

Amy & Dusty

2015 Year in Review

Noteworthy

Dusty

- Turned the big 3-0
- Traded in the sports car for a Chevy Silverado
- Worked as the Tech Coordinator at the WVUMC Annual Conference
- Created a promotional video for Little Free Libraries that was retweeted by LFL
- Added an amazing fire pit to our front yard
- Teamed a Chrysalis Flight
- Continues to play in the LIFE UMC praise band
- Got a 50mm lens for his camera

Amy

- Selected by the International Literacy Association as one of the 30 Under 30 Literacy Leaders
- Attended six professional conferences
- Bridesmaid in Sara's wedding
- Camp counselor at the MonValley District Youth Camp
- Fifth year coaching a FIRST Lego League robotics team
- Third year as the co-president of the Marion County Reading Council
- Ran a 5K
- Became the steward of a Little Free Library

A Few of Our Favorite Things

1. Enrico Cafe
2. Shauna Niequist
3. Jeep rides
4. Books
5. Soup
6. Tent camping
7. Thomas, WV
8. Chris Stapleton
9. Little Free Libraries
10. Casey Neistat

Stay Connected



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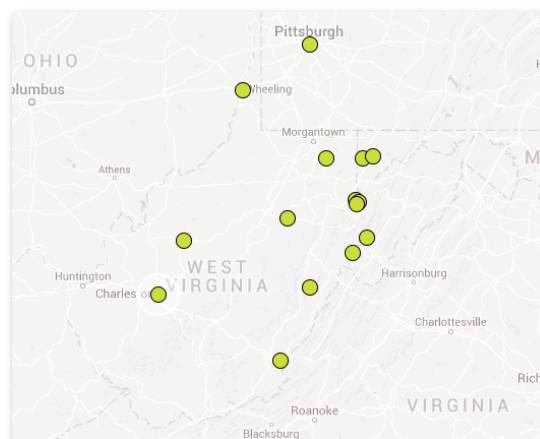
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Where We've Been



Our Family



Dusty, 30

Contractor



Married: 4.5 Years



Amy, 27

3rd Grade Teacher

Youth Coordinator



Garth, 4

Attacker of Bread Bags



Wayne, 4

Professional Laser Chaser



Ace, 5

Cardboard Destroyer



Ellie, 3

Cat Food Eater



15,346 miles

Authurdale, WV
Blackwater Falls State Park, WV
Buckhannon, WV
Charleston, WV
Davis, WV
Deep Creek Lake, MD
Etam, WV
Pittsburgh, PA
Seneca Rocks, WV
Snowshoe Mountain Resort, WV
Spencer, WV
Spruce Knob, WV
Swallow Falls State Park, MD
Thomas, WV
Wheeling, WV
White Sulphur Springs, WV

A Note from the Merrills

January and February were full of snow flurries and days spent reading and drinking coffee. Sometimes it's nice being forced to be still. We also found that the freezing temperatures meant smaller crowds at the Strip District in Pittsburgh. There is nothing like sitting in Enrico Cafe with only the heat from the brick oven to keep you warm.

April kicked off wedding season for Sara and Jared. The Breakfast at Tiffany's themed bridal shower was absolutely lovely. The bridal party also took a weekend trip to Deep Creek Lake for the bachelorette party in May. The two tied the knot on June 6. It was a perfect day, and Dusty and I couldn't have been more honored to be a part of it.

In May, Davina and Sam's house burnt down. Thankfully no one was home at the time of the fire. While they are rebuilding their home they are living with Dave and Debbie, and we are housing their cat, Tom. It took a little time to adjust, but now Tom and our boys have become best buddies.

This was an eventful summer. In June we enjoyed a visit from my Aunt Wilma and Uncle John from Texas. Our friends, the Bennetts, moved back to Fairmont. With the help of my Grandma Phillips, we planted our first garden. We also decided to try tent camping. We camped in Etam, WV, and spent the next day exploring Thomas and Blackwater Falls State Park. Our next camping destination was Seneca Rocks. When we woke up, we ventured up (and up, and up) a mountain to Spruce Knob. It's hard to believe we have both lived in West Virginia all of our lives and haven't seen these sights. We ended the summer with our annual trip to Snowshoe Mountain with Samantha and Rob Bolyard. On October 13, Dusty and I became godparents to their new beautiful daughter, Payton Jean Bolyard. She is absolutely perfect.

We have continued to work with the youth at LIFE United Methodist Church. Unfortunately, on September 20 we lost one of our senior youth, Kayla Decker, to a fatal motorcycle accident. Please continue to pray for this family and all of those missing this beautiful young lady. On September 26 we were at South Ridge Church for her funeral. On September 27 we were at South Ridge Church for Amy's dad's baptism. Both of these events were such beautiful celebrations of life. (Job 1: 20-22)

I was selected by the International Literacy Association as one of the 30 Under 30 Literacy Leaders of 2015. Following this news, I was featured in an international publication, interviewed by the local newspaper and news stations, acknowledged at the Marion County Board of Education meeting, and presented an award at the state reading conference at The Greenbrier.

The Marion County Reading Council worked to install two Little Free Libraries in local communities. These libraries have been a huge success! Dusty created a promotional video for the upcoming installation of at least two more of these libraries in the spring.

It has been a year full of ups and downs. There have been wonderful celebrations and times of mourning and loss. We are so thankful for our friends and family who have loved us through it all.

Merry Christmas and Cheers to a New Year,
Amy and Dusty



Dusty and his new truck



The new Mr. and Mrs. Martin



The Rote's visit to Fairmont



Our first camping excursion together



Our goddaughter, Payton Jean Bolyard



The fire pit we built in our yard