



The Mesa Grande Academy Alumni at Alumni Sabbath, September 9, 2008



alumni mailbag, cont.

Ramont. Chris graduated in December 2007 from SAU and we both returned home to California. In February 2008 Chris asked me to marry him and by October we were wed.

You know that cliché “you never know where life will take you”? I agree! In the past 5 years I’ve lived from a basement apartment to dorm rooms overseas, from a luxurious mansion, to a fold out couch. I’ve bunked with strangers and yes (for a while there), I slept on a kitchen floor! Now, my husband and I live in Redlands where I work part time at Macaroni Grill and am a student at Cal State San Bernardino. It’s been a wonderful adventure so far and I’m excited to see what the next years have in store!

- *Collie (Partain) Bowles ('03)*

After graduating in '04, I attended Walla Walla University. I began taking Elementary Education and had a great time learning to become a teacher. I did my student teaching at Roger's Adventist Academy where I taught 1st and 2nd grade. I had 20 wonderful students, most of them boys, and I was able to pass my student teaching and graduate. This past year I was a student missionary on the beautiful island of Pohnpei, which is in the Marshall Islands. I taught 3rd grade and I had 24 beautiful and bright students. I enjoyed my time on the island, where I jumped off waterfalls, camped out on the beach in my hammock, and had a great year learning about life, myself, and God. I am now back and preparing to get my masters, and figure out what else God has planned for me.

- *Amye Lloyd ('04)*

For those who don't know or have forgotten, I have been going to Andrews University for the past 5 years. Last summer (2008) I got to go to Europe for a month as part of the Architecture program. I visited Italy, France, Belgium, and Sweden, and had a real blast. I just graduated with a Bachelors in Architecture in May, and am going back for my Master's degree this Fall. Hope you all are having fun wherever you are.

- *Seth Myhre ('04)*

When alumni of the honored class of 1999 get together on alumni weekend for their 10th reunion, the school will pay \$10 per person towards food for Saturday night! Come and enjoy some time together with your former classmates!

If you have contact information or other updates on any alumni, please contact
Judie Yakush, Alumni Coordinator, at
(909) 795-1112 ext. 252,
or email jyakush@hotmail.com.

Thanks for helping keep our alumni in touch with the school and each other!

edited by Lynn Holder ('03)

Hello, to all MGA Alumni! On September 9, 2008, nearly 50 Mesa Grande alumni returned to campus to reminisce and reconnect with former classmates and teachers. The alumni welcomed Delwyn Finch, former MGA Youth Pastor ('90-'95) and Bob Bates, former MGA faculty ('92-'94) as the speakers for the morning. Additionally, Collie Partain ('03) shared a slide show of her various mission experiences around the world. We look forward to an even bigger turnout for Alumni Sabbath this year. Please make plans to attend this year's reunion so you can catch up on your school family and stay in touch. There is only one all-school reunion each year, don't be left out!

**Plan now to attend Alumni Sabbath this fall
September 12, 2009
Honor Classes 1994, 1999, 2004
Guest Speakers: Tracy Gunneman, Alumni parent (class of '04) and Mike Bennie, former faculty '98-'04.**

With this year's edition of the newsletter, over 100 alumni have willingly shared something about their lives for the “Mailbag” section. Thank you for your contributions and please continue to keep your school “in the loop.” Alumni news is the heart of the newsletter, so we need to hear from YOU!

As some of you might remember, the Senior Class of '92, along with the Eighth Grade class, gave MGA a marquee

sign as their class gift. That original sign was able to provide one panel of information, and it served the school well for 17 years. Just before graduation this year, the sign was retired and replaced by a new electronic readerboard sign, thanks to a generous donation from the Home & School Scrip program.

Our new sign can carry a virtually unlimited number of messages to our parents and school community, providing better communication. The ability to share more information, in a more timely and efficient manner, is a big advantage for MGA. It is no longer necessary to climb a ladder to place and replace the letters as it is now all done through the computer.

If you live in the area, please consider purchasing scrip so that the Home and School Association can continue to bless the school by filling in the gaps and provide much needed equipment and furnishings. It's a no-cost way to bring significant funds to MGA. Check out the school web site for more details about scrip at www.mesagrandeacademy.org.

- *Judie Yakush*



Class of 1993



Class of 1998



Class of 2003

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I am a mom to two boys, Tyler (5) and Zachary (1 ½). I am married to Steve Soren, and we live in Cherry Valley. I work full time in pharmaceutical sales. To continue the MGA tradition, my son Tyler will start kindergarten in the fall.

- **Shannon (Forland) Soren ('91)**

After graduating in '93, I went to La Sierra to complete 2 years of prereqs for dental hygiene. In 1997, I graduated from LLU with a BS in Dental Hygiene. That same summer I married Sam Stevenson ('91). Just this week we celebrated our 12th anniversary.

I worked for several dentists in the Redlands and Calimesa areas before moving to the San Bernardino mountains in 2004. We live in Running Springs (on the way to Big Bear). I work for a wonderful dentist in Lake Arrowhead, and we love being up here in the fresh air! Sam has his own personal training business in Redlands, and has been there for the last two years. He loves to finally have his own place to work, and is doing well there. We have 2 little boys. Ben (8) is starting 2nd grade, and Daniel (5) is starting kindergarten this year. They enjoy riding dirt bikes with their dad, and are growing up so fast! They are a blessing.

Wishing you all the best. We look forward to the next big reunion and catching up with friends. Twenty years will be here before we know it!

- **Robyn (Kiger) Stevenson ('93)**

After graduating from Mesa Grande, I pursued a business degree at La Sierra and directed one of the first SIFE teams on campus to 3 consecutive championships. I completed my degree at UCR and moved to Manhattan to attend law school. I was fortunate to be spared the fate of so many on 9/11 as it was my usual commute to take the subway from the World Trade Center to school every morning at that time. I met the love of my life, Sam, while in law school and we married three years later on a yacht in New York Harbor during a hurricane. We have recently resettled in New York after a too-brief couple year stint in Vermont, where we enjoyed snowboarding at every opportunity. I am blessed to be a full-time mommy to our beautiful and energetic daughters, Addison (2) and Caleigh (3 months). It will be bittersweet to return to work in a few years. I wish all you the very best!

- **Patria (Wise) Bryant ('94)**

I have been truly blessed in my life since graduating from MGA. God has given me two beautiful, amazing children - Brenden (5) and Kathryn (3). They are both the best thing that has ever happened to me, and I thank God every day for bringing them into my life!

After graduating from MGA, I went on to attend PUC. It was there that I met my wife, Tamalisa. Actually, I first heard her singing in the music hall auditorium my freshman year. She didn't know I was listening, but I thought she had the voice of an angel! I didn't get her to go out with me, however, until 2 years later! We graduated in 2000, and were married shortly thereafter.

I work as a building contractor and Tamalisa is a registered dietician at a local hospital. We both enjoy spending time with our kids, acting in local theater, and taking trips down south to visit grandparents and go to Disneyland of course! Our life is very full - sometimes I think maybe too full! But I don't think I would have it any other way.

Life certainly hasn't turned out the way I thought it would when I graduated. We have had many ups and downs over the years, and not everything has worked out they way I hoped or wanted. I think that, in the end, the challenges we have faced in our lives have made us stronger in many ways. Looking back, I can definitely say that God has always taken care of us, though I will admit there were many times when I thought our situation seemed hopeless.

I am learning to trust God more and more these days. I praise Him for the good things in my life, and I do my best to understand and learn

from the things that don't seem to go my way. I often think about all of my friends and classmates from MGA, and wonder how everyone is doing. I have lost touch with so many of you. I sincerely pray that God has remained a part of your lives, and I hope you have all been as blessed as I have!

- **Jeremy Carlson ('95)**

Since '96 I've finished degrees in biology at Southern Adventist University and Walla Walla University. I also volunteered as a student missionary from the Calimesa Church, spending a year at Davis Memorial Hospital in Guyana, South America. In 2004 I returned to that area of the world to study the behavioral ecology of capuchin monkeys in Suriname for the year.

Currently, I'm a PhD student at the University of Florida. My research experience has broadened, but I've most often looked at how juvenile animals behave before and after they disperse - all towards the goal of understanding why they make such a complicated and important decision. I enjoy sharing my research at conferences, being in the field, and managing data. Interacting with undergraduate students in class, tutoring, and research is a close second.

My best news is that I'm trying to keep up with my son Edrian who arrived in January 2008. At 18 months he's become an enjoyable handful. Kathy, Edrian and I enjoyed hanging out with family and another MGA alumnus in California for a week in June and plan to visit again in December. Edrian is busy learning both Spanish and English, and is throwing a rubber lizard as I'm trying to write this. Everything else that I'm doing pales in comparison, but I'm happy to share more and interact through social media. All else failing, e-mail me at colbjo@gmail.com.

- **Jonathan Colburn ('96)**

Since '96 so much has happened! I thought I wanted to be a nurse, but after completing a year of the nursing program at PUC I quickly learned that being a nurse was not for me. Most importantly, though, I was blessed with a daughter in 2001 who will now be in 3rd grade this upcoming school year. We followed my family and moved to San Clemente in 2002. It's so beautiful down here, although I could live without the Orange County "attitude". I graduated from the University of Phoenix with a degree in Business Management and Administration and have been working as the Director of Human Resources at a consulting firm for the last 6 years. Life is good. I have a beautiful, healthy daughter, a wonderful family, and have been blessed with a close circle of friends. My memories of MGA are never far from me and I often think of all of the amazing memories that were made. We love having visitors and San Clemente an awesome place to visit so if you're ever in town send me an email at gsa78@aol.com!

- **Sarah Glubka ('96)**

After Mesa Grande I went to La Sierra then to Cal Poly Pomona. I graduated with a degree in Animal Science (Equine Science option) and a minor in Agricultural Business Management. During school and after I have done a variety of things including pet sitting, exercising and training horses, working on ranches, and equine dentistry, to name a few. Some things have not changed. I still live in Southern California, I am still really close to my family and I still have a lot of animals (7 at the moment, if you don't include the fish). Next I am looking at grad schools but only time will tell. My email is loriansadams@gmail.com, I would be happy to hear from you.

- **Lorian Adams ('97)**

After high school I attended Walla Walla College and obtained a degree in Accounting. While there, I also met my wife Amy. We currently live in Beaumont, and have two amazing children. Cohen (4) loves trains, puzzles, and preschool, and is training to be a super

hero. Lisi (11 months), while she is not yet sure of her life dream, is currently focusing on growing hair and walking. Amy is an ER Nurse at Redlands Community Hospital and I work for a company building master planned communities. We enjoy swimming, camping, and going to the beach (Amy and Cohen are both learning to surf this summer). We feel blessed to live so close to my extended family, and to be a part of the Calimesa Church, where we have made many lifelong friends.

- **Tom Allen ('97)**

After graduation, Darren Dudley ('98) and I started dating. In 2003, I graduated from La Sierra with a degree in Marketing and moved to Orange County. Darren quickly followed and took a job with UPS, where he has been for over 5 years. When Darren asked me to marry him, I said "YES!" and we had a dream wedding in Hawaii in 2005. It was by far the best day of my life to this point. :) We live in Laguna Niguel. I work for the University of Phoenix and completed my Masters in Business Administration in 2008. Darren is finishing up school with plans to be a English Teacher. We really enjoy traveling and the freedom that our late 20's gives us.

- **Kimberly (Snyder) Dudley ('98)**

Following my days at MGA, I attended and graduated from Arizona State University. I earned a BS Degree in Construction Management and have been working with a general contractor as a project manager. I was also lucky to meet my wonderful wife Rebecca at ASU and we were married just last year in August. We currently live in Aliso Viejo, Orange County with our two pets Jessie and Max. Life has been very good and we are thankful for the blessings the Lord has given us. It's just crazy to imagine how fast ten years can really go!

- **Keavon Anbardan ('99)**

Since graduating MGA, I have graduated from La Sierra University, with a BA in Liberal Studies. I am a pre-school teacher, and have been enjoying life. That is what I have been up to these last couple of years. Keep Smiling !!!!

- **Chani Lupens ('00)**

Since Mesa Grande I attended an art school in Florence, Italy, and then went to PUC, a defining moment in my life because some of my most important relationships today were formed during my experiences there. After PUC, I earned my gemology degree from the Gemological Institute of America. I now manage our family jewelry store (across the street from my sister and brother-in-law's two businesses) and event plan, both full time! Life is full and I am blessed.

- **Kelly Emerson ('00)**

After graduating in 2001, I attended Walla Walla College and received a double major in English and History. I spent a semester at Newbold College in England and developed a love of traveling. After graduating from Walla Walla College, I spent a year as a substitute teacher at where else but Mesa Grande! I then returned to school, only this time I decided to pursue nursing. I have since graduated from Loma Linda University and have started working at a local hospital in San Bernardino. I have been so thankful for the grounding I received from my time at Mesa Grande and feel this background helped prepare me for all the many different paths I have wandered, as well as future paths I may encounter.

- **Alycia Bristol ('01)**

After graduating I attended Southern for 4 years, with a year spent learning Spanish in Spain, and graduated in 2006 with a degree in Elementary Education. I married Shaun Smith after graduation, and we moved to Charlotte, North Carolina, where I taught in a multi-grade classroom of a small Adventist school for two years. In 2008 we moved back to CA for Shaun to start medical school at LLU. This fall

I will be changing careers and beginning pharmacy school at LLU.

- **Christy (Ketcherside) Smith ('01)**

Since graduating in '02 I have been doing a little bit of work and school. In the first year after graduating I went to Crafton Hills College and received my EMT certification. I used my EMT certification to work at Loma Linda ER as a ER Tech. During the time I was working there I began taking my nursing prerequisites. I finished those in 2006 and started the waiting game to get into a nursing school. Also, that same year I quit my job at Loma Linda in preparation to getting into a nursing school. In 2007 I was accepted into the College of the Desert nursing program. I have had my struggles in nursing school, but I am very close to being done. However, I broke my leg skiing this past March, which has set me back a semester, so I won't be finished until the spring of 2010, instead of this December.

- **Matthew Chrispens ('02)**

I graduated from Pacific Union College in 2007 with my Bachelors in Social Work, after spending a year as a student missionary in El Salvador at an Orphanage. After graduation, I spent a year as a Dean at Milo Adventist Academy in Oregon. I moved back to California in June of 2008 and am currently pursuing my Masters in Social Work at Cal State San Bernardino.

- **Summer Randall ('02)**

After graduating in '03, I went to La Sierra University to start general classes and ended up deciding that I was meant to be a nurse. I finished the prerequisites and applied to Loma Linda University, where I spent the next 2 years in the nursing program. To fill my summers I worked at Pine Springs Ranch summer camp, meeting some amazing people and strengthening my relationship with God. In February 2008 I started the pediatric residency program for nurses at Loma Linda Children's Hospital and was offered a job in Neonatal Intensive Care. I graduated from the nursing program in June 2008 and have continued working in NICU since. My future plans are to go back to school to achieve my Nurse Practitioner Masters with a focus on maternal/child health, and maybe spend some time somewhere overseas as a student missionary. I feel very blessed! =>

- **Michelle Meert ('03)**

Chris Bowles ('02) and I started dating when I was in the 10th grade. We both played sports and, well, a long bus ride to Palm Desert for a game is the closest thing to a weekday date as you can get when you're 16! After graduating in '03 I traveled for 2 years to places like Norway, Sweden, England, Italy, BC, Guatemala, met up with my brothers Dennis and Ben in the Ukraine (and the list goes on but you get the idea). During this time I was able to participate in many different community outreaches, attend schools, and travel.

After that, Chris and I headed out to Southern Adventist University for 2 years, and I had a chance to spend time with my brother Richard

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ATTENTION ALUMNI!

Your classmates and friends would love to hear about you! Send your own "Alumni Mailbag" information to: jyakush@hotmail.com

Submissions may be edited for space and content. Thanks for keeping in touch!