



*December 2004*  
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# Family Isbell

*Special Two Year Premiere Issue*

*2003-2004*



## A House

A lot of major life events have happened over the last year or two. The first big one was the completion of Cottage Isbell. It's been almost two years since closing, but the final touches from the builder have only been completed recently. Sometimes that's just how it works.

This year has mainly been about the landscaping (that's a big word meaning "money pit"). We've added sod, 33 trees & 120 stepping stones in the back. Next year is about the front and replacing the mulch with stones. We know you care about this stuff.

## A Couple

Somewhere in the middle of this, Sheila and Charles got married. Pierre Sheppard presided over a wonderful—and quite efficient—ceremony at Pristine Chapel here in sunny Atlanta.

There was also an after-reception cookout hosted by Charles Isbell, Sr. at Cottage Isbell. His award-winning BBQ was a huge hit

and apparently converted a few vegetarians back over to the dark side for at least one meal. Now that's good cooking.

We are quite happy that so many of you could join us. For those of you who couldn't, you can see lots of pictures at <http://www.isbell.org/weddings/sheilaandcharles/>



## A Child

The most important event for us was on Saturday, September 11, 2004. At 7:58am, after two and a half days of labor followed by an emergency c-section, Jacqueline Olivia Nicole Isbell (JONI) joined us here in the world.

Her start was a little unusual and a couple of weeks early, but all has turned out well: she is a very healthy and happy baby girl.



Joni enjoys kicking while in her Kick n Play chair, kicking while on her back, kicking while sitting, and kicking while kicking. She is the most advanced and beautiful child ever, and at three months Joni is laughing, giggling, more or less sitting up and working out the details of crawling—or at least kicking while on her stomach.

Joni enjoys being read to, being talked to, and being sung to by her mommy. She also loves her precious tummy time, giggle time, and tickle time with her daddy. Her cooing cadence is amazing. Her increasing mobility is scary. And her laugh is quite rewarding.

Recently, Joni has discovered her hands. She is batting at objects, grabbing at them and putting things in her mouth. She is also typing up webpages: <http://www.isbell.org/~joni/>



## Art of Life

Other than being very, very, very pregnant for most of this year, Sheila rediscovered some activities that she had put on the backburner in years past. She returned to an art studio, doing oils. It was great fun, and inspired Sheila to paint some Winnie the Pooh pictures for Joni's room. She also created an online book club with her friends while remaining an active member in a local Oprah book club. Also because someone has to do it, she has kept busy on various communications committees creating newsletters and designing other media.

Sensing that her social life was going to slow down considerably, Sheila made it a point to host a few get togethers and tried to see friends as often as possible. In July, Sheila and Charles drove up to Cincinnati to celebrate her grandmother's 87<sup>th</sup> birthday and welcome cousin Jerome back from his duty in Iraq. All had a great time.

During all of this, Sheila continued working for SFA and the Naval Research Lab. With Joni's arrival, she scaled back to part time, but is now preparing to return to full time work at the start of the new year.

Sheila is also looking forward to more pool, gym, art and book time and more time with family and friends.

## Boys with Toys

Charles dealt with his impending fatherhood somewhat differently. Declaring that he needed a jump start on his mid-life crisis, he went out and bought a new car. There is some debate over whether it's a family car, but at least it has 325 horses and a six speed manual transmission. Oh, and lots of gadgetry to go with it including integrated bluetooth. "I did it for the children. You understand."

Charles reached several collector's milestones as well, finally breaking

10,000 comics, 850 DVDs, and 14,000 (all legal, I swear) songs.

Charles did other things besides live beyond his means. Professionally, Charles is in the middle of his third year at Georgia Tech and preparing for the oncoming tenure train. He was honored as a Scholar of Note at the beginning of 2004, and has been able to travel abroad for talks, including to Bristol & London, as well as to Vancouver & Whistler. Sheila and Joni stayed home this year, but they plan to join him in Vegas and possibly Germany in July.

Fatherhood has slowed down his ultimate frisbee time, but not completely. If nothing else, he's rediscovered racquetball and is playing regularly again.

## 'Tis The Season

Well, we don't exactly have a tree, decorations or presents as of yet. We just aren't feeling very holiday-ish in the traditional sense this time around. Still, Joni has pointed to the car in the garage and made it clear that she expects gifts of her own. She'll probably get an exersaucer, jumperoo and safe toys for tasting under the imaginary tree.

Toys aside—whether the kind for big boys or little girls—we've already begun celebrating the most important part of the holiday for us: the gift of life and the gift of loved ones in our lives. Also, as new parents we have a free pass to be completely cheesy!

Happy Holidays All!

*Charles, Sheila & Joni*

Favorites we discovered in 2004

Movies: Hero, Kill Bill, The Incredibles, Elf, The Limey

DVDs: Matrix 10-disc set, Lord of the Rings Extended Editions, Yes Minister

Music: John Mayer *Heavier Things*, Nina Simone *The Blues*, Guy Davis *Stomp Down the Rider*, Amel Larrieux *Bravebird*, Soundtrack for *The Ladykillers*

TV: Desperate Housewives, The Wire, Boston Legal, Dave Chapelle Show, Reno 911!

Books: Nicholson Baker *The Fermata*, The Daily Show with Jon Stewart *America*, Larry Niven *Ringworld*, Paul Coelho *The Alchemist*, Sue Monk Kidd *The Secret Life of Bees*

