

2009 West Coast Gougers

New Years in January 2009 opened with some stability for the West Coast Gougers with no immediate move on the horizon. We celebrated New Years with friends three hours later than New York but found out they replay the ball drop out west on Pacific Time. Angela had started a new job in December at San Diego State University and spent the beginning of the year getting settled in while working hard on her master's thesis. We finally started to get used to California and fell in love with San Diego and the surrounding area. Tall James came to visit in February and we went on a tourist blitz to everything possible in four days. Visiting friends in LA was fun, but that place is too big for my tastes, though we still have to hit up Hollywood. Coming to March, I prepared to leave Angela and AJ for seven months as I transferred to a pre-commissioning ship in Pascagoula, Mississippi. I moved to the Gulf Coast into something of a culture shock from San Diego and got settled in to living on a ship in the shipyard... not the greatest experience but I made some good friends (who had cars!). Angela, freed from me, promptly embarked on a whirlwind of traveling and work. She managed to finish her master's project earning high praise from her professors, visited me several times, and went on a wine trip in North Carolina with some girlfriends. I got a weekend off to meet her in Virginia Beach to witness her graduation from Regent University and have a quick visit with all the family, then headed back to the Deep South. Angela flew out to Mississippi for the fourth of July, and we headed to Pensacola Beach, FL for a great weekend on white sand and clear water. Finally, the ship was ready to get underway and I embarked for a tour around South America. AJ at home apparently started to go a little more crazy than normal and managed to eat an entire tennis ball. I got the X-Ray's from Angela online while underway and had a good story to tell (AJ was ok, which made the story humorous). I got a chance to visit Brazil, Chile, and Peru on our way home, and as exciting as that was I realized how much I really do not like traveling without Angela. Every cool thing I witnessed or experienced I was thinking how much she would have enjoyed it too. Also, we worked virtually all the time sailing, earning every moment of liberty we receive. September rolled around and I missed the beginning of Football season. Meanwhile Angela took full advantage of her Aunt and Uncle moving to Las Vegas and spent several weekends there, including going to a Virginia Tech alumni event and a country concert. Finally I made it home and was greeted on the pier by my lovely wife! After saying hi to AJ we took a quick weekend to Blacksburg for the Nebraska game, witnessing a terrific moment in Lane Stadium history. I had to rush back home for work, focusing on getting the ship commissioned finally. Rod and Debbie came out for the ceremony and we had another whirlwind tour of San Diego, but there really is no running out of things to do here. As we prepare for our second Christmas here in California, we have much to look forward to. It has been another crazy year for us, but surprisingly stable as we still have the same home address! We invite you to come and visit us in San Diego over these next few months, as we LOVE sharing this amazing city with everyone we love. May you have a blessed and prosperous year!

Love Always, James, Angela, & AJ

Check out our new website: www.wanderinghokies.com

