

**Here is a bit of our journey early on for those who are interested.**

**This recap journal was begun in January 2014 *Enjoy!***

***\* Scroll down for the most current entry 2021***

When we first moved out to the country in November 1992, to what we now affectionately refer to as "Turtlebee", we were a simple homeschool family with 5 children ages almost 1,3,5,7 & 9yrs.

Our goal had been met. We moved from a mobile home in Whitmore Lake to 30 beautiful, uninhibited acres of countryside; plenty of room for our children to safely explore and use their imaginations; no matter that the cottage/cabin was 900 sq ft. on a slab floor. Everyone advised us to "doze it".

We made it our cozy home for 14 years and when we moved out it became Turtlebee's honey house for our beekeeping events and Kathie's candle making shop.

Tim was working diligently at a very good job that he enjoyed as a computer numerical-control operator at an aerospace research facility. He worked long hours away from home, so we were always thrilled whenever we had Daddy at home. We also talked everyday by phone as his breaks would allow...pre-cellphone era.

*Our first spring at Turtlebee*, a friend brought us beehive boxes that he was no longer using. We accepted them but, in all honesty, just thought it would make good kindling for our wood stove.

However, our friend worked with us to "order up some bees". We had never heard of such a thing! But Tim's curiosity had been piqued and as homeschoolers, we were always up for something new.

Well, that was the beginning of our beekeeping journey. Since Tim was an outdoorsman and not one to follow the average sporting events, his attention was drawn to the honeybees.

The more he learned as he read to us, the more our understanding and interest grew and then the more we wanted to involve our friends. This led us to extracting honey with our homeschool friends. Needless to say, word spread, and other home schoolers began contacting us. We were delighted to share our home with them and provide a fun memory.

As our family continued to grow, so did our need for Daddy at home. Our oldest son, Josiah at 12, was showing a need that his mom was not able to fill. So, as God lead and as we trusted (trusting was the hardest part), Tim left his work to come home full-time in 2000.

By now we had established our business and were at the Brighton Farmers Market with our honey every Saturday, May through October. This is not going to sustain us, but it was a step in the right direction, we thought.

When Tim turned in his resignation, his boss gave it back to him reminding him that he had 8 children and could not afford to quit his job. He kindly told Tim to take a week and think about it before turning it back in. Tim considered the advice given to him and the next day he returned the resignation with his declaration, "For the same reasons, I can't afford not to quit." We have never regretted our decision.

God is ever faithful and though it has not been necessarily the path of least resistance, we have grown in character and grown as some have described us as "a tight family." The point is, we have grown. For us, God has used this beautiful countryside and beekeeping.

**As of January 2014**, 22 years later (can hardly believe I am saying that), we have 5 sons, 4 daughters...the oldest 3 are very happily married...with 6 still at home and one having returned from the military (ages 24 to 11 yrs).

Now, in 2014, we have 5 grandsons, 4 granddaughters (ages 3 & under). Every year only promises more activity and love multiplied when they all come home for Christmas.

We are entirely blessed for having persevered even at times when all seemed hopeless or all for nothing. We have clung to our Rock and Redeemer, Jesus Christ, who tells us that

"All things work together for good to those who love God and are called according to His purpose." Romans 8:28

Be encouraged,

Kathie

**Continue on for additional amazements...**

**As of SPRING 2016** we are anticipating...

TWO WEDDINGS, TWO GRADUATIONS & TWO NEW GRANDBABIES!!!

OCTOBER 2015, Noah(24) was deployed to serve in Kuwait area as military police and looks forward to a DECEMBER 2016 WEDDING.

**MEANWHILE BACK AT THE FARM...**

Little sister, Hosanna(22), receives a proposal of marriage to Ben Foreman of Highland and will be getting married OCTOBER 2016.

Family Chief of Staff, Tim, decides we should throw a couple of graduations into the mix; Big sister Bethany(28) & Austin of Traverse City (Bee Joyful Skin Care Products) are due with baby & 5 in August; brother, Beau(26) & bride, Joy, of 1 ½ yrs, staying on the farm, will have baby #1, much to the delight of all. Do they make cowboy (or cowgirl) boots that small?? Aawww... That will make Grandbaby #13 with the oldest turning 6 in July.

Autumn(32) & Adam are still up on the dairy farm and their boys keep them busy (5,4 & twin 2½ yrs); Josiah(30) & wife Erynn are down in Tennessee with their 2 girls and now baby hunk Josiah Timothy along with a growing number of beehives in the cove. We were able to stop in for a couple of overnight visits on our way to pick up bees in the south this spring. Celeste(20) was able to stay for a week and Destiny(14) was Josiah & Erynn's right hand man for 3 weeks. Corbett(17) was a capable driver on one of our 5 trips down south for bees this year. Three drivers make the whirlwind trips much smoother.

We are enjoying our growing family so very much.

"Rejoice in the Lord always and again I say rejoice!"

**Jumping ahead to 2020**, we had 3 graduations. Our youngest son, Destiny, and youngest daughter, Celeste, were both recognized as having completed their home education in a farm gathering of family & friends in September. The 3<sup>rd</sup> graduation was my Mom's. We were privileged to have her come to the farm for her last days before really going Home in December. We were blessed to be there for her departure at 94 years of age and to see her gaze shift from here to there. She just got to the destination before us. We are happy for her but do miss her smiles. She loved her Lord and enjoyed the song, "His Eye is on the Sparrow" and hearing me sing, "Good Shepherd of My Soul" by Kristen Getty.

To date, we have seven out of nine married and 23 grandchildren.

***\*This next one is definitely worth the read!***

**In 2021**, we are all on a journey and we know that our God is ever faithful. “Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;” Philippians 1:6

Here are a few nuggets God gave to me this summer, “All sunshine all the time... is a desert.” Right??!! And “If God isn’t sovereign, then He isn’t God.” But we know He is indeed sovereign! I am so thankful that He has our best interest at heart. *Isaiah 49:16a* says we are “inscribed in the palm of His hand.”

Tim & I had been thinking about these nuggets throughout the busy bee season of 2021. That and the fact that our youngest son, Destiny, went up to Traverse City to stay with his sister, Bethany, and her family, while helping a friend build a house from the ground level up. We knew he would be learning so much. We worked a little harder without Destiny’s help. Actually, a lot harder. But it was a lot busier, too. Wow!

*So, nothing grows in a desert.* We were growing in more ways than one. Beginning in February, the Bennett family experienced a “run” on grandbabies; 6 girls (our 4th set of twins) and 1 boy. Baby boy Malachi is still the “bun in the oven” in our October 2021 family photo and he made number 30! (No typo!!)

We are blessed to see our children continually rising up to higher ground as they walk their own life journey together with the Lord. We spend much time in prayer on their behalf.

In September, God forged a path for Tim & I to leave the farm and spend 7 days in Traverse City. When I mention that to anyone they say, “Good for you.” or “Oh, how nice.” Then I tell them our story.

August 30, while decking the roof, a wind kicked up and our Destiny went down...over 20 feet off the back side of the house and walk-out basement. Thinking he only had the wind knocked out of him, he was taken to urgent care who thankfully put a neck collar on him and sent him to emergency.

Though no visible bruising, scratches, cuts, or abrasions, he had a collapsed lung, broken ribs, and badly broken neck. His C6 somewhat imploded on impact with the broken pieces applying much pressure into his spinal cord; his C7 was broken as well. You get the picture. Pain, brokenness, uncertainty, and lot of room for God.

*“For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him.” II Chronicles 16:9a*

Never really being certain what the details of God’s plans are or the outcome, we can truly trust in His sovereignty knowing that He is the BEST Promise Keeper! His promises are sure and *“All things work together for good to those who love God and are called according to His purpose.” Romans 8:28*

Come what may, either way, God is ALWAYS good! His goodness is not dependent on our circumstances. He tells us in His word many times over not to fear. *“Trust in the Lord and do good; Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness.” Psalm 37:3*

Please take time to read God’s Word. It’s just true.

*Destiny* had to say his full name & birthdate every time a hospital staff came into his room. He was reminded that *Jubilee* is the year of the Lord’s favor when all the slaves were set free, and all the debts erased; we are destined to be free from bondage forever and *Jesus is our Jubilee!!* Thus, *Destiny Jubilee!!* To God be the glory, great things He has done and continues to do on our behalf!!

Tim & I prayed for the TACS Team (Trauma Acute Care Surgery) and with the surgeon and anesthesiologist before the 6-hour surgery. *Destiny’s* C6 was removed, and a rod put in its place; his C6 ground and packed around the rod for fusing; then a plate screwed in place from his C5 to his C7. It was confirmed numbers of times that this Neurosurgeon was the slowest and the best! *We are ever grateful & continue to praise God.*

In short, *Destiny* fell on Monday, had surgery on Thursday, and we drove into our driveway at the farm late the following Tuesday. A noteworthy miracle wouldn’t you say!! Which is why I’m giving so many details, though there are MANY more. God is ONLY EVER AMAZING!! HE ALONE IS AWESOME!! Spending so much time at the hospital, we were able to share the Lord and pray with a number of people. They were all *very special moments and divine appointments* we cherish.

*Destiny* is a walking miracle but is still dealing with some of the physical trauma from his spinal cord injury. He’s had physical therapy and regained his range of motion in his left arm, the side he landed on. Now his nerves need to find new paths to the brain, we are told. This is a lot of continual “pins & needles” sensations and itchiness. Please pray for him when you think of him. It’s going to take some time. He is able to drive again and no more neck brace. Bending his neck down still brings sharp pains. Wouldn’t this mama trade places with him in a second, but this is his journey.

He enjoys the culinary arts and turns out some fabulous omelets, scones & pastries and he makes a great cup of cowboy coffee. 😊 He is interested in pursuing HVAC (heating & cooling) and continues to meet for young adults Bible study from church.

One day, after being at the hospital a few hours, Austin & Bethany (& kiddos) whisked Tim & I away for a much-needed break... to Sleeping Bear Dunes. We hiked 5 miles of dunes making it all the way to Lake Michigan. It was a beautiful day & a lovely time, not to mention great exercise. Bethany & Austin later informed us *with delight* that they are due with their number 8 in April 2022.

Earlier in the year our children planned to converge in October to commemorate our 40<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary at Starwood Ranch in Kalkaska, Michigan. We enjoyed a few days all together. What a wonderful time!! Complete with family photos, anniversary dinner, Uncle Austin's Bible story & song time each morning for the children, a baby shower for one of the girls and a birthday breakfast for all the grandchildren who are able to sit at a table, 20 of them, and each one had a candle in their pancake lit by Mimi (Kathie). We all sang "Happy Birthday," of course and we love to hear them call us "Papa & Mimi."

***Counting every blessing and blessed beyond all measure.***

May God bless us all to recognize His amazing hand of mercy and grace in this new year ahead, come what may.

Tim & Kathie B.

**The saying, "Never a dull moment," comes to mind.**

**We'll keep you posted with any new family developments 😊**

Today is 2/22/22 and it's 2sday 😊 just a fun date on the calendar as we do our office preparations for a new Spring season of package bees, nuclei, queens, and beekeeping classes. Our CEO (Tim) and Sons (Beau & Corbett) are getting together every Monday for a meeting of the minds and tackling the farm issues and management options. I encouraged giving 2 hugs and 2 kisses to your loved ones.

"that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ," Colossians 2:2