

February 2013

Greetings, Class of 1996!

I am gazing out my window at Four Peaks (just north of Fountain Hills, AZ where we live) and staring in awe at the beautiful snow-covered mountains. We had a surprise rainstorm here today that obviously brought a fluffier type of moisture to the mountains. It was a lovely sight, especially considering that we are dry here (like most places) and really needed some precipitation. I still find myself chuckling at the sight of flat, dry, saguaro-dotted desert landscapes backed with majestic mountain peaks. I'm not sure what I expected when we first moved to Arizona, but this place really does hold a charm and rugged beauty that I could have never imagined before landing here.

One of the other "charms" of this country is the diversity of wildlife that often finds itself at our doorstep, in spite of the fact that we live in a fairly large town. A few weeks ago, while driving home one night, we saw a coyote walking down the middle of our street. This week, it was a gorgeous (and rather large!) bobcat wandering down our driveway. Almost nightly we hear (and sometimes see) a great horned owl perched on our roof. Our 3-year-old says it "hoots lullabies" to get her to sleep. What a gift to see such amazing creatures up close (notice I said nothing about rattlesnakes...).

Arizona often feels pretty far away from my roots in South Dakota, but one thing that always helps me feel connected is the network of wonderful Augie folks that pop in and out of my life at various times and in various places. I have thought a lot lately about the gift of connection that we all have – to each other and to this special college. Not long ago, I ran across a former classmate's name while searching for information on a topic I was researching. This was a classmate from my freshman year interim class; I don't think we have seen each other or visited since then. Within 10 minutes of sending an email to say hello, I had an enthusiastic reply, nice note and an offer of assistance. The greatest part is that this is a common story among Augie alumni. I have heard many stories of how connections with other Augie folks (spanning many decades) have made a huge difference in someone's life.

I hope you also feel this gift of community as part of a really special network of amazing people. How cool is it that we shared four years of our lives together! It is a thrill to hear about the directions your lives have taken, the marriages and additions to your families, the jobs and opportunities and crazy trips, etc. etc. By the way, you don't have to have earth-shaking news to write in with an update! Jot a note to let everyone know how things are going and where in this small world you currently reside. It's a busy time in life, but please do take a moment and send a note to the [alumni office](#) or to me so we can share your news with others who are eager to hear about you.

Our family is well, and life is good. We sure enjoy our two little ones (almost 4 and 20 months), although they keep us running! Abby has recently discovered the world of princesses, and falls asleep every night dreaming of a trip to Disneyland. I've convinced her for the time being that we should not go until she is tall enough to go on all of the rides. That sounds convincing now, but the fact that she is already tall for her age and that her Dad is 6'6" may necessitate a new stall

tactic. Mataya loves doing everything her big sister does, and thinks she is big business now that she is also in “school” (swim school – they both take lessons). She is in love with her pink cowgirl boots. Must be part of her western heritage from my gene pool... Scott and I keep busy with work and the girls’ schedules. I’ve been doing some speaking about my book and have loved that. Otherwise, life is pretty normal for us (I can hear those who know us well laughing... :).

In [Augie news](#), the campus is continuing to grow in many ways. Last fall, plans were announced for the [largest building project in the college’s history](#) – a \$30 million science facility. This year 131 international students are on campus (the largest-ever number of students from abroad). On the flip side, during this year’s Interim [165 Augie students](#) packed their bags to study abroad in 32 different countries. Augustana is ranked fourth among NCAA Division II schools and 28th amongst 1066 active NCAA member schools in the NCSA Athletic Recruiting power rankings. (Augie is also the only school listed in the overall top 100 from South Dakota or North Dakota). Augie is still ranked among “[America’s Top Colleges](#)” by Forbes, Washington Monthly, The Princeton Review and US News. There are many more things to celebrate, but this gives you an idea of some of the good work continuing to happen on campus. You can help to support this good work at Augustana by [making your gift to the Augustana Fund](#) - every gift of every amount makes a difference and helps Augustana achieve those rankings that we alumni continue to be proud of! Check out more in the winter edition of [The Scoop](#).

Blessings to all of you, classmates. I hope you are well and that the coming year will be filled with great moments to celebrate down the road as cherished memories.

Peace,

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## Class Notes

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Matt Arveson and wife Stephanie are loving the joys and laughter that come from life with three young children. Matt took in the NCAA Final Four basketball games in New Orleans this past year and had fun competing in a sprint triathlon and fat bike race with his Dad. The Arvesons live in Boulder, CO.

Carol Goh and husband Drew are enjoying a busy life with three wonderful – and very busy - young boys. She recently enjoyed a delightful trip to Ecuador to visit an old friend. Carol is active in her church and community in Vancouver, WA.

Liz (Wilson) Kieffer and Joe Kieffer live in Rapid City where they practice dentistry together at Kieffer Family Dental. They are enjoying living in the Black Hills with their beautiful children Olivia (8), Benson (6), Sullivan (4) and Finnegan (2).

Chad Grev and wife Rebecca (Aden) Grev '99 welcomed a son, Jody Michael, on July 18, 2012.  
Congratulations, Grev family!