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Family Isbell

A Year or Two in Review

2005-2006



Toddlng

So we aren't quite convinced that "toddler" is the best description of Joni. She began to toddle around her first birthday, but immediately thereafter she was running, climbing, hopping, dancing and prancing everywhere she could get away with it.

Because of the petri dish of day care, Joni managed six ear infections in six months. After verifying that she hadn't been able to hear for much of that time, she underwent ear tube surgery in June. Within hours, the words began to flow. Within days, she was speaking in full tirades, and is now vocalizing her distinct preferences, and making demands.¹

Although the family is amazed with Joni's vocal growth, they are just as amazed by her physical growth. Joni is a sturdy and tall tot. She remains in the 90th percentile for height, and often towers over

¹It has been claimed that she gets this from her father. His response, "Lies! Lies!"

children a year her senior (WNBA, baby! Daddy needs to retire!).

Joni loves many things—birds, planes, trains, horses, puzzles, biking, singing, and dancing—but her great loves this year have been *Dora the Explorer*, *Schoolhouse Rock*, and the Peanuts Classic Holiday Specials, especially *A Charlie Brown Christmas* (she would say Brown Christmas Tree). She's a big fan of Lucy, and runs around the house making a fist by curling one finger at a time while saying, "Five good reasons: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5!"

We think it's safe to say that Joni is an active child. This year she'll be old enough to expend some of that energy in a more organized fashion, perhaps with piano lessons, dance or gymnastics. It should be fun... or at least exhausting.

Exhausting or not, we never had as much fun as we are having with Joni right now.

<http://www.isbell.org/~joni/>



Schooling

At the very start of 2005, Sheila began working as a research scientist for The Georgia Tech Research Institute (GTRI). She loves the work she has been doing there, the folks she works with and being on Georgia Tech's campus.

Sheila's responsibilities at GTRI have greatly increased in the last two years. She sits on several committees, is the technical lead on two projects, and manages another. Outside of project work, she leads a Junior Professional group within her lab and is involved in similar initiatives across other labs. She has also taught two classes to Atlanta-area educators on video and media editing. She was also advisor to Minorities in CS, a group whose mission is to support, retain and recruit minorities in computer science at Tech. Oh, and she still moderates an Atlanta-area Oprah book club, because she is just not busy enough.

On top of all that, well... did you

ever have someone in your college class that was a bit older, crotchety, and who dresses less hip and with even less hop? Well that person is Sheila: GTRI is paying for her to attend grad school, so she is at Georgia Tech pursuing a Masters in CS. If you haven't heard her start a tirade with "kids these days...!" then you likely haven't spoken to her in years. Sheila would like to point out that in *her* day, students took notes on *paper* with *pencils*. Nowadays, they bring their laptops and pretend to take notes while they check email, work on other assignments and play solitaire. Harrumph!

Outside of work, school, being a mommy and wife, Sheila claims that she's looking forward to a "vacation," something apparently done in olden times. She is also looking forward to being the *matron* of honor in her best friend's wedding, and to her upcoming class reunion (!).

<http://www.isbell.org/~nisa/>



Traveling

Meanwhile, it seems that Charles has spent much of the last two years on the road. In addition to extended trips to Japan (where he was the tallest person in the country) and Vancouver (where he was the coldest), he spent a lot of time traveling stateside. This summer, Charles took 10+ trips all over the country.

In fact, as a part of the DoD-sponsored Computer Science Study Panel, Charles visited just about every base on the east and west coasts, as well as **REDACTED FOR NATIONAL SECURITY REASONS BY ORDER OF SOMEONE YOU DON'T NEED TO KNOW ABOUT.**

Of the many things he saw and did, Charles most enjoyed paratrooper training and playing with fighter planes. He also enjoyed visiting submarines, destroyers, and aircraft carriers (they had the best cookies).

Unfortunately, all of his trips were related to work. As 2006 was his pen-



ultimate tenure year, Charles spent it preparing for his tenure package. In addition to the CSSP, Charles was also PI or co-PI on two other DARPA contracts, and was recently granted the NSF CAREER award. He's managed about twenty papers since the last newsletter, including a best paper award at ICML.

With a hint of irony, Charles was also named best teacher for the College of Computing, and received the Dean's Award for singular contribution to the College. The latter was in recognition for his efforts at CS curriculum reform that have gained some international notice.

More importantly, he's almost broken the 1000 DVD barrier, and has definitely broken the 11,000 comic

book and 16,000 song barriers. In addition, Charles had his twenty-year high school reunion, and so has broken the old coot barrier as well. He looks forward to yelling at kids to get off his lawn.

Despite his advanced years, he's also back to playing racquetball regularly and looks forward to teaching Joni more frisbee techniques.

<http://www.isbell.org/~isbell/>

'Tis The Season

Well, 2006 is over, and it is time to prepare for the new year. The plan for 2007 is to incorporate some family time into all of these trips Charles has to take. We will begin with a February cruise to the Bahamas (as a part of the Microsoft gaming conference... so, you know, for research). We also plan a couple of days next year for sleeping, and Joni has said something about playing with more toys. It looks to be an exciting time.

Anyway, thanks for sharing a little bit of news with us, and we wish you and yours a healthy and happy new year.

Charles, Sheila & Joni

<http://www.isbell.org/>

