

Dear Family and Friends,



Hope you've enjoyed an action-packed 2013—we sure have! Ryan has hit some big milestones on the road to his PhD at Florida State, while also continuing to provide weather forecasts for an agricultural consulting firm. Erica continues to enjoy being a Florida State faculty member in the Office of Science Teaching Activities, but has had a change in job titles and responsibilities. Chloe, our loveable hound dog, has continued to make the most of her life of leisure while providing moral support to us both. We're skeptical that the events relayed below all took place in the same year, but there is a good deal of evidence supporting that claim, so as scientists we have no choice but to accept it.



After wrapping up some earlier hurricane research with a second paper publication, in **March** Ryan passed the two-day gauntlet of the PhD qualifying exam. As if surviving that mega-



exam wasn't enough, Ryan's Jeopardy! episode aired on the same day he finished. Despite the positive energy from the viewing party at our house, the televised outcome of the game unfortunately remained the same as it was in the studio: a hard-fought loss full of dizzying highs, crushing lows, and a nigh-True Daily Double narrated by noted dog whisperer Cesar Millan. Incidentally, if you missed the episode when it aired, simply search for "Michael's Third Birthday Party" on YouTube.

Having touched the lives of over 18,000 K-12 students and teachers over the past three years through Science on the Move, Erica hung up the science truck keys in **May**. She was promoted to Assistant Director of the Office of Science Teaching Activities and Director of the Masters in Science Teaching program at Florida State. While she no longer has the privilege of regularly driving an ungainly truck to North Florida schools, she now



gets to advise and instruct graduate students as they prepare to become high school and community college science teachers.

Summer adventures included a trip north to celebrate some weddings, attend Ryan's



5th Princeton reunion, and attempt to bag the New York highpoint. Who would've expected we'd have to turn back short of the summit because of impassable snow two days after Memorial Day? As summer turned to fall, we continued to work and play hard. In **August**, Ryan won his fourth consecutive Gulf Winds Track Club Summer Grand Prix track series title. In **September**, Erica claimed the prize for fastest first-time female participant at a century (100-mile) bike ride in Georgia, the spiffy blanket pictured to the right. Ryan successfully defended his PhD prospectus in **October**, but he still has a good chunk of work to put in before you can officially call him "doctor."



The year was further punctuated by quality time spent with family and friends, some happy and some sad. We said a reluctant goodbye to our grandma in **September**, followed by a beloved family dog in **November**. On the other end of the happy-sad spectrum, we got to celebrate with friends and family at a total of 4 weddings.

So that's what we've been up to over the last 12 months. Stay tuned in 2014, as Ryan plans to run for public office and we pledge to run one of the zaniest campaigns in American history. Watch out, Leon County Soil and Water Conservation Board!

Warmest Wishes for a  
**Merry Christmas**  
and a  
**Happy New Year!**

Erica & Ryan



\* Video title altered to baffle copyright infringement claims.