



Happy New Year!



With three kids, two dogs and a partridge in a pear tree, the oldest cliché in the world holds true in our house: better late than never. We're happy to get anything done, ever, even if it's remembering to bring a new box of Kleenex upstairs from the store room. Our blog is called "The Fredricks Family Circus" for good reason.



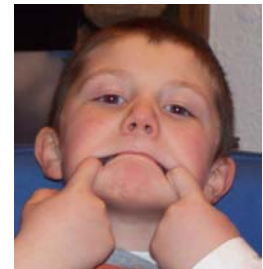
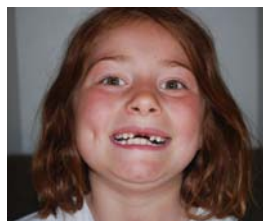
So, here it is, our Holiday Greeting, better late than never. We hope you had a wonderful and blessed year filled with love, laughter, good food and great people. We know ours was. It was busy beyond imagination but crazy fun.

Our family has a penchant for doing something BIG every February, and we did it again this year. Dexter the dog, a "schnorkie" (yorkie and schnauzer mix), joined our cozy home. He's sweet and smart, but also a complete alpha male who takes every opportunity to beat up on Tre. Tre's been dishing it back, though, and sometimes even initiates the rough play. We love them both, and Dexter is here to stay.



Saela (8), Martin (6) and Mira (2) are – *get ready for cliché #2* – growing like weeds. When Martin calls out to Saela, she answers with, "What's up, Bro?" When she's happy about something, she says, simply, "Yay." Martin compliments Dad's cooking with "Nicely done!," and when Mira's having fun she says, "Wee-haw!" When we tuck her in at night she whispers, "Don' shut da door." It's a sweet way to end every day.

Saela and Martin were both in soccer in the spring, and Martin started T-ball after school let out. In June, at the ripe old age of 7, Saela was away from home for a whole week. She attended Concordia College's Spanish Language Village, a total immersion camp, in northern Minnesota. She was homesick at first, but wound up having a great time learning all sorts of neat Spanish traditions, cooking, and language. We were so proud of her and missed her dearly. Miss Mira, meanwhile, tried to jump off the couch and land just on her left arm, which didn't work too well. She wound up with a buckle fracture and was in a cast/splint for six weeks.



Martin V played soccer again in the fall, and Martin IV was the assistant coach. Right now, both older kids are taking swimming lessons, Saela has ice skating and Martin's in basketball. Mira is our resident gymnast who does what she calls "nastics" every Thursday evening.



Over Memorial Day, Carol's entire side of the family met in the Twin Cities for a Twins/Red Sox (go Sox!!) game and all sorts of other shenanigans. We went to a farmer's market and ate the best steamed corn ever, went to a great seafood restaurant, did a walking tour of the city and ate at Hell's Kitchen before the game. Midway through the first inning, Cassi went to the bathroom where a few minutes later someone found her lying on the floor. Medics admitted her to Hennepin County Med due to extreme dehydration and she had to stay overnight. Everything turned out fine but it was a bummer to miss the Sox hammering the Twins.



The Brookings Arts Festival in July – a solid family tradition for years – was great fun, as always. We ate anything that's ever been deep fried in the history of oil, celebrated Mira's second birthday and, in a fitting tribute, tied green ribbons around trees donated in Cassi's Dad's name right there in the park. In August, on the anniversary of his passing, we released message balloons into the sky. We miss you Dad.



School started with all three kids at Dakota Montessori, but in October we switched Saela and Martin to public school. We had deliberated the possibility for a while, and it was time. Martin needed more boys to play



with and the kids needed to build on the Montessori foundation while expanding their horizons.

Thanksgiving found us in Logandale, Nev. in the beautiful home of Uncle Dan and Aunt Mitzi Bender, but not before we visited the Graceland Chapel in downtown Las Vegas. To celebrate our 15th anniversary year, we renewed our vows as Elvis and a showgirl. We were da bomb, baby! It was spectacularly tacky but an awesome good time. The following day we celebrated Saela's and Martin's birthdays in conjunction with the holiday. During our week in Nevada we had a great time meeting or reconnecting with family and visiting sites like Valley of Fire State Park and Hoover Dam. We even took the Dam tour and Carol ate a Dam hotdog.



As for us adult types, in June Cassi and Martin IV were able to attend a reading by one of our favorite humor authors, David Sedaris. While in the desert, we snuck away to take in Cirque de Soliel's "Ka" at the MGM Grande. Martin's business had a good year despite the economic downturn. He won an international Davey Award (for "small firms with big ideas") and continues to gain new clients, domestic and international. Cassi's still at MeritCare and will be going back to school in January to get her MBA with a healthcare concentration, which she'll finish in August 2011. She figures she doesn't have enough to do, might as well add homework.

Good tidings to you in 2010!
With love, The Fredricks Family Circus ☺