

1978 - 1979

FAA - Jamestown

- See Appendix II for stories and anecdotes from Jamestown FSS -

I moved to Jamestown in January of 1978 and it was a miserable time of year to be moving to North Dakota. I've always felt that it's not the bitter cold that takes a toll as much as it is the long stretches of cold weather without a break. The first month I was in Jamestown temperatures hovered around minus 20 day and night; and I was staying in a motel most of that time..

I finally completed the purchase of a house and then my furniture was delayed by a blizzard that shut down eastern Montana and western North Dakota. When the moving van finally arrived I had to shovel snow at the end of the driveway so the truck could back far enough into the driveway to unload and the snow was so cold and granular it was more like shoveling very dry sand.

Work at Jamestown wasn't too difficult. Our area of responsibility (Flight Plan Area) was approximately the southeastern quarter of North Dakota but the only busy airport in the area was Fargo. The country was very flat compared to even eastern Montana and it was a bit of a challenge becoming accustomed to the lack of visual references for weather observations.

That spring I built a basement bedroom for Kasi and worked on the rest of the house to fix up little things for us. Sue came out to see the house in March during spring break. She came again during the break between spring and summer quarter and brought the kids

. I believe it was during this visit that I had my first experience of what becoming a parent

was going to mean. Kasi and Kevin had been playing in the back yard. Kevin came in all excited telling us he'd learned to write and we had to come out and see. Walking out the back door I discovered that the "accomplishment" was that Kasi had helped him write her name - by using a



Home 1978-1979: 224 6th Ave SW, Jamestown, ND

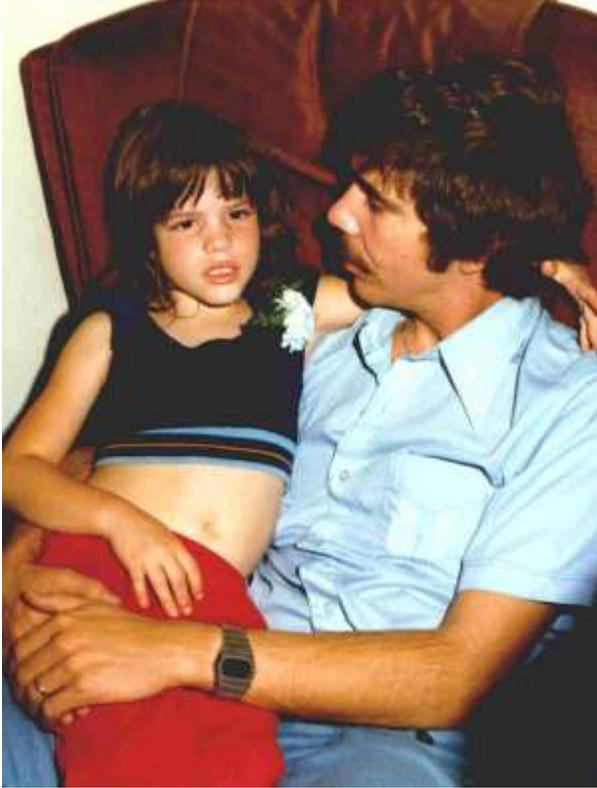
rock to scratch it into the fender of my car! I was angry beyond words, but he was so proud of what he'd accomplished that it was hard to be too mad.



In August Rick Waller, who I'd asked to be Best Man, and I hauled Sue's stuff from Havre to Jamestown, then went back to Havre for the wedding. Sue graduated from nursing school on August 18th and on the 19th we were married.



Kasi & Kevin



Jim and Kasi
I was trying to explain why she couldn't go on the honeymoon with us.

After the wedding Kasi and Kevin went to Sue's parent's farm near Lewistown while Sue and I enjoyed about a week of honeymoon travelling through western Montana and northern Idaho. It may have been the first time Sue and the kids were separated and it was especially tough on Kasi.



Once we got settled in Jamestown we began working on the adoption process and by the spring of 1979 I had legally adopted Kasi and Kevin.

I liked the city of Jamestown well enough but never found work at the Flight Service Station inspiring. The facility flight plan area included Fargo so we were fairly busy, but equipment was poorly laid out and when two or more of us were working we were always getting in each other's way.

Sue was working at the State Hospital (a mental health facility) and had been suffering some back problems so she visited a chiropractor who, after taking a ton of X-Rays told her that her problem was that one leg was longer than the other or some other goofy explanation. Then on December 8th she came out to the Flight Service Station unexpectedly and, with a grin she could barely contain, quietly let me know that she was pregnant. Shortly after that we got to thinking about what the X-Rays may have done to the fetus and in the spring went to Fargo to have an ultrasound. At the time that was the closest place where ultrasound was available and we were somewhat reassured that there didn't seem to be any problems.



By the middle of 1978 the FAA lifted the freeze on facility upgrades and of course the facility at Miles City was upgraded to Level 2. Had I stayed there I'd have gotten the promotion and pay raise without having to move. Then towards the end of 1978 we learned that responsibility for Fargo would be shifted to Grand Forks FSS. The idea was that Grand Forks could absorb the extra workload without increasing staff and, with decreased workload, the staffing at Jamestown could be reduced. Once the workload dropped below "Level 2" status the Jamestown facility would be downgraded and specialists would be given priority treatment if they wanted to move to another facility. My move to Jamestown was turning into a bad deal all around.

The day Fargo was turned over to Grand Forks FSS the workload at Jamestown immediately dropped to almost nothing. I could see that it was going to be miserable working there for the 6

to 9 months it was going to take before the facility was downgraded. I had noted that we were already overstaffed by one person and figured that whoever asked first might be able to move immediately so I talked with Sue about trying to get a transfer. She was ready to leave as well. Sue never did like Jamestown very much, probably because she got there at the end of the summer, put in a harsh winter and then went through the last half of her pregnancy during a hot humid summer.

I checked around and learned that there were two facilities that were shorthanded so thought I might be able to get a transfer right away if I requested one of them. One location was Great Falls. I thought I'd like to work there but Sue did not want to move so close to our families. The other possibility was Huron, South Dakota where Clair Wilson, who I'd worked for in Miles City, was now manager. We visited Huron and it seemed like a fairly nice town and I also liked the facility so I asked for a transfer and it was approved. I think the reporting date was supposed to be about the third week of July but since Sue was due around the beginning of August the actual transfer date was left open to after the baby was born.



On the morning of July 28th I was working a midnight shift when about 4:00AM Sue called to say she wasn't in labor but wasn't feeling well and wanted to see her doctor. I had talked to Malon, the guy who was supposed to come in at 6:00 AM, and told him that if Sue went into labor I'd call him to come in early so he could get in and relieve me. So I told Sue I'd call Malon in, pick her up, and we could just meet the doctor at the hospital between 5:00 and 6:00. When I called Malon's phone I couldn't get an answer and I couldn't imagine where he could possibly be at that time of the morning. When he finally strolled in about 20 minutes to 6:00 he said he'd heard the phone ringing, but couldn't imagine who'd be calling at that hour so didn't answer! I rushed home and got Sue to the hospital where the doctor decided to induce labor and David was born that afternoon.



Two weeks later we moved to South Dakota.