

# Doe River Datapoint

## Milbourne Family Ministry Update

— Fall 2011 —



Another year has flown the coop! It's been a very full one for us, with some big changes. Autumn was as beautiful as the picture shows and a reminder that we're more than due to send you an update. Quick family year in review here; more details inside.

### Winter

January: Jon and Kate begin attending Tri-Cities Christian School! Nancy begins job hunt; works short temp jobs.

### Spring

Spring break late March: Annual Pennsylvania trip to visit Mom Milbourne and ministry partners. The next week Nancy begins regular work 3 days a week with location and hours that mesh with school—big answer to prayer!

### Summer

Late May: School's out; Nancy works 2 days a week for the summer. Annual intense season at Doe River begins - Mark's 15<sup>th</sup> summer!

Late June: Special visit from Mom Milbourne just before her 81<sup>st</sup> birthday. She hadn't been here in 5 years; the trip had become too much for Dad M.

July: Jon and Kate, now both old enough, attend *Adventure Quest* at DRG; Nancy paints a bathroom; we both enjoy unusually quiet evenings at home!

Camp ends the first Friday in August, also Jon & Kate's first day back at school!

The following week they skip school; we all enjoy Begley/Furst family reunion in Williamsburg, Virginia.

### Fall

The next week Nancy begins a temp job as well, now working 5 days a week. Expected to be 6-week assignment; stretches into 3 months! Nancy flies to Indiana; sings in her Aunt Linda's funeral.

Late September: Mini-vacation in nearby Smoky Mountains.

Wonderful Thanksgiving break at home enjoying relaxed time as a family; home projects.

Mark's year at Doe River is filled with projects and challenges. It's been something of a non-stop year! We can't even begin to tell you how thankful we are for you who pray for us and partner with us. You're the best!

Merry Christmas!

*Mark & Nancy*



Taking in the 360° views of the Smokies from atop Clingman's Dome (elev 6643') during our September mini-break. Another highlight was an indoor water park.



The 2011 Adventure Quest Staff "Family"

## Adventure Quest 2011

Praise the Lord with us for blessing our efforts this year!

- 306 students trusted Christ as Savior
- 638 students turned over past hurts and failures to God
- 610 made other significant decisions to advance their walk with God
- 80 college students served as summer staff
- 1594 campers (individuals and 18 groups from 21 states and 2 countries)
- \$57,000 in scholarship funds raised for 167 campers in need. No one was turned away due to lack of finances!

Several new programs were introduced this year. All were popular and have been tweaked and expanded for 2012:

- A two-week introductory discipleship program, helping to complete a sequential set of discipleship and leadership programs that students can advance through during high-school
- Specialty skill-development programs: archery/riflery, equestrian and watersports

## Tech Tidbits by Mark

Normally space constrains us to share a bare minimum of details of my actual work. This time we have extra space and can share a number of my projects and challenges this year.

- **Fallback:** Last year a major effort was converting to a new registration system with more complete online features. But by last fall, unanticipated issues led us to go back to our original system for the 2011 season.
- **New Reports:** In spite of the setback, the other system introduced us to a great new set of report building and distribution tools that also work with the original system. I've already been able to build a number of new reports and processes that have REALLY improved the daily business flow. And I have several more major items to work on over the winter.
- **Old System, New Look:** In the meantime, our original registration provider had been working on a new online interface, which is much improved. We'd had ongoing opportunity to test it as work progressed over the past year and they adopted many of my suggestions. This fall I spent a lot of time on final configurations and testing and it is now "live" for 2012 programs with over 200 already registered!
- **Campus Data Network:** We'd been needing for several years to expand our office network and other communications wiring to the other 3 main buildings, but the project had been put off several times due to cost. This spring the need became more acute. After more research and dialog with several friends of DRG in related businesses, I was finally able to come up with a more affordable proposal. We'd hoped to have it before summer, but the installer got very busy and wasn't able to get here until early this fall. But when he sent us the invoice, he told us to NOT pay it, donating both the fiberoptic cable and his crew's labor cost! It is a HUGE blessing to finally have this critical piece of permanent infrastructure in place.
- **LOOOOONG Patch Cable:** In late July, we had a sudden failure of the wireless data link (due to be replaced with the fiberoptic link) that supported our point-of-sale systems and registration check-in at another building, both very critical functions. There was no way to quickly get replacement equipment, so I made up a 300-foot Cat5 patch cable and ran it across the grass! Crazy, but it worked until the fiberoptic line was installed.
- **Can you hear me now?** Shortly after the wireless failure, a lightning strike fried our office phone system! It is relatively ancient, but fortunately the local service company still had parts on hand and was able to make prompt repairs. Then I had the extended task of re-entering all of our specific system settings by hand, all on a hectic Sunday check-in day! Given it's age, I'm starting to research new phone systems.
- **Narrowband:** We rely heavily on two-way radios to coordinate activities and logistics. These operate through a repeater on a ridge to provide coverage into the gorge. The FCC is moving



Scream Machine: *Sweet Chariot*, a giant swing, drops *Questers* about 50 feet, the first half of which is pretty much vertical!

everyone to narrower frequency bands (to make space for more “channels”). So in the spring I coordinated replacing the repeater and reconfiguring all (over 60!) of the radios. Some older radios were not able to work on narrowband so I was also looking for replacements. God provided some through a special donation and others through a good deal on Ebay!

- **The Big Picture:** The meeting area in Cedar Mountain Lodge is used heavily by rental groups. When CML was built, we’d installed an older projector we had on hand. It fit the location, but it proved not bright enough for the large screen. Placement (on a homebuilt shelf) had also been problematic. This fall we were finally able to allocate funds for a suitable unit, so I researched and bought a much better projector. Then I designed and had built a much better mount for it.
- **Upgrades:** With over two dozen computers in service, there is a constant cycle of updates and upgrades of both hardware and software. This year has been heavier than usual in both areas with a number of new computers and making the jump from Office 2003 to Office 2010 software. Our camp management software also has had some updates to deploy.
- **Workin’ on the Railroad:** This spring I was asked to develop documented safety inspections for the RR. We were already keeping tabs on things pretty well, but needed to formalize and document the process, from a liability standpoint. So I researched and wrote up specific track inspection procedures and, with the help of my RR volunteers, carried out an annual inspection. This winter I will work on writing up equipment inspections.
- **Worn-out Wheels:** The wheels on our two big train cars are nearly worn out, so early this year I also started looking into replacements. High steel prices have put new wheels way out of sight. So I started looking for used equipment with better wheels and also more closely at the wheels under our “static” cars that comprise our lakeside “Sidetrack Café” and picnic cars. It turned out we have just enough other wheelsets that are OK, so I was able to develop a “swapping out” plan. It will be a lot of work to jack up the big RR cars and swap, but the price is right!



- **Rotten Wood:** In the meantime, if there wasn’t already enough to do, we found some rotten wood in a critical frame area of one of the cars. Repairs require nearly taking apart one entire end of the car. So I had to organize a volunteer crew to start on this as soon as the operating season ended in October. It is now mostly torn down and will be ready for new wood soon.



## Nancy’s News

### **Home School No More**

Yup, you read it right. You’re probably wondering what everyone else asked when they heard: “What prompted that?”

I wouldn’t trade our 3 1/2 years of home education for anything in the world. But much of 2010 I was reminded that I never wanted to be a teacher. I loved the “home” part (most days). It was just that darned “school” part! The more Jon and Kate needed to know, the less I wanted to be their teacher. It was just not my thing.

We toured several public and private schools; Jon & Kate shadowed for a day at our preferred school; we discovered they had room for us and approved us for a generous ministry discount. So in January, they began attending Tri-Cities Christian School. It was a huge change for all of us, but I haven’t had one hint of regret. God made His timing and direction as clear as a bell. Jon and Kate have never been happier, are doing well in school, have new friends, and adjusted to the earlier and longer days. We’re pleased with the education they’re receiving and I am relieved to have passed along that responsibility.

### **So Now What?**

Since we needed to fund this new endeavor, I updated my resume and began earnestly exploring options for part-time work... temp agencies, dollar stores, banks, pharmacies, home improvement & grocery stores, the airport, gift shops, clothing boutiques, restaurants, catering, schools, universities, general & medical offices, caregiving, back at Doe River... I left no stone unturned, but Mark and I agreed that I should work only 2-3 days a week. It was actually easier to find full-time work with benefits, but we knew that was not God’s desire for our family at this stage.

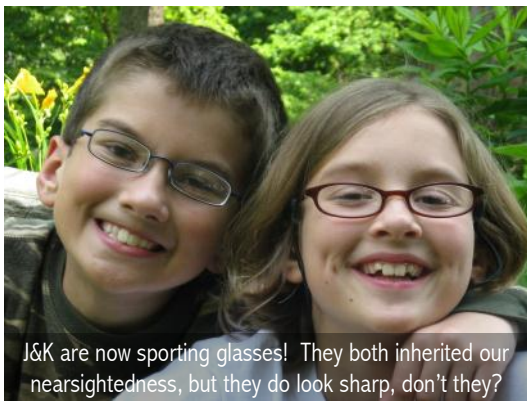
In April, God opened the door for me to become part-time Office Manager at DBL Homes. I love doing what I’m best at! I mostly manage accounts payable & receivable, create systems to keep the office organized, and develop the customer service aspect of the business, but also help with scheduling, marketing & web stuff. Check us out at [www.DBLHomes.com](http://www.DBLHomes.com). Great people, good hours, and the office is just 3 miles from the children’s school. Go, God!

### When It Rains It Pours!

In early August I was offered a temp job in the accounting dept. at a friendly, professional business I'd stopped in off the street before. It was close to the school and could flex around both my other job and the school schedule. Between the two jobs, my work schedule bumped up to every weekday, but Mark and I decided we could make it work for the 6 anticipated weeks. It grew into a 3-month assignment with more projects on the horizon! I love it! But my parents traveled to Indiana a lot of Aug & Sept due to family illness and funerals, so many evenings I worked in Mom's Mary Kay office as well. When it rains it pours! Honestly, all of it combined about laid me waste.

We're all VERY glad I have more margin in the schedule again so I can manage home responsibilities with some sanity. I love time with Jon & Kate to and from and after school. I truly enjoy my work, caring for our home, singing and serving at our church... our middle school girls ROCK!

But I've saved the best for last. Drum roll, please... That MAN God has given me! I am privileged to celebrate 20 years of marriage Dec 28<sup>th</sup> to my amazing Mark. God is SO GOOD to us!



J&K are now sporting glasses! They both inherited our nearsightedness, but they do look sharp, don't they?



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### Financial Statement

After 15 years here at Doe River, we praise God for consistently meeting our daily needs through the generous partnership of many of you. We've been grateful not to have spent much time on fundraising in a while. It's not our favorite thing to do and with so much other pressing work before us, it's all too easy to defer. But we need to shore things up for the coming year.

Like many of you, our basic expenses continue to increase. In the meantime our income has been essentially flat for 5 years and then has dropped off a bit in 2011. Nancy's income covers the kids' school expenses but doesn't make up the current shortfall. Please pray with us about this need.

Many don't give because they don't feel they can commit to a significant amount. But if a mere 5% of you who receive this letter commit to just \$25 monthly (or \$75 quarterly), we'll be in MUCH better shape for 2012. You CAN make a difference!

Perhaps you can't commit to something regular but could make a one-time gift. Any gift will be gratefully received (we know it's a hard time for many) and will help close out 2011.

Thank you for prayerfully considering our situation and what you might do to come alongside us. A BIG thank you to those of you who already faithfully partner with us! It's a privilege to invest our time and behind-the-scenes talents in the next generation of Christian leaders God is raising up through Doe River Gorge.

Have a super 2012!

#### Mark & Nancy Milbourne

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