

THE NEMROW FAMILY GUIDE TO PRAIRIE SURVIVAL 2013-2014

There can be too much of a good thing.

May I (Jason) present the case for water? Water is considered a pretty good thing; vital, in a word. When I was diagnosed with gout nearly thirty years ago, some doctor said that I should drink a lot of water alongside the pills I would be taking for the rest of my life. I took that to heart and, to this day, I drink gallons of water a day. Sometimes, you can actually hear me “slosh” when I walk. Water is good, but I might take its consumption beyond any reasonable intention.

Here is another case: patriarchal blessings. The leaders of the LDS church counsel members to read their patriarchal blessings (a form of scripture specific to a person) often, most likely because many rarely read their personal blessing at all. Again, I read and study my blessing often and, it could be said, a little too often. The Brethren, as we call those church leaders, likely didn't have Jason in mind when the counsel was given and I probably “feast” on my personal blessing more than is either wise or prudent. My frequent review of what I am supposed to ultimately become and the blessings I am meant to receive didn't seem to mesh with what I was doing and the possibilities given where I was living. Baring some fantastic miracle, things needed to change.

It is upon a zealous interpretation of my own patriarchal blessing that the upheavals of the past two years are based, which will be roughly outlined in this Guide. So much was happening last year at this time that no Guide even happened. Utilizing this text, you can determine for your own purposes if things among the Nemrow family of Oklahoma have simply gone too far. Some days, I wonder this myself.

The Nemrows abandon Tucumcari for the Metropolis of Portales.

In April 2013, Jason received a job offer to return to his undergraduate university as a Linux administrator, therefore everyone except Matt packed up and moved to Portales, New Mexico after spending nearly eighteen years in Tucumcari. Sadly, finances were poor, housing was even worse, and the hunt for better opportunities continued unabated.

Jason goes back to school and earns a Masters degree.

In an effort to make sure Jason was at the top of every list when job hunting and to keep his options open, he went back to school in May 2013 and spent the bulk of his early mornings and Saturdays doing assignments on-line. Just moments before his interest and energy were depleted, he earned his Masters degree in information technology network management in September 2014. *[Jason, who decided that his formal first name sounds more professional and began using it again, will be 48 years old this coming May.]*

Brenna Julaine teaches English in China.

Julaine plucked up her courage and applied to a program that teaches English to Chinese children and she spent four months in summer 2013 at a school not too far from Hong Kong. She also got to learn about a different culture, tour a bit, and bring back some exotic treats! *[Brenna, who prefers her middle name of Julaine these days, will be 21 years old this coming March.]*

Most of the family relocates to Oklahoma City.

Another job offer for Jason at Christmastime 2013 brought the larger part of the family from Portales to Oklahoma City, Oklahoma to work at the local Dell computer call center, where he remained in some discomfort for six months. The family lived in a rented house for the first few months before Lisa found a nice kitchen (wrapped inside an adequate house) that we purchased in February 2014.

The younger boys experience four schools in two years.

With all the upheaval in 2013-14, the younger Nemrow boys (Joshua, Samuel, and Caleb) attended schools in San Jon (NM), Portales, (NM), Moore (OK), and Putnam City (OK). All teachers loved them and were sorry to see them move on to other places and schools.

Samuel continues to serve in Aaronic Priesthood leadership.

As soon as the family settled in their new LDS church ward, Samuel was called to serve in the presidency of the teachers quorum, keeping up his tradition of leadership in the priesthood and nearly always being among the first to bear his testimony every month. *[Samuel will be 15 years old this coming February.]*

Matthew finishes high school in Tucumcari.

Upon completing the 16th grade (a few more than the rest of us) in May 2014, Matt finally bid a happy farewell to public education and received his high school diploma. He continues to be “the guy everyone knows” in Tucumcari and to work at the local dinosaur museum and KFC among other things. *[Matthew will be 23 years old this coming January.]*

Julaine starts an LDS mission to Bakersfield, California.

In June 2014, Julaine left home to serve a proselyting mission for the LDS Church in the Bakersfield California Mission. She is meeting many new people, working with interesting companions, and gaining and sharing a much stronger testimony!

Lisa is tricked into getting a job.

As a favor to a sister at church, Lisa agreed to help clean the local LDS Temple when they were shorthanded. She thought it was voluntary, but paperwork convinced her that it was a paying job. She began in June 2014 and went from being the back-up person to being a regular worker and recently to being something of the leader among the paid cleaners. She always seems to find the most dirt and the temple is much cleaner for it. *[Lisa will be 54 years old this coming June.]*

Shayna flirts with cookie shop management.

In September 2014, Shayna took an opportunity to manage a cookie shop in a local mall. It was a flurry of hiring, firing, broken equipment, theft, and extremely long days. She left that job just after everyone abandoned her the day after Black Friday 2014 and returned to the familiar smells and labor of being an assistant manager at Subway. *[Shayna will be 25 years old this coming June.]*

Joshua stars in the role of Dr. Sanderson in his high school production of “Harvey”.

Joshua got to perform alongside other actors and a six-foot-tall invisible white rabbit (pooka) named Harvey in a high school play in November 2014. This was his second outing in acting, the first being with the Missoula Children's Theater in fall 2012. *[Joshua will be 18 years old this coming August.]*

Caleb wins a place in an art showing at a local university.

Caleb has an art class in high school and his work was impressive enough to beat out other entries in a Oklahoma City University-sponsored art contest. He was featured in an on-campus showing in November 2014. *[Caleb will be 15 years old this coming February.]*

Finally, here is the traditional “Last Word”.

Everyone accuses me of having a mid-life crisis and I think I am finally happy to admit it.

When I looked at my life with nine years in the same job and every indication of doing the same thing in the same place for rest of my working life, I realized I wanted something more. I was living among a lot of wonderful people who “settled” where and how they were and I really didn't want to be that sort. I have absolutely no idea what constitutes “more” or “better” for me or my family, but pursuing further opportunities, before my age became a serious impediment, seemed like a good step forward at the time.

Like anyone who strives to improve, I have met with a bit more hardship than that to which I had become accustomed. I find myself doing jobs I don't like, or working among people that are of low character, or just enduring a longer commute than I prefer. I hoped my many years of experience would exempt me from such unpleasantness, but sacrifice, especially a sacrifice of some pride, is often a feature of progress.

Some people ask how long we will be in Oklahoma City. I don't know. Opportunity brought us here and, most likely, opportunity will dictate when and if we ever leave. A place with over a million people surely has a few possibilities, but one never knows where the on-going quest for “more” will take one!

With any fortune at all, perhaps this “mid-life crisis” won't be my last.