



MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM THE GILLS

We hope this letter finds you well and enjoying the end of the holiday season. Just when we think we've had a full year, another one comes that tops it. 2007 was no exception and hopefully 2008 will be a bit quieter - we'll see...

At the end of 2006 we were waiting with anticipation the arrival of our first born. Well we kicked off the year with a bang on 10 Jan when, while relaxing on the couch in front of the TV, Davina's water broke. Corinne Cecilia arrived 74 short hours later on 13 Jan, all 7 pounds and 1 ounce of her. Life has not been the same since. Grandma and Grandpa Leccese were our first visitors when Corinne was 2 weeks old. They visited for 2 weeks as Davina and Robert adjusted to parenthood and Corinne adjusted to life on the outside of the womb. Robert was busy updating the website with the latest photos and videos and grocery shopping for the family.

In Mar Grandma and Grandpa Gill arrived for a 2 month visit. They stayed with us for a while and when we bored them they hopped a train and traveled around Europe. We joined them on a trip to Venice, Pisa, and Rome in Apr. It was great and of course the food was wonderful - even better than the Olive Garden! ☺ Corinne was quite an attraction. The Italians had to touch her toes and her head and bless her at every turn. The little "bambina" was right at home with all of the attention.

In May we celebrated Corinne's baptism with all four of her grandparents and her Great Aunt Carol present. It was a beautiful day and a beautiful ceremony. She didn't even cry when the priest poured water on her head. (It helped that she was drinking a bottle of milk the whole time.)

We knew sooner or later we would have to brave an airplane flight with a baby so we went for the gusto and traveled to AK for our niece Skye's wedding in Jun. The ceremony was outside and the weather was perfect - no rain! Corinne did her best not to steal all of the attention from the bride. On our way to AK, due to a delayed flight out of Germany and missing our connection in Portland, we had an unexpected and pleasant visit with Davina's sister Katherine - who lives in Portland. After AK we flew to Washington to spend a few days with Robert's sister and her family. They enjoyed meeting Corinne as well. From Washington we took the usual route to Ohio to visit with the rest of Robert's family. It was so nice to see everyone. Finally we boarded the plane in Cleveland to head back to Germany.

Shortly after returning to Germany, Robert relinquished command of his squadron in Jul at a formal change of command ceremony. He didn't skip a beat and started his new job on the United States Air Forces in Europe headquarters staff the next day. He misses the day to day interaction with the troops, but not the extra long hours and the late night phone calls. We are now projected to be in Germany until Jun 2010 - one less move!



The summer was cool and wet so there was a lot of growth in the yard. We had bumper crops of sour cherries, rhubarb (great pie and jam), raspberries, and black berries (also great pie and jam). It was so cool that Corinne's new blow up pool sat in the box and is still in the box - better luck next year.

Sep was a quiet month as we relaxed from a busy summer and geared up for fall. Sep brought to an end Davina's time playing the piano at the chapel in Baumholder (a 45 min drive one way). Now she only plays at our chapel on Ramstein Air Base. In Oct we welcomed Davina's Aunt Vivien and sisters Katherine and Jeanne for an extended weekend. They, along with a friend from OH, visited following a tour in Florence, Italy. Their stay was short, but enjoyable. Also, in Oct we celebrated 10 wonderful years of marriage.

Robert's parents joined us at the beginning of Nov to celebrate his promotion to Lieutenant Colonel. It was a nice ceremony as he reflected on his time in the Air Force so far and the people who have influenced him along the way. Later in Nov we took a quick 1 day trip to France and then headed to OH for Thanksgiving. We started in Beavercreek with Davina's aunts and her parents. We enjoyed visiting and spending time together.

Robert and Davina's friends Catherine, Bill, and Susan were able to come with their children for a fun evening of dining and chasing little kids around the house! We then headed to Akron to celebrate with Robert's parents, brother, sisters, brothers-in-law, sister-in-law, and ten nieces and nephews. The total was 21 and it was great fun! Corinne loved her cousins and they loved her. Robert's parents' house almost burst at the seams. We ate well and enjoyed the family time. Robert also had the opportunity to attend his 20th high school reunion. He liked seeing old faces and talking to old friends. Where did the time go?!

After returning to Germany we prepared for Davina's sister Gloria's visit and for Corinne's first Christmas which was wonderful. After Christmas we headed to Paris for 4 days...it was cool and cloudy but it was nice seeing sights like the Eiffel Tower, The Louvre, and Notre Dame. Early in the New Year we will be getting ready for what else - Corinne's first birthday with both sets of Grandparents visiting and Davina's sister Katherine!

May the peace and joy of the holiday season stay with you and your family throughout 2008. Happy New Year!

Love, *Robert & Davina* ...& Corinne

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