



# Gill Gazette

Christmas 2011 – Edition 1 – News From Missouri



## Corinne Turns Four and Faelynn Lands in Hospital – Too Much Cake?

On 13 January, Corinne turned four years old. We celebrated with a yummy ice cream cake. That night Faelynn started having trouble breathing. In the morning, she was diagnosed with the croup and sent home to

rest. In the evening she really had trouble breathing (...sometimes stopping) and the ambulance was called. She was whisked away to the local hospital and then sent to Kansas City by helicopter. She had severe croup caused by a parainfluenza virus and an ear & lung infection. It also didn't help that she was cutting three front teeth simultaneously. Davina's parents quickly flew to Missouri to stay with Corinne. After a week in the hospital (including three days in intensive care) she was well enough to go home.



## Faelynn Starts to Walk and Turns One ... Despite the Blizzard!

After Davina's parents left in January, her sister Gloria came for a 2-week visit to help



out and celebrate Faelynn's first birthday. Days before her birthday Faelynn started to walk all on her own. There was also a huge blizzard which made it uncertain if Robert's parents would make it for the big party. Well, right on schedule the roads were



cleared, the guests arrived, and the safari-themed party was on. Everyone had a great time – including Faelynn! Robert's parents stayed for a week and we had a great visit.

## May Welcomes Davina's Parents and Attack Fudgesicles?

In May, Davina's parents drove from Pennsylvania for a nice visit. We set-up and opened the pool with the warmer weather. Rob snuck in his birthday without really noticing another year had crept up on him. We also had a strange incident where Corinne innocently was eating a fudgesicle and it ended up covering her whole body. Luckily, we were able to save her and she is fine now.



## The Gill Family Grows!

With the two girls, 2011 just flew by and they wouldn't stop growing. But, the girls weren't all that was growing. In September we learned that Davina is pregnant with child number three and a due date of 3 June 2012. Corinne is hoping for a boy. She says "there are too many girls [even the dogs!] and Daddy is the only boy."



## Reflections On The Past And The Future

As we reflect on another year in another house (our fourth together) in another state (our third plus Germany) we think about how some things change and some things stay the same no matter where you live.

*Things that change ...*

- Address
- Location of Disney and Nickelodeon on the TV dial
- Layout of the grocery store
- Quality of the internet
- Time change between here and there
- Having a tornado shelter in the garage
- Actually having to use the tornado shelter in the garage

*Things that stay the same ...*

- E-mail address and phone number
- Diapers still need changing
- Laundry and dishes still need washing
- Lawns need mowing
- Snow needs shoveling
- Dogs need to be fed and scooped up after
- Not being able to visit everyone we would like to as often as we would like
- Family and friends
- Good people and good neighbors

And finally, finishing the Christmas letter after Christmas and hopefully before New Years'.

Happy 2012!

## Corinne Joins the Air Force?

Corinne spent a day trying out the Air Force. She had the pleasure to dress up in a uniform and join her father for a day in the Air Force (...a somewhat modified day for a kid). This opportunity was because of National Take Your Child to Work Day and as long as the activities were fun (such as visiting the fire station and water treatment plant, & flying the B-2 Stealth Bomber simulator...which her father crashed when he tried to land on hangar roofs), the Air Force

was a great place to work. When it came to meetings and briefings, well Corinne states "they were kind of boring." No child labor laws were violated.



## Robert Heats Up Re-enlistment

Robert accepted an unusual request to re-enlist one of the base fire fighters in the middle of a fire. So, he suited up and head-



ed into the flames. Afterwards he helped put out the fire. Needless to say it was a memorable event for everyone involved.

## Davina's Sister Katherine Stops by for a Visit

Over Labor Day weekend we enjoyed a visit from Aunt Kat – Davina's sister. She said she just wanted to hang out and spend time with her nieces. Well, it seems they spent hours and hours in the pool and at the playground. She even sent Robert and Davina out on a "date night". It was an unusual and fun event. All in all we can't wait to see her again!




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## Gill Gaggle 2011 Overflows with Giggles and Grins



In July, Robert's parents, siblings, and their children (just 22 of us) descended on Copley, OH for a family reunion. A great event was planned with games, a scavenger hunt, plenty of food, and a photo shoot. The 12 cousins loved spending time together and getting to know one another. The parents & siblings enjoyed talking and catching up.

**“Big” Red Riding Hood & “Little” Bad Wolf Spotted in Missouri**

For Halloween this year Corinne decided to be Little Red Riding Hood. Well didn't the website advertise a cute Big Bad Wolf costume too? So you can guess what Faelynn was. They really enjoyed their costumes – especially the sparkly red shoes. Robert trick-or-treated around the neighborhood with the girls while Davina rationed out the Halloween candy to the hundreds of kids who flooded the streets.



**School Days, School Days: Corinne Completes First Year of Pre-school and Starts Second!**

Corinne thoroughly enjoyed her first year of pre-school at Sacred Heart Pre-school. The class took a fun farm field trip in April where Corinne touched every animal and any animal. The year ended with a cowboy/cowgirl themed party. In August, she returned to Sacred Heart for her second year of pre-school. The class visited Powell Gardens in September, the pumpkin patch in October, and the firehouse in November, and caroled around Warrensburg in December. This is my kind of pre-school!



**“Cousin Kelly” Marries in Colorado Springs**

We headed west to Colorado Springs for “Cousin” Kelley’s wedding to Marian. It



was great to see Kelly’s family and to see where we once lived. (Gee, has it been over ten years since we left?) The mountains are still beautiful. The wedding and the recep-

tion were beautiful and fun. Corinne really enjoyed dancing with the other young cousins and friends. After the weekend it was back on the road to Missouri.

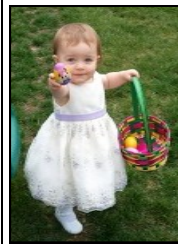
Oh, but we can't forget that on the way home Davina turned a significant milestone – 40. We celebrated with dinner at California Pizza Kitchen outside of Kansas City. Yummy!



**Springtime Brings Easter**

In April we enjoyed a nice Easter complete with an egg hunt at the base park.

We woke up early Easter morning and found a big pink egg in our front yard compliments of our neighbors. We also hunted for baskets that were hidden in the china cabinet and the



dryer. After church we had a yummy brunch and then home to an egg hunt in the backyard. The girls (including Pele and Alexis) had fun hunting for eggs.

**Family from PA Visit for Turkey Day**

Davina’s parents and sister, Gloria scheduled a week-long trip over the Thanksgiving holiday. Robert cooked up a small storm and we feasted. The girls enjoyed playing



with Grandma, Grandpa, and Aunt Gloria. The visitors also witnessed the almost overnight transformation from fall decorations to Christmas decorations. To paraphrase Gloria “It was like two holidays for the price of one.”

**Looking Ahead to 2012**

As we look ahead to 2012 we can see it has all the makings for another good year. To kick it off Robert will deploy to Kandahar, Afghanistan in mid-Jan and return in late May. His return should be just before Baby Gill is born. Faelynn will be tackling toddler-hood as she turns 2 and Corinne will be turning the magical age of 5 and beginning kindergarten. We hope you and your family have a happy holiday season and a prosperous 2012.

**News Alert!**

**Davina Turns 40!**

Yes 40...4 decades...It is hard to believe. Though she was very nervous about the approach of the event, she handled it well and has adapted well to her roll as a “forty-something.”

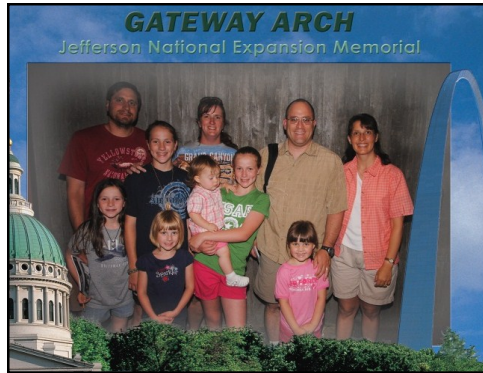
## Gills of Dayton Travel West

July brought some great visitors to Missouri. At the beginning of July, Robert's brother, Donny and his family arrived on



our doorstep for the weekend. They were winding up their nearly month-long adventure traveling across the United States. Everyone relaxed at our house for a day enjoying the pool and then headed to St. Louis to visit the Arch and a converted shoe factory

that is now a museum/play park – City Museum...with more twists and turns throughout that place then we could fathom. The cousins had a good time playing together and the adults did all they could to keep up!



## Christmas in Missouri

Christmas this year brought not only Santa bearing gifts, but Grandma and Grandpa



Gill from Ohio. They were on the first leg of a three-stop journey to visit Robert, his brother Donny, and his sister Amie. Those dreaming of a "White Christmas" were sorely disappointed as the weather was dry, sunny, and in the 40s. We enjoyed watching Corinne on Christmas Eve in the church Christmas pageant as she played a shepherd. Christmas morning brought many surprises including a nice trampoline for the now converted garage playroom. (Sorry, Rob, you have to scrape on frosty

mornings now.) Everyone was quite pleased. Although Corinne was extremely concerned as to why Daddy received coal from Santa. Faelynn just enjoyed unwrapping gifts and playing with the new toys – especially the big stuffed Dora doll and the cute round Dora pillow.

For the rest of the visit the girls enjoyed playing games, doing puzzles, and reading books with Grandma and Grandpa. We celebrated Corinne's birthday early with Grandpa and Grandma and took in dinner and a movie. And with the warm weather we attempted our first geo-caching in the neighboring Knob Noster State Park. We found two before it was too dark to see anymore. A third one was in the parking lot of the Mexican restaurant we went to afterwards. All in all it was a great visit and we look forward to seeing them again.



## Pet Notes — Pele and Alexis

Pele and Alexis want everyone to know they are doing fine and enjoying their retirement years. Pele is now 14 years old and Alexis is 13 years old. They have pretty much left their watchdog role and for the most part sleep and show up for mealtime. Alexis

loved summer in Missouri because it was nice and hot. Pele enjoyed the cold and snow of the winter. They did show a burst of energy when there was a mole in the yard, but when the mole was gone they returned to their senior dog ways. They look forward to a healthy and relaxing 2012.

## The Montowskis Pass Through Missouri

Later in July we greeted Robert's brother-in-law Tim and his three kids. They were on the road from Washington State heading to Ohio. After they detoured around to cross a very swollen Missouri River, we enjoyed relaxing and swimming in our patio pool.



The cousins enjoyed playing, swinging, and running around in the sprinklers. After departing Missouri, they headed east to Ohio ahead of us for Gill Gaggle II (see related article on page 2).



## Focus on Faelynn

Our dear Faelynn has made quite the metamorphosis this year from crawling baby to running and talking toddler. It is hard to believe what a difference a year makes at her age. She watches and imitates everything sister does (which is mostly good stuff). She also has a distinct mind of her own. She loves all things Dora and to dress-up. She repeats everything we say and especially enjoys big words like Pennsylvania. Her soft spot is for all things sweet. In particular, she gravitates towards chocolate. In the future, she looks forward to participating in activities she only watches Corinne do now – dance, tumbling, swim class. What does 2012 hold for our almost 2-year-old?



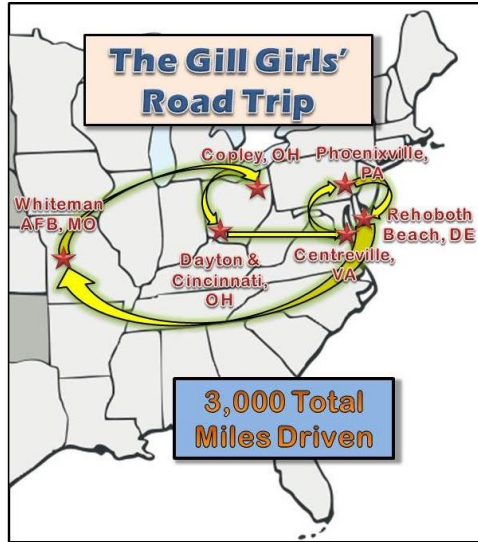
# Davina and the Girls Hit the Open Road...For 23 Days

Well the plan was for Davina and the girls to leave Missouri for a few weeks so Robert could read good old Air War College. The three girls headed east and visited many faces and places. Next time we have even more faces to see. We started in Copley to be with Robert's parents and family. Then we headed to Cincinnati for a



great day with Catherine our college friend and her husband and two sons. Next we went north to Dayton for a few days with Davina's Aunt Carol and Aunt Vivien. Davina's dad and sister Gloria joined up with us there to get some extra time with Corinne and Faelynn. From Dayton we were off to Northern Virginia to visit friends from Germany who now live in England - the

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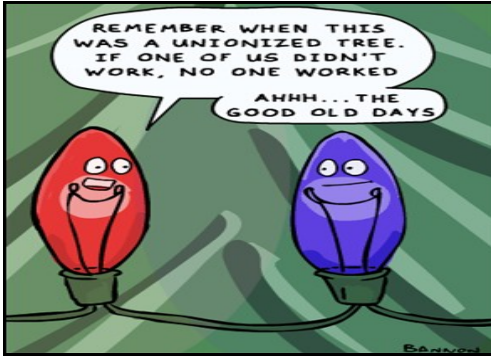
Blooms. We had a great time swimming and taking a Metro excursion to the Smithsonian American History museum. Who knew that five kids under five could be so much fun on a train! From Virginia we traveled north to Davina's parents in Pennsylvania. We visited a few days and then headed with them to Rehoboth Beach in Delaware for a few more days. Oh, how nice to see the ocean and feel the sand between the toes. From there we were on the I-70 express route back to Missouri to pick up Robert for the rest of the adventure.



**LOTS OF MILES!**  
**LOTS OF SMILES!**



## Comics



## Sports Extra! Corinne Shoots and Scores Big!

Throughout the year Corinne continued to participate in instructional sports leagues. In January, she took on basketball. Despite the snow cancelling several sessions, she learned to dribble, pass, and shoot. In June, Corinne grabbed her bat and pink glove and headed to the old baseball diamond. She learned the basics of throwing, catching, batting, and running the bases in the right direction. Finally, in September she started her second season of instructional soccer. Much time was spent on kicking and passing. There was even a parent-child “game” at the end of the season...which of course the parents lost.

In addition to the sports leagues, Corinne continued to take tumbling and dance classes. Out of all her activities, Corinne enjoys tumbling and dance the most. All in all, it was a fun time of learning, laughing, and having fun!



## School Year Activities Wind Down and Summer Activities Wind Up

June was a transition from school year activities to summer activities. Corinne capped off her first year of dance class with a recital on the big stage at the local university. There was defiantly no stage fright for this little girl. It was quite cute.

She also started summer swim lessons where she did not want to put her head un-

der water and ended her fall swim lessons with no problem dunking her head. She also enjoyed Vacation Bible School.

For the fall, Corinne enrolled in another year of dance, where they do half tap and half ballet. She enjoys it so much.

