

Greetings to all here at the end of 2010,

This year's theme was that we added to our collections of outdoor gear.

It started with Kim getting a new hybrid bicycle in the spring. She wanted a light bicycle she could ride on dirt roads. She also wanted to be able to tow a trailer with a dog on board. Her old Trek was outrageously heavy and it wasn't really her size. I now use it so we can ride together off pavement.



While we were at the bike shop shopping for Kim's new bicycle we noticed they were having a sale on last year's road bicycles. A few years back Kim bought a Lemond road bike so she would be able to ride with me. Kim is a much stronger cyclist than runner so we can ride fast together. I was more scared of the Lemond than I was jealous. My mid 80's Schwinn was just no match for her sleek carbon fiber and aluminum bicycle. I have to work too hard to stay in front of her when we ride together. Because of the sale I ended up getting a great deal on a Cervelo S2. It is a really fast frame, at least a couple of miles per hour faster than my old bicycle for the same effort level. I knew the new Cervelo should be raced even if the last time I raced on wheels was when I was 16 years old. I started riding Wednesday nights with the competitive group from our bike shop.

Having ridden less than 250 miles I took my first fall going around a gate. I jammed my shoulder and scratched my right calf. I got up and promptly fell on my shoulder again. The next weekend during the Seven Sisters Trail Race I fell and jammed my shoulder yet again. My friend Craig has a PT business and he looked at my shoulder and said it was deranged and that nothing was damaged, but some foreign tissue was in the joint and it just needed to be worked out. I promptly started saying I had a disgruntled shoulder.

We bought a home gym. After enough excuses about the gym being too crowded after work or it being too late to go to the gym Kim picked out a home gym. It took quite a long time to assemble. I think there were 47 pulleys. Now I have to come up with new excuses why I wasn't lifting weights.

In early May we made a trip south. It was an ambitious plan. In my pre-Kim days I would just list the things I wanted to do and try to make as many as possible. Now Kim wants plans, reservations and a hotel room at least every third night we are on the road. Even when I propose overly optimistic goals, Kim still just nods and agrees to let me attempt too much. The trip went like this:



Saturday - Drop dogs at vet for boarding; drive to Big Meadows Campground on Skyline Drive in Virginia; hike to a waterfall before sunset. We had camped and hiked at Big Meadow in Sept of 2007. But that year we got to the waterfall after sunset, this time we got to see it in daylight.



Sunday - Drive to Grayson Highlands State Park in Virginia; hike to the top of Mount Rogers the highest point in Virginia at 5729 feet; camp overnight. It got down near freezing that night, which explains why there were only two other groups with us using the campground.

Monday - Drive to Cosby Tennessee; hike Mount Guyot; stay in hotel in Newport, TN. I was quite proud of finding the summit of Guyot, 6621 feet in elevation. There is no trail to the top and no markings. You have to bushwhack. This was my third attempt - I ran out of



time my first try and summited Old Black the second time. For this attempt I knew where the summit was but not how to get there. The forest is Hansel and Gretel thick along the Appalachian Trail. I had given up and sent Kim back down the trail when I had my epiphany and figured where to leave the trail to reach the summit. The small picture of me on the photocard is on the summit of Guyot.

Tuesday – Hike up Mt LeConte, elevation 6593; spend the night at the Lodge on LeConte. Kim loves it there. There is a group of rustic cabins at over 6400 feet elevation. The shortest hike in from a road is over five miles. They use llamas twice a week to pack in supplies for the lodge. The views are beautiful except when you are in the clouds like we were this year. We were on the sheltered side during our stay; the other side of the summit had 50 mile per hour winds and less than one hundred foot visibility.

Wednesday - Hike off of LeConte; drive through Georgia to get Brasstown Bald, Georgia's highest point at 4783 feet, and then drive into Alabama to pick up Cheaha the highest point in Alabama at 2405 feet. We stayed in a hotel outside of Montgomery that night.



Thursday - Drive south to Lakeland Park in Florida and the high point Britton Hill all of 345 feet above sea level. Then down to Fort Walton Beach for lunch and a look at Florida's Emerald Coast before the BP oil spill could ruin the white sands then on to Orlando to spend the night in a mega resort.

Friday - We drove to Titusville in the morning and then waited to watch space shuttle Atlantis make its last flight. There were no delays and the shuttle went off like a charm. Watching a launch is really impressive. We then drove north toward Daytona to have dinner with our friends Deb and Howard before driving north to Brunswick, GA for the night.

Saturday - Drive home. I had given Kim the option to fly home from Orlando but she was willing to ride shotgun. We stopped for pictures at Ebright Azimuth, the highest point in Delaware at 442 feet.

Technically we got home at 1:30 on Sunday morning. Regardless it was a long day.

Kim has caught the high pointing bug; early May saw four more states for her. Over Memorial Day weekend she wanted to pick up a group of three states she didn't have. At first the plan was for her and Lacey to go, but I couldn't let her go alone. We got our first GPS to help with the navigation. Since the dogs were coming, Kim found a three-man tent for the occasion. We have a two-man tent, but it is light weight and meant to be carried deep into the back country. The new tent is much better suited for our whole family. Well not for Bentley. While Kim slept he paced back and forth well past midnight the first night in the tent. Pace, pace, pace then paw, paw at the zipper and repeat endlessly as only an obsessive fox terrier can.

We drove to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania on Saturday. Sunday we made a loop picking up Mt Davis in Pennsylvania, Hoyo Crest in Maryland and Spruce Knob in West Virginia before heading back to Harrisburg for the night. Monday we drove back home. The only good picture of the five of us all year was on the top of Spruce Knob. That is the main picture on the photo card. The last time I was there it was 30 degrees with a 50 mph wind. When I got up to reset the timer on the camera Asta had had enough and walked off the tower. He was a smart little dog. The weather was much nicer this time.

I was able to talk Kim into making a duvet cover out of raft race t-shirts. We didn't use the always popular home made shirts, but rather we bought classic official t-shirts from years past.

Owning a house always means there is something to be done. Luckily for us almost everything major is done. There is only a short window of time when I can apply polyurethane to the wood trim. It has to be done with the windows open for 24 hours. Kim was kind enough to plan an overnight hiking trip with her friend Andrea so I could get the job done. I had time to prep and apply a coat of polyurethane while Kim and Andrea drove to Massachusetts where they camped at Pittsfield State Forest in the pouring rain and hiked at Mount Greylock.



Our fall trip was up to the White Mountains of New Hampshire so Kim could pick up Mt. Washington and then our annual pilgrimage to Katahdin, the highest point in Maine and the Northern Terminus of the Appalachian Trail. Other than the weather on Mt Washington everything went to plan.

We dropped the dogs on Monday morning and then made a dash up to the Crawford Notch Visitor's Center. We parked our car and caught the hiker's shuttle to the Appalachia Trailhead and hiked up to the Madison Hut, the hardest hut to reach in the Whites. The hut consists of three rooms, the kitchen, the common/dining room and a bunkroom with rows of bunks four high. Or at least it used to be like that. We stayed there one of the last nights before a planned demolition and rebuilding was to take place. We were fortunate to be there when a group of old hut (OH) men came to say goodbye. The staff of the huts are mostly college students and the OH Club's members are former hut staff. A couple of the OH that came to visit had worked the huts in the 1940's and are now in their eighties. Most of the guys present had been staff in the 1960's. After dinner they all said who they were, when they worked the huts and told stories. In hindsight I wished I had stopped them so that I could have filmed with our camcorder, they were quite the group.



That pesky 50 mph wind kept following us. It was there Monday night on Mt Madison. Tuesday we left Mount Madison to make a traverse of the Presidential Mountains and back to our car. It was foggy and as we climbed the slopes towards the top of Mt Washington the wind picked up. Kim was finally able to bag Mount Washington, New Hampshire's highest point.

Once we started our descent off of Mt Washington we left the wind and the clouds behind. It is not much more than a mile to the Lake of the Clouds Hut, which was cloud free, and the wind was not much more than a breeze. We pressed on with our death march and got to our car around 7:30 and spent the night at the elegant Eagle Mountain House. They have a wonderful restaurant that serves gluten free pasta, so Kim was able to enjoy a warm meal.

Wednesday we drove via the back roads to Baxter State Park in Maine. Our GPS wanted to take us over Sebec Lake, there is no bridge or ferry and the private road looked like it was only suited for trucks. Eventually we got to Katahdin and stayed at the Abol Campground.

Thursday our plan was to hike up Abol to the top of Katahdin and then come down the Hunt/Appalachian Trail. Abol is the shortest route to the summit. It is exposed and very rocky. Once we cleared tree line the rocks were the size of small appliances like toasters. Halfway up the rocks were more like large appliances, washing machines and refrigerators. The rocks at the head wall are between car and house sized. I was quite impressed with Kim; four years ago she would have turned back. Now she doesn't complain and there isn't any quaver to her voice as we scramble towards the tableland.

The small picture of Kim on the photo card is on the tableland and the slope behind her is the Abol Trail.

Friday we drove home with a detour to Gulf Hagas, some call it the Grand Canyon of the East. We called it something else. We only did half the hike and left. The fee for using the private roads is a bit excessive. Not sure why out of state cars need to pay more, we just know we won't be paying again.

While we hiked our way through New Hampshire and Maine, Kim's group at The Hartford went through layoffs. It was always in the back of her mind while we were gone. Luckily Kim survived the layoff and was even able to land one of the manager positions in the new organization.



There is a race in the Berkshires called the Josh Billings Run-A-Ground. Originally the race was a relay with a bike ride, a canoe paddle and a run. When we were 18, Andy Layden, Steve Kurland, Rob White and I put together a team, Team Bophuthatswana, and competed in the 6th annual race. Times change and now there is a kayak division and an Iron Person division. My nemesis, Scott Livingston, set the kayak Iron Person record in 2009. I had to give the race a second chance. So I competed as an Iron Person as Team Bophuthatswana in the 34th Josh in September. My really fast bicycle got its chance to race. Kim was my support crew. I finished ahead of the time we put down as a team 27 years earlier.

Fear is a great training aid. All my injuries and commitments to non-running endeavors took their toll on me. With five weeks to go before my fall marathon I put my foot down and came up with a training plan. I stuck to the plan and was rewarded with a 3:00:53 my fastest marathon since April of 2002. I learned nothing from this other than I want to be faster in April of 2011 at Boston and faster still for my fall 2012 marathon.

Kim gets more vacation time than I, but also has troubles using up her time. She took a week off in the fall while I worked. During her free week she went up to Lowell, MA to visit a quilt museum and on the way home she visited many new quilt shops. She also took Lacey hiking up Mt Greylock, the highest point in Massachusetts.

Kim, with me and Bentley, in tow returned to Urbandale, Iowa for the Living History Farms Race. This is Kim's longest running streak at eight years in a row. When she first started running in Omaha her trainer said she should try that "stupid race" out in Des Moines. It is cold; there are creek crossings and mud covers everything. Even the hotel has a hose down station before you can return to your room. And the race fills to capacity with 7500 people.

On the way out to Iowa we dropped off an umbrella stand to our friends Andy and Kim in Ohio. In return they were gracious hosts to three wayward travellers for the night.

On the way back from the race we picked up the highest points in Indiana and Ohio to add to Kim's collection. With 25 states summited Kim is over halfway to her goal. She has no desire to attempt Denali, and the routes up both Borah in Idaho and Granite in Montana are too exposed for a girl from the plains of Nebraska. Forty-four states is Kim's goal, but she may get as many as forty-seven.





This was 34 years in a row for me at the Manchester Road Race on Thanksgiving Day. This is my longest active running streak. It was also the 34th year for the current race director; I took a picture with him this year. It was also 34 years since Amby Burfoot last won the race. I got a picture with him as well, but he made me promise to write a story about how and why I started and stayed running.

I still refuse to go quietly into middle age. This year I made a conscious effort to run at the track in search of the speed of my youth. With my lack of good time management skills I often run at the track in the dark. The latest act of desperation was the purchase of a treadmill. No more excuses that it is too hot, too cold or too dark. The unit we got was advertised for people over six feet tall, not that our height mattered, but at 12 mph my stride was almost the length of the standard belt and Kim was concerned that I might get tired and fly off the back of the standard treadmill so we got one with a longer belt.

Can't really say Snoopy is thriving at 15+ years, however he keeps motoring along. No

major medical incidents unlike the last two years. He is having a problem slipping on the hardwood floors. Two years ago we hiked up Mt Frissell, the highest point in Connecticut and Snoopy was just exhausted for days afterwards and had no appetite. This fall we took him up the slightly easier Bear Mountain, the highest peak in Connecticut. He was pretty pokey at first, and then I started bribing him with treats. Once he realized I was in possession of an unlimited supply of food Snoopy became my shadow. The rest of the hike went quickly. On the following day's evening walk Snoopy wanted to pick up the pace.



At seven and a half years old Bentley the wire fox terrier is still a puppy. He loves to tear into his toys, chase the tennis ball or just run and bound through the yard because he can. He travels the best of all the dogs and often gets to come to our races. Bentley and I went on an overnight trip to hike up Mt Marcy in New York. I was very proud that he was able to complete the hike with only minimal help. Bentley is a bit frustrated with Snoopy and will growl at Snoopy or out right attack the old beagle by jumping on his back. Many barks and arfs are exchanged, but no real damage is done. Bentley is also on Facebook. He has friends around the world. Search for Birchhurst Bentley if you want to follow his adventures.



Lacey is still her feisty self. She is the alpha dog no matter what. Finally she is warming up to Bentley, partly because we no longer leave Bentley and Snoopy together unattended. Lacey and Bentley spend the good weather days together outside in the pen while Snoopy gets to sleep the day away in his crate. Lacey still loves to run. Kim does limit Lacey's mileage and makes sure the little beagle gets lots of rest days.

I'd say life still has its constant rhythm, but the beat is still a bit too fast. We are planning for slower days to come. My friend Rich bought a piece of land on the New Hampshire side of the Maine- New Hampshire border to build a retirement home on. We've been thinking about buying land on the Maine side of the border. There is still plenty of time before retirement, but maybe it is time to believe it will happen some day.



On the flip side we are still working on our house. A few years ago after three failed attempts of my trying to drive an Aspen tree home from the Rockies I had one shipped back east to me. I planted it where a dogwood had died after years of being peed on by Asta The Small Dog®. I named it Aspen The Small Tree and it is growing well. This year I finished cutting the maple in our front yard and had the stump ground. We bought an American elm tree for the spot. The Valley Forge Elm is the most Dutch Elm Disease resistant species so far. I named the Elm, George. It should grow to one hundred feet tall. Kim asked if I really wanted a tree that tall in front of our house. I replied, "Not in our lifetime."

So 2010 is best summed up by live for today, but plan for tomorrow.

Best wishes to one and all,

Todd and Kim

Bentley, Lacey and Snoopy

PS Keep up with our adventures at www.KimBrown.net