

Dear friends and family,

Welcome to the first annual "Phillips Fill-up." With this year's meteoric rise and bouncy-ballic turnaround in gas prices, we thought you might like a free fill-up... of news and fun facts from the Phillips family's 2008.

It seems like distant past now, but Jen and I got to escape in January to the Bahamas. We had a wonderful time relaxing and enjoying some gorgeous scenery on what would be our last vacation before becoming parents.

Heading into 2008, Jen was already a few months pregnant and eager for that morning-sickness-filled first trimester to turn into the pleasant, easy second trimester. Unfortunately Jen's body did not get the memo, and she continued to feel pretty lousy. She never developed strange food cravings or built up a big appetite, but instead persevered through a tough pregnancy like a trooper.

We had a pretty simple birth plan: EPIDURAL ASAP! When we arrived at the hospital for the big event, Jen was ushered into the triage room for "20 minutes at the most." Actually 2.5 tough hours. Jen was dilated to 7 when they finally got her a room and an epidural. Things went much smoother after that, and - after some world-class pushing - Lillian Elizabeth Phillips entered the world at 6:02 a.m. on May 24, weighing in at 6 lbs. 15 oz..



Look how we've changed over the year!



Lily has certainly changed our lives. It's amazing how much your baby affects you, whether it's the gut-wrenching crying and tears or the heartwarming smiling and giggles. Lily seemed to be in pain a lot the first couple months, and not knowing what was wrong compounded our stress. After finally discovering that she likely had a milk protein allergy, we switched from breast-feeding to a hypoallergenic formula. She improved after that and now is generally very happy.

Mark works at Rediscovery Software developing software primarily for museums and libraries. He got to work from home some during maternity leave and continues to work from home one day a week. To tone down the nerdiness



a bit, he loves to get out on the soccer field. L'Equipe (that's our soccer team) has been dominating the co-rec soccer world in Charlottesville (winter: undefeated, spring: undefeated, summer: who cares?, fall: undefeated). He also enjoys writing screenplays and meeting with his fellow aspiring writers in CAOS, but he didn't write much in 2008.

Jen works in the Concannon lab at the University of Virginia on type I diabetes and DNA damage repair. She has cut back on her hours so she can spend Fridays at home with Lily. Jen also enjoys playing soccer, but not this year (L'Equipe eagerly awaits her return). She enjoys photography and has found a really cute subject to hone her skills with.

Since you probably have already found out, we figured we would just fess up. Jen turned the garage into a meth lab. Who would have thought that Jen "Safety First" Phillips would overheat the phosphorus and blow up the garage?

Don't worry, no one was hurt and the garage was not attached to the house. It didn't really matter because the cops were on to us already (bye-bye CrystalMethForLess.com). So off to jail. But Lily was left behind and we had already used our one call! (Wrong number. Who can remember phone numbers now with them all stored in the cell phone?) This is where it got kind of weird. The pack of wild dogs in our neighborhood heard Lily screaming, jumped through one of the windows blown out by the explosion, and tended to her. We owe these dogs everything, but don't let dogs raise your baby! They fed her garbage... literally! Sure we were introducing solids: avocados, bananas, sweet potatoes... not road-kill deer carcass! We can't complain entirely: they did teach her to roll over.

Well, that was our 2008. Much love and happy holidays, Mark, Jen, and Lily

P.S. We thought we might start a tradition of mixing a paragraph of fun falsehoods in with all the fun facts. Oh well, maybe next year.