

*2013 Holiday Greetings
from the Bryant Family
Tampa, Florida 33647*

As usual, the interesting news from the Bryant household is almost entirely the boys'. Sam and Ben have been really busy and are grateful for a relaxing Thanksgiving break.

Sam has had another successful year as he moved into his senior year in high school. Not surprisingly, he is in the midst of college and scholarship applications. We are eager to learn where he'll be next year. His accomplishments over 2013 include initiation into the National Honor Society in February, learning to rappel off high towers, and receiving two Eagle mentor pins. Arthroscopic surgery, in which a bone fragment the size of a tooth was removed from his elbow in August, only slowed Sam down for a few days. He continued playing tuba/sousaphone in the marching and concert bands, this year adding orchestra. His band teacher nominated him for the Honor Band at the University of Tampa which will be held in early December. In order to broaden his school involvement, Sam joined the music honor society and assumed a leadership position with a service organization, which he'll be representing at their January state convention.

Ben spent the spring playing soccer both for his middle school and a regional club as well as performing on the tuba and trombone in jazz and concert bands. He celebrated the completion of 8th grade with a class trip to Washington, DC. Ben's most notable accomplishment was earning Eagle Scout rank which we celebrated with family and friends at a Court of Honor on June 1st. Surprisingly, his middle school science fair project on children's backpacks was published in a peer-reviewed journal. This fall Ben joined Sam at Freedom High School. He also joined Sam playing tuba in the marching band and discovered that playing while marching backwards and sideways is not as easy as it looks. Recently Ben became part of the wrestling team. He has his first junior varsity match soon, wrestling in the 160 pound weight class. At about 6'2", he's the tallest boy on the team.

In addition to enjoying marching band together (playing at many football games and helping earn top honors in competitions), the boys have shared some great adventures this year. During spring break in March they roughed it a couple days, camping on an undeveloped island in Tampa Bay. Starting in the spring, they went through several months of training before working as volunteer counselors for a Boy Scout National Youth Leadership Training camp in July. Shortly after they returned, we all drove to the Keys to one of the Boy Scouts' high adventure camps, Sea Base. Sam and Ben spent a week sailing, snorkeling, and enjoying other water sports on a 41' sloop with a captain and 4 other scouts plus 2 adult leaders from Texas. Both boys are active in Order of the Arrow (a Scouting fraternity), and Ben became a Brotherhood member like Sam. And both have become avid Dr. Who fans.

Judy is glad that she's no longer the boys' chauffer now that Sam is an experienced driver. This allows her to work later at the University of South Florida's Psychology Department and gives her more time to help the High School Band Boosters. She travelled to a conference in Seattle in April and to Iowa City in May for the dedication of the Becker Reading Room at a new synagogue.

Dave's travels this year included polygraph conferences and training sessions in Denver and Orlando. He was re-elected to his third year as a Board member for the Florida Polygraph Association. A unique opportunity came when Dave joined other detectives and Homeland Security officials for statement analysis training from an Israeli Intelligence agent. Among his cases this year was a child custody court hearing in which Dave testified as an expert. Dave guest lectured again for the University of Tampa and St. Leo University on forensic interrogation, taught gun fighting skills for the police department, and conducted a monthly firearms qualification class for retired law enforcement officers. In March, Dave picked up a 60th anniversary edition Grand Sport from the Corvette factory and museum in Kentucky. In August, he drove the car to Webster for the Ron Bryant Memorial Motorcycle / Classic Car Ride. Dave transferred his role with our Boy Scout Troop to a new Scoutmaster, marking the first time in 11 years that he has not been the primary leader for a Scout unit. Immediately, the District appointed him as a Commissioner, and he continues to serve on the District Advancement Committee.

At 10, Rommel is slower and a bit arthritic, but he's been dieting and feeling sprier this fall. He still gets jealous of any attention we give Saphira and still enjoys visits from other dogs, going to the beach, sniffing for other animals on his walks, and vacationing with the family.

Those trips included the June Londinsky family reunion in Ft. Lauderdale and a longer trip before school began. The latter took us to colleges along the east coast and in the Midwest; to New York for white water rafting, boating in the 1000 Islands, and visits with family and friends in Webster; and stops at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, Indianapolis Motor Speedway, Mammoth Cave, and the Corvette Museum. Who knows where our travels will take us next year.

Wishing everyone Happy Holidays and a wonderful 2014!

Dave

Juy

Sam

Ben

Saphira (the uromastyx)

Rommel (the Rottweiler)