



IN THE IMMORTAL WORDS OF A FACELESS RUSSIAN FLAK TROOPER FROM RED ALERT II: "AT LEAST I HAVE JOB."

THE WITTE TIMES



NEWS AT LEAST AS ACCURATE AS THE PROFESSIONAL MEDIA

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THAT SEETHING HOTBED OF REBELLION KNOWN AS LANSING, MICHIGAN



off all evening. Cretin.

Fortunately, he gets away with it because he is such a darned likable person. Maybe it's his generally agreeable nature, his undefeatable smile, his ready willingness to help when asked, or his completely bizarre and off-the-wall sense of humor.

He is a sophomore at Lansing Christian and elected to take a WWII history class this year, much to my delight. And, speaking of military history, this summer Joy surprised the family and took us to the "Thunder over Michigan" air show in Ypsilanti that featured a ton of WWII aircraft, including flyovers by eight WWII B-17 bombers. Seth took his friend Aaron along and they had a great time.

Seth started working concessions at Lugnuts baseball games and the MSU Breslin Center this year through LCS. Not surprisingly, he is a great worker.

He continues to do a lot of biking and skateboarding with his friends. I like that they enjoy getting outside and doing something other than having their eyes glued to a screen.

This year the kids gave me a ping-pong

table as a Father's Day present, and lately Seth and I have been spending about an hour or more every evening doing battle. I try to be a good sport when he beats me.

Seth just joined the robotics team that meets at Okemos High School. It looks like it's going to be a blast. The team will build a robot to compete with other schools around the state. Web design and animation projects are also part of the competition, and I think Seth is going to work on animation.

He is considering going into a "New Media" program at the career center next year. The course would include digital photography, digital filmmaking and digital editing. I wish I could take it.

One of Seth's interests is doing graphics on the computer and he is also an excellent artist. Given his mechanical inclinations, I would not be surprised if he pursued some sort of technical design career. Wherever he is going, though, I am sure he will be well-liked.

THE LUCKY 13TH ISSUE

I know that most people seem to think that 13 is *unlucky*, but here we are, in the richest country in history, and even when we fall on what we consider terribly hard times we still have more than most people around the world. By mere happenstance of being an American in the early 21st century, we are more blessed than we can possibly imagine, and I more than most. I have all that I could want.

One of my most treasured assets is a wealth of wonderful friends. This is a time to be thankful for all we have. And so, in appreciation of all I have been given, let me share with you, my friends, a little of the past year with my greatest treasure: my family. This is my 13th telling of the tale, and each time it grows richer.

THE MONSTER CHILD KNOWN AS SETH

Seth is the kind of kid you hate to have as a sibling because he never seems to get into trouble. Worse, he is incredibly lazy. He thinks nothing of getting all of his homework and chores done right away so that he can goof



NEVER A QUIET MOMENT FOR ALLISON

Our senior has been having a busy, busy year. She is still in the "Students in Entertainment Technology" program at Haslett High School two hours every day. She says her favorite job is working as a flyman. Sure, it sounds glamorous, but it actually takes skill to be able to rig things to float in the air.

In addition to the same WWII history class as Seth, she is taking AP World Lit and an independent study art class. She is the vice-president of the LCS chapter of the National Honor Society, which means that should something

happen to the president she would have to step into the executive office. Of course, they always fly separately now. It's one of the burdens of office, but she is honored to serve.

This spring Allie went to Guatemala for a mission trip with a number of her classmates. She did absolutely great doing good and wants to go back. She is eager to travel.

Allie is still a bit up in the air about where she is going to attend college, and that is an issue that will need to be settled soon.



literally read and critiqued by a worldwide group of readers.

In the last year we have really seen Allison transforming into a mature young lady. I think she will be ready for college, but I know we won't be ready to let her go.

JAKE: THE OTHER SOPHOMORE

Jake is now a sophomore at Calvin College. It's not the same without him around here but we are very proud of him.

His first year was a little rocky due to a variety of issues. My first year of college was pretty rocky, too, so I can relate. At least he didn't get shoved through any windows.

He came home for the summer and worked detailing cars and helping a family friend get a former rental house ready for sale. He also took a couple courses at Lansing Community College.

This fall semester has been different from his freshman year. He has a new roommate whom he seems to really like,

and he is meeting more people on campus. He has been busy working in the cafeteria and as a result he doesn't make it home as often as he did last year. So it makes the whole business of him being off to college much more real. They really do grow up and move away....

He has been talking about declaring a major in Psychology and is really enjoying the Developmental Psych class he has this semester. It appears he's getting down to business at school, and we're pleased to see that.

He also has an astronomy class and got to set up a remote astrophotography session on Calvin's telescope in New Mexico. It was a real treat to see his photo and write up on Calvin's website.

He is still dating Lindsey Marshall—they have been seeing each other for over a year and a half now. Lindsey's a very nice young lady and we enjoy seeing her. She is attending nursing classes at Jackson Community College, so Jake doesn't get to see her too often.

I sure miss having Jake around but it's good to see him spreading his wings.

A SONG FOR CAITLIN

Caitlin is doing well in the middle of middle school. It's seventh grade now, and she is a teenager. Her mother cried a little when she turned 13 this summer; this milestone is another reminder that the kids are growing up. All our kids are teens now, but only for a couple months as Jake turns 20 in February. They are only ours for a little while.



She is turning into a bit of an event planner. This spring she helped organize the pre-party at our home for the LCS Junior-Senior Banquet and this fall she and her friends organized a masquerade dance. She also attended a firefighters' conference, and spent 16 hours working the event. She is starting to put her skills learned at SET to good use.

When she's not busy running from one event to the next, she still does a lot of on-line writing and editing for a number of web-based fiction groups. Her stories are



But back to Caity. She loves extracurricular activities. She is doing Girl Scouts this year. She just started back up with the diving team at Okemos High School. She would dive at Lansing Christian but, as we don't have a pool, that could get painful. She is the only girl who can compete on the middle school team, as the other girl is in sixth grade. There are not any boys on the team. We're hoping Caitlin makes captain of the squad.

Caity also started cheerleading for boys' basketball this year and I think she is doing wonderfully, although she won't do any of the cheers I have suggested. Fortunately, there *are* several other girls on the cheer team.

Caitlin played girls' soccer in the spring and coed soccer this fall. Last winter she played girls' basketball and this summer she went to basketball and soccer camps. Like I said, she likes to keep busy.



When she is not doing all these other things, putting off her homework or being pestered by her parents to clean her room, she plays the piano. We've paused lessons for awhile because of her schedule, but she loves to compose her own pieces and has been doing so since she was nine. Last spring she played one of her compositions in the junior high talent show and it was absolutely beautiful.

For Christmas last year we gave her a recording session, and on the day before her 13th birthday we met an audio technician at Trinity Church. The church graciously loaned the use of their Yamaha grand piano, and we think the results were lovely. You can judge for yourself by following this link:

www.wittelaw.com/personal/pirouette.htm

Caity already has seven tracks for her second CD and has asked for another recording session for Christmas. It would be a gift for us as well.

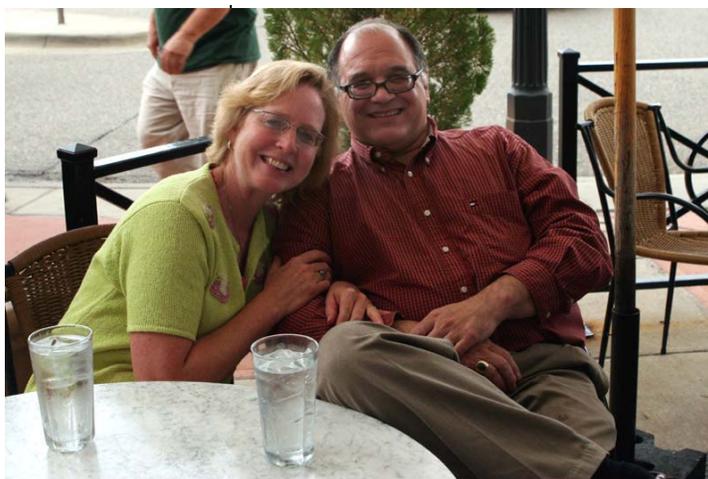
JOY'S WORLD

Joy finished her sixth year on the school board at Lansing Christian and is now term-limited out. We're going to miss all the junkets. She found a new gig serving on the board of Hidden Treasures, the thrift store operated by LCS. She also spends a lot of time volunteering there.

She got the opportunity to babysit her brother's one-year-old son for three days this summer. It was really different to have a crawler/toddler around again. She loved it. She also does some babysitting for the House's two little ones across the street, so she is getting her mommy fixes and we are in no rush for grandchildren.

Her landlord/tenant practice continues to thrive, not surprisingly. She attended over 400 hearings this year. She says that she cannot believe that it has been 25 years since she graduated from law school.

Between court and kids, Joy spends more than 2 1/2 hours driving in a typical day. She's definitely the road warrior of the family. Now and then she gets some time to spend a morning having coffee with her girlfriends and she treasures the opportunity. I only hope that they aren't talking about me.



She repainted the laundry room this summer and now it's just the right color after all. She spent many hours working in the yard and planted a small vegetable garden this spring. This fall she and her mom canned 90 jars of applesauce, so we have a good store laid in for the winter.

We had a nice time celebrating our anniversary this year, first going to Bravo's for a dinner outside and then going to Dusty's English Inn, a very romantic B&B not too far from here. 21 years aren't nearly enough.

MORE ANCIENT TOYS

I managed to gather up more old mechanical objects to screw around with, so that makes 2010 a happy year for me.

In the spring I bought a second 1999 Olds Aurora. This was a very low mileage, extremely clean car, and Joy drives it most of the time. We love the Auroras, but we have to find ways of telling the two black Oldsmobiles apart. We call the high mileage example the "B-Rora."

Last fall in a fit of impulse I bought a classy, butter yellow 1971 Sea Ray SRV 180



on eBay. It's a beautiful boat and is capable of accommodating the entire family, something the *Minimum Wage* (our other boat) cannot do. I think I am going to name this one "Carpe Throttle."

The most recent toy was really my brother Rich's fault, since he's the one who insisted we had to buy the 1978 Arctic Cat Panther 5000 snowmobile. What did we do without eBay?



On a professional level, I started a two-year stint as the chairperson of the Bankruptcy Section for the Federal Bar Association in our district. Here's hoping I don't mess it up too badly. Seriously, it is good to have the opportunity to give some time back to the practice.

FAMILY OUTINGS, ETC.

We didn't make any long trips this year, but we did have a lot of fun little escapades.

Last April, Joy's mom celebrated her 80th birthday. She needs to learn to act her age. We had a very nice birthday party at her house and one of her gifts was a book of love letters to her from everyone in the family. It was quite sweet.

As always we went to the FBA bank-

ruptcy seminar in northern Michigan in July and this year we made a sunset trip out to Sleeping Bear Dunes for a sensational evening.

The boys and I scored tickets to the Meadowbrook Concours d'Elegance, one of the nation's premiere auto shows. It was a beautiful day and we had a great time looking at some amazing vintage rides.

We spent a nice week at my Mom's this summer with my sister's family while brother Rich and Sharon and their two youngest were here from Tennessee. During that week we also spent a day on Mackinac Island and an afternoon in the UP on the northern shore of Lake Michigan. Very pleasant.

We had fun with the snowmobiles at Mom's place last winter. Of course, we also did the traditional hay rides at Witte's Woods this fall. We tried our first Office Retreat there this summer; that was great fun for the 21 of us. There's a lot to do at Lily Lake.

During Thanksgiving break Rich was up again for a week and the two of us did some serious cleaning in my Dad's workshop. It has been long enough since Dad died that we could finally throw away a lot of things, and it felt good to get the shop clean again.

One major event for our family is that, after three years, we finally sold our house in DeWitt to a young couple with four

kids and one on the way. I am glad that the house is filled with a young family again, and pleased that its upkeep is no longer my responsibility. It was sad, though, to say goodbye to the place of our wedding reception and the kids' first home. Time for someone else to make some memories.

Finally, a bit of sad news. This year my dad's oldest sister, Lorraine, succumbed to cancer. Aunt Rainie was always sweet and we will miss her.

Well, that's it for No. 13. Now we have to think of things to do so that I will have something to write in issue No. 14.



Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from all of us.

—THE WITTES

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