma School" – a week-long school that our church runs. People come from literally all over the world to learn about Soma's approach to living out the good news of Jesus in neighborhoods. As part of the school, students live for a week with Soma families and just "hang out" with us and our neighbors and see how we try to love and serve our neighborhoods. We start the week with four strangers and by the end of the week have formed a life-long bond! This year, we've had folks from Arkansas, Texas, Alaska, Washington, Oregon, and California.

Escaping Northwest Winter...

In February, we were blessed with the first of two opportunities to escape the cool, gray winters of the Northwest. Our dear friends and immediate neighbors, Matt & Kirin invited us to spend a week with them at their timeshare in Hawaii. It was an awesome treat, even if Roseanne spent a fair chunk of it in bed with back spasms! We hiked, toured the "Mighty Mo" (USS Missouri), and had a ton of fun together!

Upon returning, we continued our Valentine's tradition with four other couples. This time it was the women's turn to surprise the men, and they "cooked up" quite a surprise: the five guys were divided into teams for an Asian "cook-off". Amazingly, the results were actually pretty good. The process, however, was not so pretty. Didn't somebody say you should never watch sausage being made?



We had a wonderful week with our neighbors, Matt & Kirin in Hawaii.



Katie left in May for a year in Thailand. Here she is trying to figure out how to carry all her stuff in backpacks



Mark & Matt enjoyed harvesting dungeness crab this summer. We all enjoyed eating them!



We got in a short but very wonderful cruise to Victoria with our friends, Don & Bunny

More warm water!

Our second winter escape came in March when the East coast Selene (our type of boat) Owner's group organized a "rendezvous" in the Bahamas. Roseanne and I had never been to the Bahamas before, and we were stunned by the amazing clear, warm (and SHALLOW!) water. We spent a wonderful week with our friends, John & Kathy Youngblood aboard their beautiful, well-traveled Selene 53 "Mystic Moon".

More Katie adventures

In May, our younger daughter Katie left for a year in Thailand. She is working with YWAM (Youth With A Mission), writing and photographing for YWAM Thailand's web site. YWAM is involved in all kinds of great things in Thailand, including an effort to rescue kids from the horrors of human trafficking and the sex trade that Thailand is so infamous for. You can follow Katie's adventures on her blog:

<http://thelandhehasshownme.blogspot.com/> and you can read several of her stories on YWAM Thailand's web site: <http://www.ywamthai.org/> Roseanne and I will have the opportunity to go visit Katie in Thailand in January!

Weddings, Birthdays & Reunions

In June, Roseanne and I were privileged to be guests at the wedding of John & Kathy Youngblood's younger son, David in Lake Tahoe. We had a great (if very brief) time with John & Kathy as well as several more of our boating friends. Unfortunately, we didn't get to hang out with our friends in Lake Tahoe for long because this wedding was the "kickoff" of three trips that were literally back-to-back. We flew

home to catch our grandson, Titus' first birthday. The next day I left for a business trip to Amsterdam. I was there a few days, only to return to Seattle just in time to board a flight to Juneau for a reunion of Roseanne's sisters. Two of her sisters were on an Alaska cruise that stopped in Juneau and a third of her sisters was living in Juneau, so the four of them (and their husbands) all met at Roseanne's sister's house in Juneau for a very brief reunion. The cruise ship only stays in Juneau for about 6 hours, so it was brief. Fortunately, another one of our amazing neighbors is an Alaska pilot and he had given us some passes that allowed us to fly to Juneau very inexpensively.

Summer Boat Adventures

Roseanne and I had hoped to spend a month or more aboard the boat this year—we actually wanted to get all the way to Alaska, but that would have been a 3-month cruise. While I'm really enjoying my expanded role with our company (www.flightstats.com), it does limit our ability to take off for extended cruises.

So...we ended up reducing our month-long voyage to about 10 days with our neighbors aboard. We had originally planned to go up in the San Juans and then over into Victoria, British Columbia. However, an unexpected main engine failure (are they ever expected?) put a kink in those plans and we never ended up leaving the San Juans. We still had a great time with Matt & Kirin aboard the boat and wandering around Anacortes as we got the mechanical problems taken care of.

We hope that within the next summer or two, we'll be able to take the whole summer to cruise Alaska with friends and neighbors.

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Our second grandbaby, Ksenia, was born on October 28—one day before her Great Grandfather's 89th Birthday! This is her mom, her older brother, and proud grandpa!

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Katie's Blog:

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*For to us a child is
born, to us a son is
given, and the
government will be
upon his shoulders.
And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor,
Mighty God,
Everlasting Father,
Prince of Peace. Of the
increase of his
government there will
be no end.*

Summer with Family

August brought two family reunions. First, Roseanne's family on her Dad's side got together for a weekend at a house they rented together in central Washington (near Leavenworth). Roseanne's sister-in-law organized a wonderful white water raft trip for a bunch of us on the Wenatchee River. I love white water rafting, and we had an awesome time. We also got a number of photos that were taken by professionals near one of the biggest rapids. You can see those photos on our gallery at:

http://www.tildens.org/gallery2/main.php?g2_itemId=4741

Photos of the family reunion in general are here:

http://www.tildens.org/gallery2/main.php?g2_itemId=3668

Then, about a week later, we had a mini-reunion of Mark's family at our place in Gig Harbor. Mark's aunt (his Mom's twin sister) and her husband, along with their son and daughter-in-law flew in to Portland and after spending some time in Corvallis at Mark's sister's place, drove up to our house in Gig Harbor. Mark's Dad and his helper/roommate, John, also came and we had a brief but really fun time together. Most of the group even went over and had a tour of Stadium High School in Tacoma, where Mark's Mom and aunt graduated from High School in 1945. The staff was gearing up for the upcoming school year, but they very graciously let us wander the halls and see this amazingly restored spectacular old building. Photos of their visit are here:

http://www.tildens.org/gallery2/main.php?g2_itemId=4308

The Last Hurrah for summer

September is usually a pretty nice month in the Northwest. This September, one of Katie's close friends, Laura Janicke got married. Katie was sad to miss it, but she was already in Thailand, so we went in her place! It was a beautiful outdoor wedding and Roseanne and I enjoyed seeing many of our old friends from our previous church in Portland.

Then, because we hadn't been able to do nearly as much cruising as we'd originally hoped, we squeezed in a couple of short ones—one was just an overnight "game night" on the boat with some neighbors and their two boys. The other was a slightly longer cruise with our close friends Don & Bunny. This time we actually made it to Victoria!

Another Child is Born!

October's highlight was the birth (just one day before Mark's Dad's 89th birthday) of our second grandchild. This beautiful little girl named "Ksenia" (we call her "Zen" for short) is healthy, happy, and almost 2 months old as we write this. Her brother, Titus, loves to kiss his little sister and it just melts Grandma and Grandpa's hearts.

Well...as usual, we're out of room, and you've probably just about run out of patience with our long-winded update. I hope you enjoyed catching up with our story. We'd love to hear yours (by letter, or in person!).

Love,

Mark & Roseanne