

In 2004 Mark and I set off to celebrate our tenth anniversary with a two-week trip to Fiji where the weather is sunny and warm, the waterfalls beautiful, the diving above average but "current-y", and the people exceptionally friendly once you get over the fact that some have relatives that ate people. Fiji is, after all, the Cannibal Isles, and if you're lucky you'll not get eaten. If you're very lucky, you'll stay at a place that has spears, clubs and--my favorite--forks hanging on the wall just to keep you thinking about being eaten. And if you're very, very, very lucky, you will find these items for sale. Things that are for sale are dangerous for Mark, and we now own a club and fork, both of which make our friends a wee nervous when we invite them for...I mean to...dinner.



While in Fiji, we made some new friends from Hawaii and Indiana, saw some underwater critters we'd not seen before, and took our first self-portrait underwater. We also had our underwater camera gear fall apart on us, and I will not soon forget standing on the ocean floor with several o-rings in my hand while a small black-tip reef shark came swimming up, checked us out, perhaps deemed us too stupid to eat, and swam on. A giant wrasse--in fact THE wrasse

Mark had so very badly wanted to see--also approached while we stood on the ocean floor gathering the parts of our camera gear.

But who needs good pictures to remember a tenth anniversary...especially when it turns out only to be your ninth? My mom's the one who informed us we'd celebrated our tenth a year early.

In the summer, Mark, Holly (14), Arthur (17) and I headed west to make our third assault on Mt. Wilse in Montana, a mountain at 11,833 feet. During the two previous attempts in 2002 and 2004, we overcame altitude sickness, back spasms, getting disoriented, a turned ankle, numerous thunderstorms, and watching from afar as our tent rolled down a hillside (Arthur having caught it when it was five feet from falling into a lake). The fact that the tent held all of our sleeping bags was only part of what was bothersome; the other part was that we'd been camping and hiking so many times, only boneheads would set up a tent in a wide, open, mountain meadow without tying it down.





In 2004, we finally got things figured out. We drove up a Jeep trail as far as our vehicle would allow, set up a base camp and tied lines from the tent to some heavy rocks so our tent couldn't roll or blow away. We also got up early so we could return to our base camp before the usual afternoon thunderstorm. We also left our heavy camera gear, crampons, ice axes and helmets behind.

Hiking with only the essentials, we reached the summit in time to enjoy blue skies and a great view. We also found a pile of rocks called a cairn and a weatherproof container for leaving notes for other hikers. The Mt. Wilse container was empty. Wanting to leave some message to the outside world as to our accomplishment, and with no pen or paper in our possession, Holly ripped off each of our underwear

tags and put them in the container. So, if you ever get to the peak of Mt. Wilse, look for the container at the cairn and add your underwear tags to ours.

Other than that? Holly is swimming and has started driver's training. Arthur is swimming, running, and working, and will be a Spartan next year. Becky is working for Detroit Diesel and contemplating grad school. Willi is  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the way through her Master's in social work.

Mark loves his job as a professor at Alma College. My brother found a new job in New York. My sister started a new company to help you get organized, called simplify101. My dad continued to rack up skeet shooting awards. My mom went lighthouseing and was constantly on the go. My dogs are spoiled. We have 5 jumping mice in three cages on our kitchen counter that shred all of our junk mail. As usual, we have little usual to report.

Have a great holiday season.

