

November 9, 2004

Hello and Happy Holidays! I hope this letter finds you and yours well. This year has been one of preparation for Chris and I. Well, just read on...

### *The BIG News First*

When I hinted in last year's letter that Chris and I were thinking about starting a family, I didn't think we would be reporting that we had wrapped up that "to do" by the end of this year. As I am writing this letter to you, I am 36 weeks pregnant. By the time you receive this letter, our little boy, Tyler Aaron, should be in our arms. He is due December 9<sup>th</sup> and we cannot wait to meet him! We have been blessed with a problem-free pregnancy so far and with a few weeks to go, I pray it remains that way.

### *\*\* UPDATE \*\* - December 4, 2004*

Well, Tyler had other plans and chose to arrive 2 days after I wrote this letter – a full month early! I was at work Thursday morning and wasn't feeling well. I couldn't concentrate on anything I was doing, so I told my boss I was going to work from home. He gave me a strange look and I responded, "It's not labor." What did I know? At home, my doctor's office was closed from Noon until 1pm, so I decided to wait. After all, this was probably something else. By 12:40pm, I called Chris saying that I did not feel well enough to take myself to the doctor. We arrived at the doctor's office around 1:20pm and discovered I was already 4 cm dilated and would need to head straight to the hospital. Chris and I hadn't even packed bags for the hospital yet. We arrived at the doctor's with my purse and Chris' camera (I almost told him not to bring it). The big question was - where was Tyler's head? At the hospital, an ultrasound confirmed that he was breech and a cesarean section would be required. We arrived at the hospital around 2pm and by 4:16pm, he was here. His arrival was such a surprise, but we wouldn't have it any other way. He was 7 lbs. 3 oz and 19 inches long.

### *Surviving Tyler*

Chris and I now have a new respect for all parents! The first two weeks was not easy. Although we know that every week presents new challenges, we are happy to have made it this far! Those moments when he is looking up at you or sleeping on your chest totally make up for sleepless nights, nursing sessions that seem to go on and on, and the clean diaper that Tyler dirties as fast as he can!

### *Getting Ready for Tyler*

#### *The Nursery*

The nursery is ready to go and looks amazing. Both grandmothers contributed their creative talents to the room. Chris' Mom painted a beautiful "day in the park" mural and my Mom has sewn lovely bedding and window treatments. I think Tyler will feel very cozy with the soft colors and fabrics. As he grows, he can imagine several wonderful days in the park with his furry friends!

#### *A "Family" Vehicle*

Chris and I both drove 2-door coupes – not necessarily family friendly vehicles. We thought about waiting until our second child to replace them, but ultimately decided we should take the time to look while we had it. I bet most couples argue over who gets to drive the new car. Chris and I disagreed on who got to keep their existing car; we were both so attached!! In the end, our mechanic made the call. My Civic was cut, I now drive Chris' Mustang and Chris is driving our new car – a Subaru Forester. Chris loves the car. It is a family car (small SUV), but with a turbo engine and all-wheel drive, it is fun and sporty as well.

#### *A "Family" Room*

Knowing that we would be spending quite a bit of time in our living room, we decided to spruce it up a bit. The inspiration for the room came from our trip to Southern Colorado last fall. We had a painting done based on a great aspen photo Chris took from that trip. The painting now hangs over our mantle and is the centerpiece of the room. We have painted the room, put in a new ceiling fan, "refreshed" the couch and updated the lighting. We also bought our first piece of furniture – a slate-top coffee table! We think the room is pretty cozy. Now, if we could just keep the dogs off the couch..... :-p

### **Job Changes**

In discussing starting a family, Chris and I knew that one of us would need to have a stable job with benefits. Chris decided to leave Vincera after four years and find something that would provide us that stability. In April, he found a Product Manager position at Dell. The job began as a contractor position, but in August, they made him a permanent employee. Adjusting to a company the size of Dell from a start-up environment has had its ups and downs, but as he learns how to maneuver in and around the system, Chris seems to be enjoying his new position. They do work hard, but they also have fun too. Chris was packing up his biking clothes this past Friday saying he was going to be involved in a "Tricycle Race" during a field day! There have also been several "team building off-sites" consisting of afternoon movies and go-kart racing! Dell is a big enough place – I think I might need to get a position there! :-p

Speaking of me, Jackie and I decided that starting a company was a bit overwhelming for two people. She found a technical position at a marketing firm and I now work for the company that originally engaged us to develop their software. I am one of 5 people, so I remain in a start-up environment. The firm is a private equity consulting firm that helps pension funds invest and manage their portfolios. I work as a "jack-of-all-trades" writing software, preparing marketing documents and presentations, performing project management tasks, and monitoring the portfolios we manage. It has been fun dabbling in so many different areas and learning a new industry.

### **Alpha Dog Photography**

Chris is still enjoying photography and has taken some beautiful photos this year. He has created a web site for all of his photos aptly named Alpha Dog Photography! You can go directly to his site at [www.alphadogphotography.com](http://www.alphadogphotography.com) or you can go to our family site, [www.hedgefamily.net](http://www.hedgefamily.net) and click on the link to [Alpha Dog Photography](#) on the home page. If you have some time, check out shots from recent vacations, amazing flora and fauna, and other fun photos he has taken.

### **The Family**

Our families are all doing well. We feel so blessed to have everyone so close by with Tyler on the way. My parents have been vacationing fools as they spent 5 weeks in the Northwest in early summer and then spent another 5 weeks in New England during foliage season. In between the traveling, they have done some serious renovating and redecorating of their home in San Antonio. The house looks amazing!! I keep telling them that I may have to move back home! :-p

Chris' folks have decided that they are ready for "real" retirement and currently have their B&B up for sale. They are pondering several options including relocating to Austin, spending part of the year in Florida near John's daughter, and traveling around the country by RV. We are all hoping that the B&B gets sold this year and they can have fun doing a little bit of everything.

Bryan, Lorena and her family live about 15 minutes north of us in a house they bought a few months ago. It is a great house with lots of space, which they are really enjoying. They are very busy these days with their jobs. Additionally, Lorena is completing her dissertation in what little spare time she has. We still see them fairly often and know they are looking forward to corrupting our son! :-p

### **In Closing**

We hope that everything is going well in your neck of the woods. I am sorry if we have been out of touch. I know that a child will mean even less free time for us, but we do hope to touch base more often. I have an on-line journal to which I make entries on a regular basis and Chris is excellent about keeping his pictures updated. Please visit [www.hedgefamily.net](http://www.hedgefamily.net) and click on Tyler's photo album to see the oodles of pictures that Chris has taken of Tyler. If you want to get a hold of us, email is an excellent way to do that. Chris e-mail is [c\\_hedge@hotmail.com](mailto:c_hedge@hotmail.com). I have a permanent email address at [alyssa\\_hedge@alumni.texas.edu](mailto:alyssa_hedge@alumni.texas.edu) or you can email me at [alyssahedge@gmail.com](mailto:alyssahedge@gmail.com). You can also call us at 512-380-9616.

We hope you have a wonderful holiday season and that this coming year is filled with joy and lots of laughter! Take good care!