

December 2014

Greetings from Friendswood, TX

It's been a fun and exciting year, with our new addition to the family and several big trips to the corners of the country.

First off, our biggest news is the arrival of Phelan Sheng-Jiang Wang (王盛江) on November 12th at 9:40 am. Labor for Julie was around 2 hours and he was born at the Rite of Passage Birth Center in Friendswood, TX. At birth, 7 lb 9 oz, and 20" long. 'Phelan' is Irish/Gaelic for 'Wolf', 'Sheng' is Chinese for 'prosperous', and 'Jiang' is Chinese for 'river'.

Megan is 7.5 years old now, and continues to be homeschooled by Julie. She's very interested in researching Cat and Dog breeds, and can recite breed characteristics of breeds we've never even heard of. (She's still interested in bugs and dinosaurs) Her current favorite series of books is Warriors by Erin Hunter (pseudonym), about the trials and tribulations of clans of feral cats in their forest homes. Megan has also been working on riding her bicycle without training wheels.

Hunter, like our house is 11 years old now, he continues to be very active, and of course still leaves the confines of our yard at will, but he is more apt to return home on his own. He's also developed a skin allergy, so he's on antihistamines.

Our cats Pepper and Pakhet at just over a year old, and have taken to roosting on top of the cat tower, and often try to escape into the yard

Since Julie was pregnant, for $\frac{3}{4}$ of the year she spend a lot of time nesting and researching/buying cloth diapers. There wasn't a week that went by that didn't have a soft fluffy package stuffed into the mailbox.

Winston is still working for Boeing on the Space Launch System (SLS) program. He travelled to Huntsville 11 separate times for a total of ~58 days. The SLS is being designed to carry heavy things to orbit, and less heavy things to beyond Earth orbit.

As mentioned our house is 11 years old, and we should complete our mortgage payments by the middle of next year, after which we can start paying for home improvements. Like the A/C condenser and evaporator we replaced this year.

Although we didn't spend a large amount of time on the garden this year, we still grew greens, garlic chives, tomatoes, sweet potatoes, bell peppers and eggplant. Our Improved Meyer lemon tree continues to flourish and provide ample amount of lemons for us to give away. We also added a tangerine tree to our backyard, and it's borne about 10 oranges this year.

Our 2005 Prius had some issues this spring, (battery pack, catalytic converter was throwing system errors and the transmission casing was cracked.) The estimate to fix everything was around \$7000, slightly more than the Kelly blue book value of the car in good working order, so we donated it to the local public radio station, and they managed to auction it off for \$6700. Our best guess at what happened was: Since none of the issues actually prevented the car from being driven, and are not apparent upon a cursory inspection, we assume the winning bidder was unaware of exactly how broken the car was. Thanks to an online friend of Winston's who worked at a Toyota Dealership in California with ties to a local Houston dealer, we were able to score a 2014 Prius V 3 for \$1000 under dealer price. It is roomy and blue and gets 42 mpg and we love our new car very much. And even though it needed to spend a couple of months in the body shop after Winston was responsible for the car accident that skewed the front end it is running fine now, and no one was injured in the accident.

Travelwise this year we made three major trips as a family. The first was in May when we attended Winston's Second Cousin Diana's Wedding. It was held at the Seattle Aquarium, and we rented a large vacation home to serve as a base of operations. We visited the Zoo, the Children's Museum, Pike's Place Market, Fremont, and we spent a few days driving over and

around Olympic National Park. We met up with some of Winston's co-workers who relocated up to the Boeing facility in Everett, Greg and Sam (and Sam's husband BJ) And really had a great taste of the beautiful pacific northwest, as well as spend time with the whole family.

Our second trip was in conjunction with a business trip. For two weeks in June while Winston was supporting SLS Core Stage Critical Design Review, Julie, Megan and sometimes Hunter, Pakhet and Pepper, visited the various park, nature centers and museums of Huntsville, AL. During the weekend in the middle, we took a couple of day trips to see the Little river Canyon National Preserve, and the Cathedral Caverns State Park. Both were very pretty and decidedly colloquially Alabama at the same time.

Our third major trip was primary to visit Winston's sister Peggy in Brunswick ME. During the last week in July and First week of August, we flew into Boston, and drove up to Brunswick, we visited Bowdoin College where Peggy is the "Assistant Professor of Art History and Asian Studies" and celebrated Trevor's first Birthday. We also visited the L.L.Bean Headquarter store and got outfitted for the rest of our trip. We then drove North to Augusta ME to visit the state capitol and state Museum. We then drove to Acadia National Park and met Julie's cousin Regina and her son Chris who drove up from New Jersey on top of Cadillac Mountain. After a few days of driving around the loop road 4 or 5 times we continued on our own North into Canada and Fundy National Park. After enjoying the dramatic tides we headed to Grand Manan island and took a couple of boat tours, one to see Herring Weirs and Salmon farms, and one to see wild Atlantic Puffins. For those of you keeping track (not that I think any of you would be) the boat tour to see the Puffins is the first dedicated trip whose primary purpose was to see a bird. Everything previous, birds and other wildlife were considered ancillary bonuses. We headed back to Brunswick ME and visited Wolfe's Neck Farm and Wolfe's Neck Woods State Park, where we got to see fledging ospreys. On our drive back to Boston we stopped at the beach in Odiorne Point State Park on the Piscataqua River in New Hampshire. Before we flew out of Boston, we were able to spend some time with Bridgelands having some meals and visiting the Harvard Museum of Natural History. We also snuck in a short stop at the Lowell National Historic Park.

For Halloween this year, Megan went trick-o-treating as a Black Cat, and Julie accompanied her as a Witch. Winston carved Megan-o-Lantern VIII, and Megan carved her own jack-o-lantern for the first time.

The last couple of months have been final preparations for Phelan and the actual round-the-clock care and feeding. It's been 7.5 years since we've had to take care of newborn and some things are brand new to us. For instance, Cloth Diapers have version control numbers, (Bum Genius 4.0 is so much better than v. 3.0, or so I'm told) also Car seats have expiration dates. Fortunately, some things are the same: Julie falling asleep in the glider chair breast feeding with the baby on the Boppy pillow. Megan has adapted well to the presence of her little brother, so long as we can keep her from getting too bored.

Christmas and New Years be spent in a similar fashion as this past month.

And so passes another year here in Texas, where we're thankful for our existing holdings and new addition, as well as our health and happiness. We look forward to next year, and wish you and yours the very best.

With Love,

Winston, Julie,

Megan, & Phelan

P.S. As always, we will try to post more photos at <http://basil2.homeip.net/~basil/Photo.html>



Photo 1: Michele and Roger visited [Jan. 20]



Photo 3: Megan in her fort of retaining wall bricks [Feb 1]





Photo 5: Pakhet, Pepper, Hunter, Megan and Julie [Feb. 9]



Photo 6: Pakhet & Pepper [Mar. 7]



Photo 7: Hunter at the "Phone Eating Park" Friendswood, TX [Nov. 26]



Photo 8: Galveston Homeschool Group at Galveston Island State Park [Apr. 1]



Photo 10: Homeschool group at the West Bay Common School Children's Museum, League City, TX [Apr 22]



Photo 9: Megan and Colby doing the three-legged race at the Homeschool Field Day, League City, TX [Mar. 18]



Photo 11: Megan's diorama of a scene from "Secrets of Droon #26: The Moon Dragon" for the Peens Art Contest at the Orange Show Center for Visionary Art Houston [Apr 12]



Photo 12: Visiting Sam and BJ in Everett, WA [May 6]



Photo 14: Olympic National Park Sign [May 11]



Photo 13: Family Portrait in Seattle, WA [May 10]



Photo 15: Megan on top of Hurricane Ridge, Olympic National Park [May 11]



Photo 16: Megan and Julie with a Mallard Duck, Lake Crescent, Olympic National Park [May 11]



Photo 17: Vicksburg National Military Park, MS [Jun. 15]



Photo 18: Julie and Megan on the bank of the Little River Canyon National Preserve, AL [Jun. 7]



Photo 19: Megan's 7th Birthday Cake, Dinosaur Themed [May 23]



Photo 21: Trevor and Megan [Jul. 23]



Photo 20: Guest at Megan's Birthday Party [May 23]



Photo 22: Family Portrait, Brunswick, ME [Aug. 2]



Photo 23: With Chris and Regina, Acadia National Park Sign [Jul. 25]



Photo 25: Chris and Megan on South Bubble Mountain overlooking Eagle Lake, Acadia National Park [Jul. 26]



Photo 24: Fundy National Park sign, New Brunswick, Canada [Jul. 28]



Photo 26: Julie pushing South Bubble Rock, Acadia National Park [Jul. 26]



Photo 27: Megan holding a live lobster, Top of the Island Sunset Tour, Grand Manan Island, New Brunswick Canada [Jul. 30]



Photo 29: Megan's black cat Halloween Costume, with photoshopped facepaint [Oct. 26]



Photo 30: Megan's first Jack-o-lantern she carved by herself [Nov. 1]



Photo 28: Megan standing on a giant beetle sculpture, Houston Zoo [Aug. 12]



Photo 31: Megan-o-Lantern VIII [Oct. 31]



Photo 32: Our new 2014 Toyota Prius V 3, and 1997 Subaru Impreza [Mar. 31]



Photo 34: Colby and Megan on a Trampoline, League City, TX [Aug 15]



Photo 33: Megan riding her bicycle sans training wheels [Nov. 1]

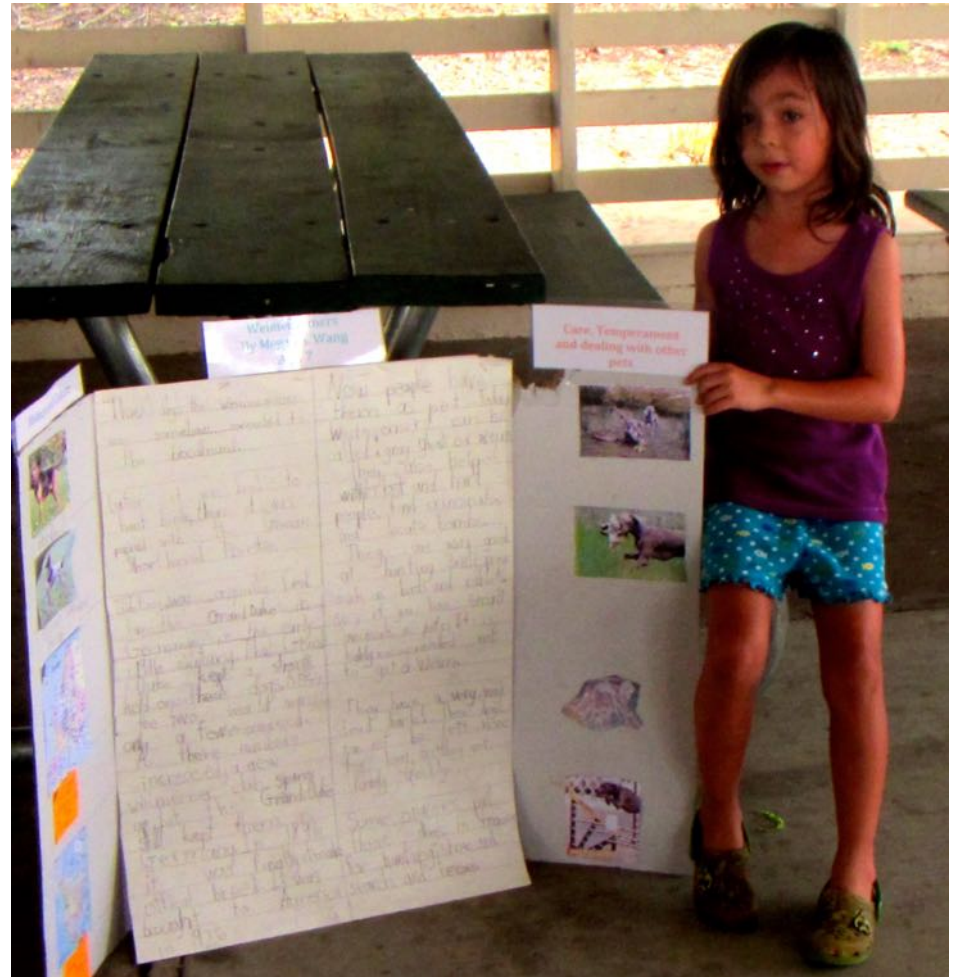


Photo 35: Megan presenting her Weinaramer Report for the Homeschool Science Fair, Walter Hall Park, League City, TX [Sept 8]



Photo 36: Julie in her third Tri-mester with Phelan [Oct. 1]



Photo 37: Baby Shower for Julie, Galveston, TX [Oct. 11]



Photo 38: With Mina, Artiman, Bo & Arshida at Challenger 7 Memorial Park, Webster, TX [Oct. 25]



Photo 39: Phelan's 1st trip Home [Nov. 12]



Photo 40: Thanksgiving Portrait [Nov. 27]

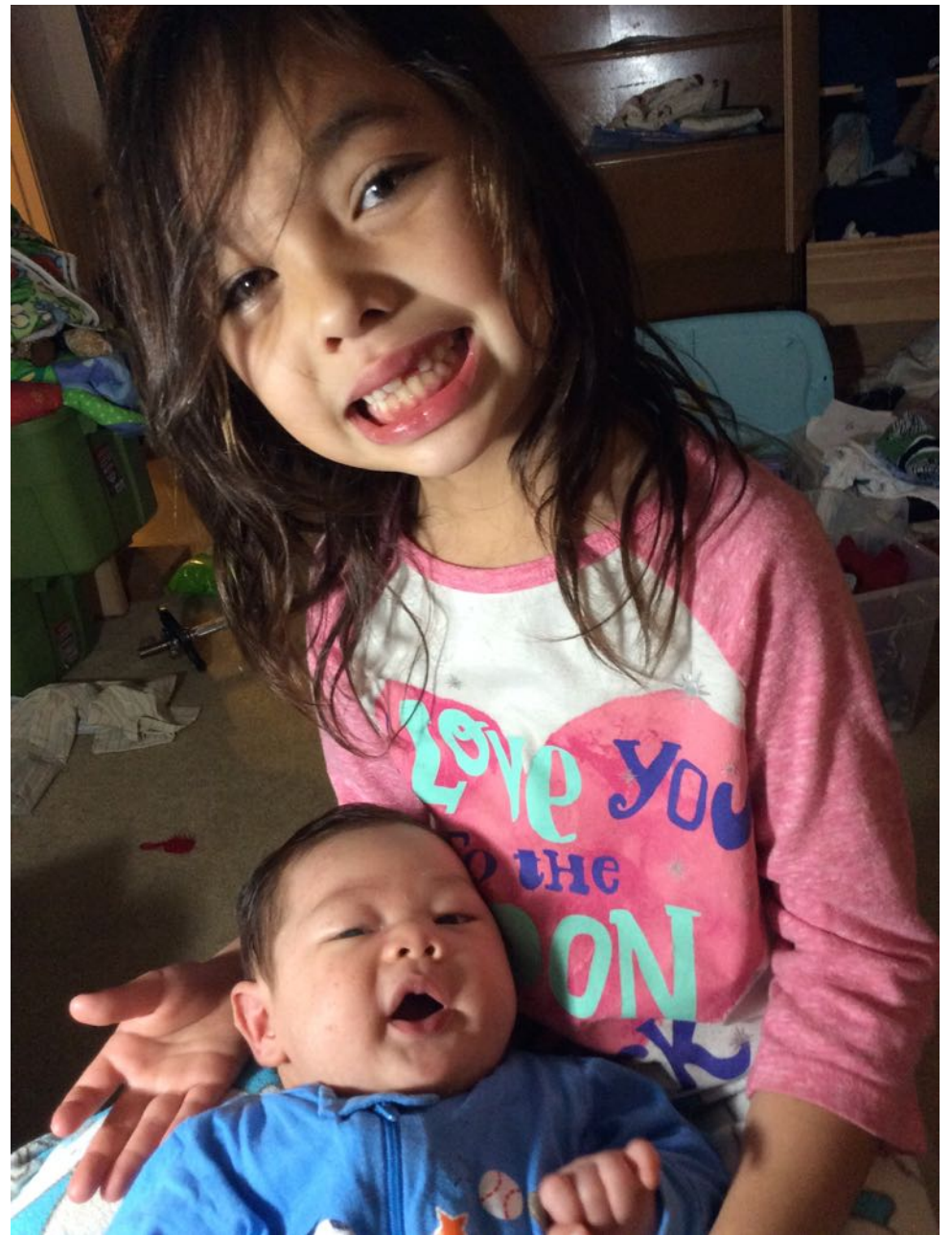


Photo 41: Megan and Phelan on Christmas [Dec. 25]