

Summers Scrapbook 2025

It's hard for me to get my head around that it is once again December and yet another year has come and gone and it is again time for me to sit down and chronicle the activities that have occurred over the past twelve months. It feels as though I was just doing this exact same thing writing about 2024. I would love to say that time seems to fly when you are having fun but over the course of this year like many others, we have had our ups and downs, but I would still not change anything as the events of this year has made us closer and helped to humble us.

They say the hardest part of writing is the beginning. If that is the case, I've already gotten a good start, so I invite you to sit back and relax with a cup of hot chocolate or if you are lucky a cup of Trina's wassail and follow along as I try to weave a story out of everything we have done this past year.

January

The year started as does every year with a family celebration for New Years followed the next day by another celebration of Whitney's birthday. Jeff had his one celebration though. The new year saw him buy a new Tesla Model S. This is his first electric vehicle, and he spent the better part of the month customizing his car so that it reflected his personality and style. The customizations were not just related to the car, Jeff and Trina also installed an electric charging station in the garage. Both commented how strange it is that they can now power the car without visiting a gas station or charger.

February

Jeff was not content just with an electric car and a charging station. Starting this month, he began a much larger project. Jeff talked Trina into installing a solar array on the house so that the sun could power their lives. That seems like such a foreign concept of getting free energy but that was the goal. Installing a solar array is not a DIY project and little did Trina and Jeff know how long this project would take. It started in February with the install of the solar panels, but all the wiring and countless bureaucratic reviews and approvals would push this project through the first half of the year. One comical story from this month, Jeff wanted to transfer his "CJEFFGO" personalized license plate from his Camaro to his new Tesla. The DMV had a different idea and denied Jeff using that plate on the new car. It took several visits to the DMV to finally understand their reasoning for the denial. The official response was that the plate contained profanity. Somehow the DMV took the "EFFGO" as being shorthand for cursing. After Jeff explained it was part of his name they relented and he was able to get the plate on his new car. Jeff and Trina welcomed their latest granddaughter Ember Sloan Testa to the family with Tiffany giving birth on February 19th. Both mother and daughter are doing well.

March

March saw a lot of changes again for Jeff in his job. His manager retired and he was again reorganized within the company. Early Warning Systems is a great place to work but feels a bit dysfunctional regarding their architecture program. Jeff is being given a lot more responsibility, but progress is slow which is frustrating. Rather than dwell on the negative, Jeff is working to develop a new architecture program. Time will tell how well this will work. Besides his job, Jeff is excited that baseball season is back which means he and Trina are spending what seems like every moment at Chase Field with the Arizona Diamondbacks. The solar installation continues this month with the addition of Tesla PowerWalls to provide battery backup to the house when the sun is not up making off grid living nearly a reality.

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April

April saw the continuation of the solar project on the house. Things are now wired and in place, but the system is not active due to delays in the inspections from the City of Chandler. Jeff is a lot more involved with this project and is doing a lot of the finish work and sheetrock to make sure it is how he wants it. Trina is just excited because part of this project includes cleaning the garage which has been on Jeff's to-do list for years. Not all was good news though; Jeff came down with severe bronchitis this month and they thought it might result in another hospital stay but the doctors caught it in time and he is slowly on the mend.

May

May saw several large milestones accomplished. The solar installation was completed and by mid-May the house was producing its own power and storing it in battery systems. The system is already paying dividends as the power bill went from \$300 a month to \$70! The other big project this month was replacing the backyard trees that had died from the severe weather. Trina spent a lot of time coming up with a planting plan with the landscaper and now they have what looks to be a nice hedge along the back wall. This planting of course led to more ideas for landscaping that will continue for most of the summer and fall before Trina got everything she wanted. In what has become a never-ending saga, Jeff saw his job get reorganized again and he had yet another new boss. This level of change does not appear sustainable and neither Jeff nor Trina know where that is going to land. They are beginning to consider that perhaps it may be time to enter a new phase of their lives, retirement. No decision was made but the thinking has started.

June

June started with Trina flying from Arizona to Idaho Falls. She is picking up a rental car there then driving to Montana. Ashley and Aaron and their family are moving back from Montana to Arizona and Trina offered to go up and help them pack their house so the moving company can pick up their stuff. Jeff and Trina are both very excited at the thoughts of Ashley's family being close again. Jeff had thought about going to Montana with her but a few days before her trip, he suffered another shoulder injury on his left shoulder, and it is now looking like a fifth surgery may be a possibility although Jeff is not committing to that just yet. The month ended with Trina returning from Montana just in time to celebrate Tiffany and Wrigley's birthday. Wrigley turned five and will be starting school next month. Hard to believe how quickly she is growing up.

July

July saw Trina and Jeff going back north to Idaho Falls. They are going to stay with Jeff's dad and try to take care of him. Jerry still spends the summer in Idaho living in his house there but with his increasing age, this may be the final year that happens. There are enough projects needing to be done at the house that Jeff and Trina will spend a couple of weeks there getting things done. Normally Jeff and Trina fly but this year they drove just to see the sights and to also bring a bunch of things back from Idaho if this is going to be the end of dad living in that house alone. The grandkids all returned to school this month. Lily, fresh from moving from Montana is a sophomore. Syrell starts middle school this year. Teigan is going into the fifth grade. Cole is now a fourth grader while Ryker begins third grade. Adding to this group is Wrigley who starts kindergarten in Maricopa. She is very excited to be able to go to school. No one is quite sure whether Tiffany is ready for her oldest to be school aged just yet.

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August

August saw a very busy month for the family. The month began with Ryker turning eight and being baptized. He has been looking forward to this event for a while, and everyone is so proud of the choices he is making. Ryker also had a birthday as did Cole this month so there were lots of parties and fun family events. Jeff and Trina continued the house transformation projects this month having new insulation put into the house to make it even more energy efficient. The result between the insulation and the solar panels has reduced their energy consumption by over 75%. Trina though was most excited that after asking Jeff for years to put in a built-in ladder to reach the garage attic, it finally got done making it easier to get up and down to the storage area in the garage.

September

Jeff and Trina had only planned one trip to Idaho and that was in July but just after Labor Day things happened and they had to drive to Idaho and put Jerry on a plane. He has been getting increasingly confused and is mismanaging his medications scaring everyone. Jeff and Trina drove up and spent a week making sure things were properly closed in the house and putting his dad on a plane to Arizona. Jeff and Trina happened to be in Idaho for the Eastern Idaho State Fair that they had not attended since they were kids, so they spent the day in Blackfoot reliving memories and enjoying each other's company. When Jeff got back, he found out his job had reorganized once again, and he now had a new manager with new priorities. Clearly this is not going well and by the end of the month Jeff had decided the time was right and that he would retire. Early Warning Systems asked if he would stay on and change positions again, but Jeff had realized after decades of work, it is time for a new opportunity and a new way of life. Neither Trina nor Jeff are quite sure how Jeff will adapt to retirement. He seems way too busy to be able to relax.

October

With October coming, Jeff is finding his left shoulder is acting up more and he has an appointment to see the orthopedic surgeon. The funny thing is Trina had seen this same surgeon a month ago and he suggested she may need surgery. The doctor was therefore somewhat surprised to find that Jeff's arm was worse than Trina's. Trina has decided to postpone her surgery, and Jeff is going to wait until early in 2026 to get his arm done. They are quite a pair, each with one good arm and one that just kind of dangles. October also meant the end of baseball season. Trina was relieved that it was over, but Jeff was sad especially since the Diamondbacks struggled with their own injury issues this year and did not make the playoffs. Most of the rest of October was spent taking Jeff's dad to various doctor's appointments to understand what is causing the cognitive decline. It has been a very humbling month.

November

November was definitely an eventful month. The first part was filled with various medical appointments. Besides taking Jeff's dad to several specialists, Jeff also had some health issues. For the third time this year he developed bronchitis which progressed to the point of pneumonia. With all the health issues he is having and the changes at Early Warning Systems, Jeff officially retired from working and will spend the rest of 2025 trying to recover and think about his next steps. As the month ended, Trina was busy preparing for the annual Thanksgiving celebration that is held. Jeff was still recovering from pneumonia, so Trina had to do most of the activities herself. The morning of Thanksgiving at about 2 AM, Trina woke Jeff up as she was just coming to bed. She announced that the oven had caught fire and was no longer working. There

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is nothing quite like waking up to someone telling you your kitchen nearly went up in flames with an entire family planning to arrive for dinner less than 12 hours from now. It was a stressful holiday as arrangements had to be made to find a way to cook turkey without a working oven (thank heavens for amazing neighbors and friends). Trina was able to survive, and dinner went off without too much drama. That was not the end of the saga though. Jeff and Trina had an upcoming vacation planned on December 3rd so they spent the rest of the Thanksgiving holiday trying to find a new stove and oven that could be delivered when they got back from vacation.

December

The month of December saw Jeff and Trina going on vacation to Walt Disney World. This trip had been planned for two years. Whitney also planned to go on the trip as well as Dakota and Brinley who Jeff and Trina took as a college graduation trip. In a last-minute change, Mallorie also decided to come along as an early 40th birthday present for next year. Everyone had a blast in Disney World celebrating their various events. Just before leaving on vacation, Jeff had a relapse and suffered another bout of bronchitis. He spent the entire vacation on antibiotics and breathing treatments but didn't let that bother him. Jeff got to do a few fun things he has been wanting to on this trip including making a new light saber at Galaxy's Edge. He even talked Trina into them both making a custom droid. The trip was amazing and was just what they needed to recognize this new chapter of their lives. Unfortunately, the trip came at a cost. When they returned, Jeff began to feel worse and ended up in the emergency room on December 23rd with bronchitis and complications from an enlarged aorta. The rest of the month would be spent recuperating and getting ready for Christmas.

I don't mind telling you, after typing all these activities, my fingers are exhausted. Between all the keystrokes, recording all the events of the past twelve months, and recovering from bronchitis I am going to need a long rest to recover. This year has been such a blessing for our family. While we struggled with some bad luck and health issues, we also saw incredible joy and an outpouring of love for our family.

We've seen our family grow with a special new spirit in Ember and we have had a chance to reconnect and be a part of Ashley and Aaron's family moving back. We have seen all our kids and grandkids grow into incredible people who are finding their way through this mortal life.

The hand of the Lord is everywhere we looked in 2025 and we are all looking forward to seeing where 2026 will take us. Jeff is already working on new app ideas and an outline for a book he has been planning to write but never seemed to find the time. Trina is increasing her to-do list for Jeff each day and is looking forward to spending more time as a couple.

We are thankful for all our friends and family for continuing to be part of our lives and we look forward to enjoying every moment we can spend together. We pray that you will be blessed in this upcoming year and hope to be a part of your lives. May the Lord bless you and all that you do!

Jeff & Trina