

Merry Christmas 2012 Dear Family and Friends,

We have had another fun and exciting year and have so much to be grateful for. In keeping with Soley tradition, we are excited to share that we are, God-willing, expecting another little Soley in January of 2013. Everybody is healthy and the children are growing so quickly. We have been blessed in too many ways to count, again. God is so good! ☺

Nana Bogema hosted the annual week-long 4th of July family campout. She is a brave soul, as she opened her home to 23 guests! ☺ We had a wonderful time! The children swam and fished with their cousins, enjoying every minute of their precious time together. This fun was broken up only to catch a game of Apples 2 Apples with Nana and the Aunts and Uncles and, the ever-so-necessary, but very inefficient, sleep.

In late summer, Nana and Grandpa Soley took our family to Valley Fair for an amazing, memory-filled day. Our cheeks hurt by the end of the day from smiling; watching the children enjoy the rides and their Nana and Grandpa. We are so grateful for their generosity!

Nana Speikers, very bravely, opened her Florida home to us in October, where we stayed with her for a week. The week was action-packed, and rich with memories. We loaded up the van and made the 26 hour road-trip. There is no way to make 26 hours go fast, but Nate did a great job of wiring the new van such that the children were never went for entertainment. Nate took the big 4 fishing and as a result Libby caught a shark! We also enjoyed an amazing Red Fish dinner, compliments of our anglers and Captain Bill! Bev took us to the Naples Zoo where we were able to feed giraffe and take a boat tour of an island filled with monkeys. We also enjoyed swimming and shelling on Sanibel again. Florida (and Smyrna, Tennessee) will never be the same after our visit, but I think they will let us come back! ;)



Nate – Took the big 3 boys on Scout camping trips where they learned so much about being outdoorsmen. He went fishing with the children before work and even took the big 2 cat fishing late into the night. To our great delight, Nate landed the elusive walleye. It was an **event** and we all celebrated! He is busy with work, thankfully, but never too busy to wrestle, hug, and inspire. This fall he worked with the children on renewable energy science projects (fuel cell, wind turbines, and solar power). He is *our* super hero; even cooler than Captain America and Iron Man!

Andrew, 11 - He continues to strive for independence and is growing into an amazing young man. He had a great summer of camping adventures with his Dad and brothers, as well as his own adventure last winter, walking across the lake, alone, to meet Nate at the rental property. He is very responsible, and he knows his limits. It was very hard to watch him go and Nate and I prayed for his safety and watched from both ends as he... took his first step toward becoming a man. You could see the sense of accomplishment in his face and the gratitude for our trust in him... Bitter-sweet... He continues to surprise us with his thoughtfulness and is always willing to have fun with his little brothers and sister when we need his help.



William 9 - He surprised me by making a pair of earrings for my birthday... sooo sweet! He bought his first RC truck this fall, and, as you can imagine, he and his Dad enjoyed time behind the r/c together. He caught the most beautiful bass this summer; he is a natural fisherman. He started guitar this year and we are the benefactors of his talent! He is the first one to help, and the last to complain. I am thankful that he will still sit on my lap and cuddle, fear the day when this will end, and will savor each time now.

Libby 7 – The art and craft gene did not skip this girl. She is so creative! She cut out and began hand sewing a dress, made a couple of Barbie blankets, and a purse; she is even doing a little knitting! Much



to my chagrin, seldom can her room be found without shreds of yarn and material... but she is having fun! She is very thoughtful and generous; one night when we had gone out to dinner, she volunteered to pay for \$5.00 of it (\$5.00 of her \$6.00 allowance). She still loves gymnastics, and sings, and sings, and sings! She anxiously awaits the arrival of her little brother or sister, and has prayed unceasingly for a little sister. She showers us all with her love and gifts. She wraps at least one present for me a month, usually one of my books! ☺



Charlie 5 – Oh Charlie! This little boy is just a joy; tough as nails, but soft as a lamb. He is right next to Dad as often as seemingly possible. He is interested in gears, motors, and has a fishing rod in hand only when he is awake. He also purchased an RC truck and drives it whenever it is not broken. He lost his first 2 bottom teeth when using them to open a bottle of water. He has a beautiful and kind heart and his smile makes our hearts sing. He dressed up as Captain America for Halloween this year, and admires this super hero very much! He makes a shield out of everything, pot/pan covers, paper plates, Frisbees, tree bark, etc.

Thomas George (T.G.) 4 – This summer, when Charlie asked me to help take a fish off the line, I had my arms full and asked him to hold on for a sec. Thomas yelled “I’ve got it Mom!” Charlie agreed, “Ya, Mom, he can get it!” At which point I paused to watch, in disbelief, as our 3 year old took a fish off the line for Charlie. When he smiles, every part of him smiles. He was Iron Man for Halloween this year and what Iron Man has in brains and courage, T.G. has in heart. He looks forward to joining “scub scouts” some day! ☺



Patrick will be 2 in January - walking in early 2012, his first words were, Mom, Dad, HeL-Lo, hi, and Bibby (Libby). Immediately before an attempt at a naughty act, he stops, smiles wide, and says “Hi”! We have a super hero in the making, “Super Patrick”; dressed in his flour-sack towel cape, arms stretched out running around the main-level loop as we sing Super Patrick to the theme for Super Man. While soaring across the rooms, he banks hard into the kitchen, giggling and smiling; it is enough to soften even the hardest of hearts... priceless. He carries babies around the house and hugs them, and points to my belly and says “baby!” He too is ready for the January addition to our family! ☺

All is well with me. I continue to thank God for the privilege of staying home with our children. It is such a miracle to watch these little people grow into the young men and woman God is calling them to be... even more exciting to play a vital role in God’s plan for each of them. Nate and I love being married, and love being the Mom and Dad to an amazing quiver full! Our home is seldom quiet, never boring, and very often filled with laughter... we continue to thank God for spoiling us so, and are very hopeful for what the future holds for us all. We are also thankful for our friends and family... for each of you, for playing a special role in our lives.



Together, our family enjoyed a year filled with memories... slumber parties, r/c trucks, camping, farmer’s markets, church festivals, music, slip n’ slides, fishing, swimming, church programs, book clubs, camping, field trips, road races, service work, jungle gyms, reading, outdoor adventures, arts and crafts, swimming lessons, rodeos, zoos, pets, carnivals, laughter, and love. We are thankful for family and friends like you and any part you may have played in all of the above!

God’s blessings to you all! Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

The Soley Family – Nate & Kristen, Andrew, William, Libby, Charlie, Thomas-George, Patrick & Baby #7

