

twentyTWELVE

2012, for us, was mostly about trying new things. In an effort to be brief (which I'm sure I'll fail at), here are some lists of the things that made up our year...

ARCHERY

- All three boys got compound bows in January and were invited to join our local JOAD team (Junior Olympic Archery Development). They had practice at least once a week and a tournament each month during the JOAD season (Oct – Apr).
- Micah started out in the yeoman division (under 9) and took third in each of the four tournaments he participated in at the start of 2012.
- Micah is still a yeoman and is now taking first in each of his tournaments. (As of this writing, we've had three for this season.)
- Asher & Noah started out as bowmen (9-11) and didn't set as high of scores as their brother...but were shooting from twice the distance. ;)
- Asher has now opted out of JOAD (just recently), though he continues to go to the range and shoot with his brothers weekly just for fun.
- Noah has moved up to the cub division (12-14) and has been working hard at outfitting his bow and honing his skills. He set a new personal best of 268 (out of a possible 300) recently and is stoked.
- Nathan and I both got bows as well and practice with the boys at the range every so often. (Nathan's bow is a compound like the boys, but mine is a more traditional looking recurve bow.)

KARATE

- Asher & Micah continue to enjoy classes at Karate West. We've been going about 2.5 years now.
- Asher started the year as a green belt and has since earned his way up to high blue belt. (Purple and blue were in between.)
- Micah began 2012 as a yellow with black stripe belt and will make it to green belt by year's end. (Given his age, he advances slower than Asher and has many more intermediate belts between solid colored belts.)
- Both boys did great in their February tournament, taking first in forms plus a first in sparring for Asher.
- In May, Asher joined the Karate West Demo Team and couldn't be happier. The team performs at least monthly at promotions and the occasional outside event. They learn routines to music and get to use weapons in some of them. (Both of which make Asher happy.)
- As part of joining Demo Team, Asher also joined the Black Belt Club...which means he's allowed, too, to participate in special weekly classes to learn weapons forms.
- In case you're counting, that means Asher's at Karate West each week twice for class, once for Black Belt Club, and once or twice for Demo Team. (You can see why Asher's no longer doing JOAD.)
- So far, Asher's only cut himself once in the head with the kamas (like hand-held size scythes) and knocked himself a few times with the nunchuks. ;)
- In September, Asher decided to compete in one of the regional tournaments in Denver and came home with third in traditional forms.
- Micah's gearing up to start the sparring classes once he earns his green belt and his classmates should be apprehensive about this. ;)

SWIM TEAM

- Noah continues to participate in swim team during the school year at our nearby local gym.
- He started 2012 on the red (beginner/intermediate) team and moved to the black (intermediate/advanced) team in April.
- He opted not to participate in swim team over the summer, as summer swim team involved practices five days a week at 7:00 in the morning (as opposed to twice a week at 5:15 in the afternoon during the school year). ;)
- During the school year, they have internal meets and his times have been steadily improving.
- He prefers to swim backstroke and freestyle, though has added IM's (all four strokes) and butterfly recently.
- (Asher and Micah took swim lessons during the summer. Asher made great progress, enough that he was asked to join the swim team for the fall also. But. Asher's got enough on his plate. ;) Micah's still working on not sinking but is getting better, lol.)

RUNNING

- I made it to my goal of running 500 miles this year! That was in early November, so it'll definitely be higher by year's end. (But I'm realistic enough to know that the holidays and the cold weather have a negative effect on my mileage, lol.)
- I managed, too, to complete two half marathons! My first ever half was here in Fort Collins in May and I managed a decent time considering it was my first ever. My second half was the Georgetown to Idaho Springs Half with my pal Molly...worse time but far better company. ;)
- The boys participated again in the Healthy Kids Fun Run series here...running about five one-mile fun runs from May to October-ish.

- As part of that, though, they opted to turn one of those fun runs into a full 5K, so we ran our first 5K as a family in August. (And Micah would be delighted to inform you that, of the five of us, he finished second.)
- After that, Nathan and I braved the obstacles in a local Mud Brigade 5K and had a blast with friends! (During this, too, Nathan convinced me to give those five finger shoes a try, as he'd been loving his. I actually find myself wearing mine somewhat regularly now, and Nathan rarely wears anything else.)

EXPERIENCES

- In January, we attended Mythbusters LIVE here at the local event center and it was fabulous! Our boys are huge Mythbusters fans.
- Field trips this year have included Missile Site Park, Rawhide Energy Station, the local kite festival, the Da Vinci Exhibition in Denver, Fiske Planetarium's events for the solar eclipse in May, hiking in Rocky Mountain National Park, Cheyenne Frontier Days rodeo (where we also saw the Thunderbirds air show), New West Fest (where Asher's Demo Team performed), the Denver Zoo, the Denver Museum of Nature & Science and plenty of other things I can't remember right now.
- Nathan and I bottled our own wine.
- Boys saved for and purchased their own iPods.
- Noah got contacts. (He says he's just glad he didn't need correction until he was able to go straight into contacts, though he has glasses for days when he has swim team.)
- Micah lost teeth and had teeth pulled and didn't die during any of that (though convinced he would. ;)
- Nathan chose to start a Paleo diet routine in August/September and is doing really well with it. The rest of us are more resistant, as we love bread and potatoes and sugar. ;)

SCHOOL

- Yup, we're still homeschooling. ;) It's going pretty well. <knock on wood>
- As of this fall, Noah's "officially" in sixth grade and a middle schooler... Asher's in fourth, we'll say... and we're calling Micah second grade, though all of his work is at a higher grade level than that. At LEAP (which is essentially the same Options one-day-a-week program we've done for four years now but just with a new name this year), Noah's in 6th/7th, Asher's in 5th and Micah's in 3rd. Just to confuse you. ;)
- At LEAP, the boys have plenty of music... Noah has guitar, Asher has guitar, drumming and bells and Micah has recorder/chimes and choir. Noah and Micah also take cooking, and Asher's taking the Ameritowne class that Noah's so loved the last few years.
- At home, we've been trying out new curricula and programs and also experimenting with giving out grades (for motivation).
- Our biggest challenges this year have been in dealing with a tween. We're thankful that, by and large, Noah's a pretty darn easy kid and not prone to drama. Plus, he's fairly handy and self sufficient. Trusting him to watch his brothers from time to time has also made life so much easier.
- But. His more frequent moods, refusals to smile (hence our holiday picture, lol), feelings of distance from his brothers, and supreme procrastination I could do without. ;) (Also, the boy's growing like crazy (literally, 5 inches in the past year!) and is difficult to keep clothed and fed, lol.)

HOME

- Things we replaced (not necessarily voluntarily) this year included: our entire AC/furnace system, the dishwasher and the grill.
- We also purged the basement, made a new kitchen table, put up shelves in the laundry room for all the bow cases, and cleared out two storage rooms to create a bedroom for each boy.
- In the process, we had a ginormous garage sale and got rid of loads of stuff. ;)
- Though we didn't make any trips, ourselves, this year, we had lovely company and were able to see most of our immediate family here... Cassy & Charlie were out in January, mom came in February, Joe & Bridget were here in April, Zach & Marcy live here (and Haylee & Quinn visited such that we were able to see them at the end of June), Nancy came out in September and John & Nancy will be here at Christmas. Blessed.
- We're thankful, too, that Nathan's job continues to have the flexibility that he's available here when needed. It was more than seven years ago that he and a couple friends started what is now Rebit, and we're so grateful that it continues to do well.

So. That was more than you bargained for, right? ;) Don't worry. I won't be upset if you didn't read it all. In short, we've been active and happy and blessed. We hope you're doing well, too, and wish you a joyous and smiling holiday season!

Love,

Amanda, Nathan, Noah, Asher & Micah