

Merry Christmas to our beloved family and friends,

2007 brought to our family many reasons for celebration beginning with David's 40th birthday in February, which we celebrated with a week of skiing at Copper Mountain. Emma and Atticus flourished in ski school and enjoyed their time on the mountain (with the exception of a blizzard on the last day). Aramis was a bit of a reluctant skier, and Eragon was just barely mobile at the time, so he spent most of the trip in a backpack. In the spring, we celebrated David finishing his Master's degree in Electrical Engineering at Stanford University.

Christmas 2007



Eragon, age 2



Saturn surfing in St. Louis

chocolate treat imaginable, Christy and the kids settled into our newest adventure...the world of home schooling. Though schooling at home, Emma and Atticus are actually enrolled in an online charter school. Especially with its ups and despite its downs, Christy and the kids feel privileged to be able to spend so much time together. We have managed to incorporate Aramis into the lessons with a preschool curriculum, and Eragon seems to blend in fairly well as he has always enjoyed doing whatever the older kids are doing anyway. He colors and shares books with us and bangs on the computer when it's not being used for actual schoolwork.



Aramis, age 4

In May, we celebrated Christy's sister Cathy marrying Ryan Russell in a beautiful outdoor ceremony in Oklahoma. The whole Pond brood was included in the revelry—Emma was lovely as the lead flower girl/Jr. Bridesmaid, and Atticus and Aramis were dashing in their first tuxedos as ring bearers. Christy was her sister's Matron of Honor, and David and Eragon were happy participants in the whole affair (or would have been if not for Dave's sudden illness the night before the wedding—he nearly missed the whole thing!). We are all delighted for Cathy and Ryan,

and celebrated further when they announced the expected birth of their first child due in May 2008!

The summer was a blur of travel—after the week in Oklahoma for the wedding festivities in early May, we camped at Blue Mesa Lake near Gunnison with our friends the Weeks for the Memorial Day weekend, then spent a week in Missouri in early June celebrating family at the Pettijohn Family Reunion. In July, to better facilitate some of our travels and camping, we purchased a pop-up camper large enough to accommodate a family of six. We then promptly packed up our new camper and hauled it to California for a trip capped off with David's graduation ceremony at Stanford. It was so much fun to camp in the Bay Area that we returned in July



Atticus, age 6



Emma, age 8

he too is participating in tournaments. He played on a fall soccer team as well, and just recently joined Cub Scouts. He has been very anxious to get into scouting so this is a long-awaited treat. Atticus has shown a great interest in all things Harry Potter, so we celebrated his 6th birthday with a Potter party just a few weeks after the release of the final book in the series. He has a loving and compassionate nature, and is particularly patient with little brother Eragon. Aramis infuses our lives with laughter and fun. He turned four in September, and we celebrated with a grand knight party in honor of his current obsession. He is crazy about any kind of knights, including the traditional feudal figures, as well as Narnia and Star Wars knights (as in Jedi). He also thinks of Captain Jack Sparrow as a

for the Garlic Festival—yes, it's that good!

We did have a bit of excitement at home during the summer when a bear decided to help himself to a snack from a trash can in our garage. A week later our neighbors spotted a mountain lion in their yard—



welcome to Colorado!

In August we celebrated Christy's 40th birthday, which meant welcoming a host of family—they came from near and far to spend a week doing everything Christy's heart desired, including our first visit to the Lafayette Peach Festival and dining at Denver's historic White Fence Farm and The Fort in Morrison. In between groups of visitors, the six of us enjoyed a relaxing getaway at the Grand Hotel in Steamboat Springs, our first visit to that part of the state. Finally, after more than a week of birthday revelry, and indulgence in every kind of



Can I stop shoveling now?



Helping with Fall yard work

Beach fun near Santa Cruz



She enjoys the opportunity to delve deeper into subjects that were often somewhat marginalized in her traditional school, particularly history and science. Much to Christy's delight, Emma has developed an appreciation for Nancy Drew mysteries, and she has begun reading through Christy's old set. Besides reading, Emma enjoys staging elaborate productions starring herself and her three brothers. She is a born director and is blessed to have a (mostly) willing band of brothers to lead.

Atticus is in 1st grade this year, and is making exciting progress with reading and math. He insists that he can't read on his own yet, but disproves this by getting high marks on his school work and surprising Christy almost daily with his ability to grasp difficult concepts and his thoughtful analysis of everything under the sun. He has always been a philosopher at heart. He and Emma take chess lessons together and



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On Stanford Campus

sort of knight, what with his skill with a sword and all, and is a big Potter fan, often wielding his toy wand as he does a toy sword. He is surprisingly conversant in Star Wars trivia and will make serious assertions about plot points at any given moment. Though he hasn't quite mastered the moves, Aramis is anxious to be able to play chess like his older siblings. He loves Dora the Explorer and styling his hair with water and a comb (he says this makes him look "fabulous") and learning his letters, and he loves to play and sing and in general entertain the whole family with his bubbly personality and good humor.

To our great relief, we were able to celebrate as Eragon finally established himself on the growth charts at the age of two. Though he has not yet perfected the art of speech, he communicates quite well using a combination of



Uh oh! Where's the milk bottle?!



Grand Vistas at Glenwood Caverns

signs, grunts and a remarkably wide range of facial expressions. He is beginning to make a variety of sounds, but often just laughs when we suggest

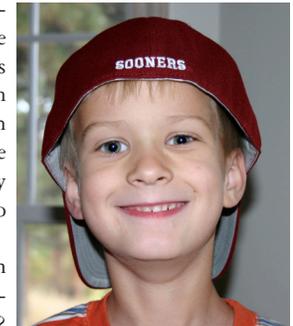
that he attempt to emulate words. On the other hand, he graduated from his high chair to a regular chair very early because he learned to climb into it and would terrify Mom & Dad by balancing precariously on the seat, trying to figure out a way down. He also conquered the stairs much earlier than we would have considered letting the other kids do so, partly out of his stubborn insistence in following the older children through the elaborate barricades, which were intended to keep him safely away



from them (the stairs, not the other children). He is passionate about his belly button, coloring and Eric Carle books (our very worn copy of *Brown Bear, Brown Bear* is his favorite). We find him absolutely irresistible and *still* don't mind a bit that he is holding on to babyhood, as he is the last of our babies and we're *still* in no hurry for him to grow up. The others are already doing this far too quickly!



Not had enough of the Pond family celebrations?



We're finally starting to blog at <http://blog.pondfamily.net>. Don't check it too often though, as we haven't yet gotten the hang of frequent posting. For more photos, check out the "Photo Gallery" link.



Thrills at Elitch Gardens in Denver



We pray that you and yours are blessed with God's love and peace in your lives in the coming year!

The Pond Family

David, Christy, Emma, Atticus, Aramis, Eragon, and Gizmo

Rodin's Burghers of Calais Sculpture Garden at Stanford University



Merry Christmas!
2007