

2 0 0 8 C H R I S T M A S E D I T I O N

# the JANICEK family

HOWDY, Y'ALL!



*In March we spent a fun-filled vacation in Denver at Elise's uncle, Norbert's house along with Elise's parents, Steve and Joanne. To go along with this year's medical-themed newsletter, it's worth noting that your humble narrator took to the slopes for the first time in his life and did a fantastic job of breaking his ankle and left him on crutches for the better part of Spring!*

*We had a blast while in Denver, despite the broken bone. We're forever indebted to Norbert for putting us up, showing us around the Denver area and for being such a gracious host!*

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Merry Christmas, happy holidays, good tidings, guten tag and git-r-done! We hope this newsletter finds you and your family well and in good spirits. If not, I'll do my best in the few minutes that it takes you to read this to put you in good spirits. If, for any reason, you are not completely satisfied, you are welcome to cancel your subscription at any time. Void where prohibited. Some restrictions apply.

Much has happened around the Janicek household in 2008, so I'd like to just jump right in and recount the year past.

In February of last year the phone rang. Well, the phone rang quite a lot throughout all of the months, lots of those calls were from some guy named Obama. If memory serves me correctly, I think he was trying to sell us commemorative NASCAR popcorn tins or something. Anyhow, I received a call in late February from the National Marrow Donor Program. After the polite lady on the other end of the line made her introduction, I kept thinking, "Marrow. Marrow. Hmmmm. What is "marrow" and why is she asking for a donation of OH CRAP!! THEY'RE GONG TO TIE ME DOWN AND TAKE THE POWER DRILL TO MY HIP!"

Back in 2002 while Elise and I lived in Temple and I worked at Scott & White Hospital, I frequently donated blood. The process was always quick, convenient and painless. During one of my donations, one of the coordinators asked me if I wanted to join the National Marrow Donor Registry. I agreed then and there, so they took an extra vial of my blood and safely stored it along with other very important historic artifacts such as parachute pants, William Hung and the McRib sandwich.

I was told this past February that I was a potential match for a male patient who suffers from Myelodysplastic Syndrome and was asked if I wanted to pursue

further testing to see if I was the exact bone marrow match. I excitedly agreed and soon began a series of extensive testing. I was quickly made aware that if I were a match, I would not be donating actual bone marrow, instead, they would be harvesting my peripheral blood stem cells to donate to the patient.

Over the course of a few months and after drawing and testing 1/4 liter worth of blood samples (for those who do not have an up-to-date Metric conversion chart, 1/4 liter equates to exactly 78 US gallons), it was determined that I was a perfect match! I was then subjected to 5 days of Neupogen injections. Neupogen is an experimental drug that exponentially increases blood cell production in human bones. Within an hour of my first injection, the bones in my legs, hips and thighs had grown in circumference to roughly that of a telephone pole.

The actual procedure was performed in mid-July. I laid still for a few hours while hooked up to an apheresis machine that extracted white cells, platelets, some red cells, the peripheral blood stem cells and billions of awesome Josh cells, and then returned the un-needed blood cells back to me via my other arm.

To date I do not know the outcome of the patient. Hopefully I will learn more of his condition in early 2009, and if all goes well, I'm hoping to have the opportunity to meet him.

It is with a heavy heart that I report that Elise and I lost a baby in July. We had been trying to get pregnant for a few months and when Elise brought the home pregnancy test to me in the kitchen, I knew it was past time to get her oil changed. You would think that after having one child, I would know how to read a pregnancy test. Elise showed me how to read the pregnancy test and it was a confirmed go!



Four weeks later we were at the doctor's office and all who were in attendance were excited. We kept asking Maly, "do you want a little brother or a little sister?" She was torn. Sometimes it was a little brother, sometimes a little sister. The doctor performed the ultrasound and almost immediately we knew something was wrong. The doctor confirmed that the baby had stopped developing at week 6. Elise was around 9 weeks pregnant.

Elise bravely endured a miscarriage, we shed tears together and now have an angel statue in our back yard to memorialize the baby. We also have a cat who's pissed at us because he wants Maly to have someone else to maim and torture.

Speaking of Maly, she is now the ripe age of 2.5-years-old. Her motor skills and vocabulary are well-honed now. It's so much fun to be able to have an actual conversation with her now. It melts my heart when I get home from work and find her at the kitchen table coloring. She stops and says, "Hi, Daddy! How's your work doin'?"

"It's doing really well, Sugar."

"That's good. CAN I HAVE SOME CANDY?!?!"

This year we were lucky to get Maly into a Parents' Morning Out class at the church. This means that Maly goes to "school" from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays. This has provided her with an excellent opportunity to get a step ahead of most children in faith-based gang signs and sending text messages such as: "God is gr8" and "JC n da hizzous!" But what's best of all is that Elise now has some free time in the mornings during the week to tend to important tasks such as vodka tonics and World of Warcraft.

We're both so very proud of Maly and I love coming home on Tuesday and Thursday evenings to see her activity card and the crafts that she made that day. I'm excited that she has the opportunity to go to school and learn new things from her teachers and has the opportunity to socialize outside of her family circle.

As I type this we are on a flight back from New York City. I was in the city for business early in the week and had Elise fly out on a Tuesday to spend the rest of the week with me. My mom was kind enough to watch Maly for the 5 days - so kind that I'm a little nervous that when we step foot off the plane my mom's going to be there to throw the kid at us and high-tail it back to her house!

Elise and I managed to squeeze in as much as we possibly could in a 5-day trip to the Big Apple. We saw the Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island, Ground Zero, Grand Central Station, the Chrysler Building, SoHo, Chinatown, Little Italy, Greenwich Village, the Financial District, Central Park, Times Square, 5th Avenue, the Christmas tree at Rockefeller Plaza and the Broadway production of Spamalot. One of the high points of the trip was when we walked out of the theatre on our last night there and it had just started snowing. A snowy December night in the Big Apple is a definite must.

With any vacation comes the fact that one has to go back to work. Work for me has been steady, fantastic and extremely stressful at times, but I always make sure it affords me the opportunity to learn and to better myself. This year has brought about a lot of change in that our parent company recently hired a new chief executive. I have had the opportunity to work with him at various levels over the past couple months and am completely confident that I have secured myself as an asset to the company. I guess I could have just shortened that previous sentence to read "I brown-nosed", huh? I also have a new general manager starting in the days to come that I will be training and with whom I will be working very closely with on an ongoing basis. So a couple new faces and fresh ideas around the workplace should make for an exciting and fruitful 2009.

Elise continues to thrive as Chief Family Officer. I know raising a toddler can be taxing on the human spirit and she has nothing short of an amazing job of taking care of our little daughter. My best friend, my partner, my wife has been an inspiration to me as a parent and I'm beyond thankful that she's in my life and that she is the mother of my child. Without her, Maly and I would probably be found sitting on the couch in our underwear watching Ultimate Fighting Championship and eating nothing but beef jerky.

This year is our year to spend the holidays in Des Moines, Iowa with Elise's family. For those that are geographically challenged, Des Moines is up yonder in colder country where they all laugh at you if you use words like "flip flops" or "shorts" during the winter months of January through December. I still haven't had a white Christmas nor has Maly, nor my mom (that I know of) for that matter, but hopefully we'll all get one this year. My mom will be making the trek to Des Moines with us for Christmas again this year and we're all very excited to spend the holidays with Steve, Joanne, Grandma T. and Eric.

We hope you were all good boys and girls this year and that Santa brings you everything on your list. More importantly, we hope that you will be afforded the opportunity to spend a lot of quality time with the ones you love. Make sure to take that extra moment this season and tell those people that you love them, warts and all.

So here's to you and yours. We wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Our Love,

Josh, Elise & Maly