



2013 Sucked!



Every year I write a Christmas newsletter to let my friends and family know what's happened during the year. It's going to be tough to write about 2013. This year has been one of the most eventful in my entire life, and not all the events were good.

Normally, I organize the newsletter by members of the family and what they're up to. This year, I'm going to do it chronologically.

January - By January 2, I was 35 pounds lighter and feeling awesome.

Then on January 15, 16 days before his 5th birthday, we lost Roc. It was one of the most heart wrenching things I've ever been through in my life. He was one of the most awesome kids ever. His service was beautiful, and friends and family filled the chapel to standing room only. Even the service at the cemetery was filled with family and friends. It ended with a balloon release. On his birthday, January 30, there was a worldwide balloon release. People from So. Korea, Florida, Washington, Colorado, Georgia, and all over Texas released balloons to Roc in heaven. We all had so many plans for him, but God's plans trumped ours.

February - Andy moved to York, Pennsylvania, February 1, so I'm back to being on my own. He's taking online courses, studying to be an English teacher, and he's doing his best to maintain a high GPA. I spent February getting used to living alone.

March - Kaycie turned 31, and Andy turned 29. My babies aren't babies anymore.

We lost my Dad on March 28. He seemed to be getting better, but before we knew it, he was gone. We didn't even get to enjoy having him back in our neck of the woods because he was in and out of the hospital from October until he died. He wanted a simple service, so we only had a visitation and a private burial. I really miss him. He had some great stories, a great laugh and a great sense of humor. He's with the love of his life now.

April - Katherine turned 11! She's taller than me, and she's still making good grades, and she's very busy with extra-curricular activities.

One afternoon, toward the end of the month, I was turning into my street and was rear-ended. My Jaguar withstood the impact pretty well. My lower back and neck - not so much. I visited the chiropractor through May and June, and I was released the end of June. My doctor and I were surprised that I healed so quickly. I think it was because of all the work I was doing on my house, and the fetching and toting.

May/June - I started renovations on my house. It started with new attic vents. After they were installed, we had to paint them, and the paint I picked didn't match the house, so the whole house ended up being repainted. We broke the garage door, so it had to be replaced. Then I decided to redo the inside of the house as well. At the end of May, my house was completely emptied. Except for my dining table, microwave, a blowup bed, and a suitcase of clothes, everything was in a POD on the driveway. We completely stripped the floors of carpet and linoleum, pulled all the wallpaper down, painted the entire house, ceiling to floor, including the trim and all doors, acid stained the concrete, and moved everything back into the house the end of June. I got new appliances and granite counter tops; we painted the kitchen cabinets and added handles. Then we installed bookcases in the front room. I now have the library I've always wanted, and my house is awesome! I love it!

June 2 - Rex was baptized at St. George. My pastor Fr. Ram, who officiated at Kaycie & Jeff's wedding, made the occasion very special with a beautiful sermon. We celebrated with delicious barbeque and cake afterward.

July - Rex turned 1 year old July 9. Kaycie and Jeff had a 'stache party for him. Mustaches were everywhere, including on some of the guests. The invitations were adorable, and the house was packed with kids and friends. Rex had a good time. He's so good natured and absolutely adorable.

The next week, Kaycie announced that they were pregnant, due Feb. 24!!

I spent \$5100 on the Jaguar in a month, and when I was driving it home after another trip to the shop, the transmission started acting up; that was it! I lived the dream, and it was now a nightmare. I traded it in the next day for a 2011 Toyota Camry. I was amazed at how smooth and quiet the Camry is compared to the Jaguar. That's when I found out the value of the Jaguar dropped significantly because of the accident, dang CarFax. Now, instead of making me feel like the Queen of Sheba, my car is like every other one on the road. But it has a good service record, and the gas mileage is awesome!

August - Carolyn, my sister-in-law, lost her 5-year battle with cancer. She was 52 years old and bigger than life. She was really an amazing woman with drive, personality plus, and a great sense of humor. We will miss her.

September - It was time to take a vacation! I visited Joyce, a long-time friend, in Atlanta, GA. My visit there was only 3 days, and I had a blast. Joyce is a great hostess, and we enjoyed catching up with each other.

Then I went to Jacksonville to visit with my mother-in-law. I stayed there a week, helping her get ready for a neighborhood garage sale, visiting St. Augustine, shopping, catching up, and playing with her 3 adorable dogs. The school where Carolyn taught dedicated a climbing wall to her because she fought to find it, get it, and build it, and I was there for that ceremony. The things everyone said about Carolyn were inspiring. I began to feel pretty insignificant.

October - Back at the ranch, we replaced the tile in the front entry and the front porch of the house with a beautiful multi-colored porcelain that goes with the walls and the floors. We changed the front porch step into a raised stoop. It really is beautiful.

For Halloween, I went to Kaycie & Jeff's. Rex was the Cookie Monster, and he was adorable. He figured out the routine early on and didn't mind going up to doors to get candy. I manned the candy bowl at their house again. When they returned, I answered the door wearing my Halloween mask, which is clear except for eye make-up and lipstick - really pretty scary. All 3 took a step back, and their eyes were huge.

November - I got back home after babysitting Rex to discover my front door had been kicked in, and my TV was missing. All doors and drawers except in the kitchen and bathrooms had been opened. My dresser drawers were all out and dumped on the floor. A pillowcase was used to take my laptop, Chrome book tablet, TV, all my jewelry, my digital bathroom scale, and my Cabbage Patch doll. I felt so violated. Now I have a working alarm, a new front door and a keyed storm door, plus we replaced the door to the garage. I also had a Strike Master installed in the front door frame to thwart kicking it in again. I feel very safe and secure. I haven't replaced any of the missing items yet. Although insurance replaced the doors, my deductible on the missing items is so high that I didn't get enough to replace anything that was taken.

On November 25, I celebrated 36 years at SwRI. Yes, I'm still working. According to TIAA-CREF, I should work another 7 years - dang! I planned to work 6. Plus I had to add another \$200/mo to my account.

I got to spend Thanksgiving with my sister's family and my daughter's family in law. All in all, it was a great day.

It's **December**, and I'm ready for life to settle down a bit. I put up my Christmas tree the day after Thanksgiving, (the usual day after Thanksgiving ritual). It took a week or so to put ornaments on it. In addition to the tree, I decorated a few tables. My grandfather's mounted antlers that are hanging by the front door now have ornaments hanging off them. So cute.

I had to get away from all the sappy Christmas movies I've been watching so I could get something done. I recorded enough to watch for a year.

My social life has picked up a bit. Of course, it's taking some doing on my part. Doodle.com has become my friend. We are all so busy, and if I've learned anything this year, it is that we have to live in the present. We HAVE to make time for those who are important to us.

I set up dinner with a few friends at Zio's, and we had so much fun catching up. It has been more than a year since 4 of us have been able to get together, and that's toooooo long. I invited 5 to join us, but one had the flu, and the other had other plans already. Another couple of friends and I have struggled to get together, so I set up a meeting with them using Doodle.com again. It's a great way to find out when people are available. A high school friend is having a party that should be fun. It's awesome to have a group of people who are the exact same age (within a year) to visit with. We have some of the same histories, some of the same health issues, family issues, etc.

A couple of work friends came for lunch last week, and that's when I realized I have to find all my dishes. I didn't have any glasses to serve drinks because I gave away all the jelly and the 25-cent Walmart glasses, but I forgot to replace them.

I lost 35 pounds between Sept. 7 and Jan. 2, and I've only lost 15 since then. Actually, I've lost and gained the same 5 pounds for 6 months. 2013 was painful, and my nutritionist has been such a big help. She offered wisdom when I needed it.

I don't want to wish the rest of the year away. Life is not perfect, and it can throw a few curve balls, but it's all we have. None of us is going to get out of it alive. I plan to make the best of the rest of the month so I'll have a good start to 2014. I might even exercise.

Thank you for your love and support through this past year. I couldn't have done it without you. Having someone to talk to, spend time with, and share a hug means so much. I am so rich because of my family, my church family, and my dear friends. Let's not be strangers.

Alana

Visit my personal development blog - <http://aww-pda.blogspot.com/>
or my weight loss journey blog - <http://awwmusings.blogspot.com/>
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