

The big news from the Brown family this year is all about pooping. Well, maybe that's second biggest news, I guess Christine's tumor free body is the biggest news. Yes, the treatments of the past couple of years have paid off and she is now officially in remission. You probably heard the large sighs of relief from the whole family. The treatment included immunotherapy, aromatherapy, transcendental meditation, frequent foot massages and massive amounts of quilting. At least that's what she told me. I put the cure down to the fact that she just bossed the tumors into submission, the poor buggers had no chance.



Actually pooping probably comes in at number three (a shame, it would have been more appropriate as number two). The other big news is the arrival of Audrey Jane Bridges, Ellie and Bob's second



daughter born on November 7<sup>th</sup>. Everyone is doing great apart from the sleepless nights. Not mine, I sleep like a log, everyone else just can't seem to get a good night's sleep for some reason. When the baby arrived home I was given the important job of “staying out of the way”, something I excel at. While everyone else filled in with the other boring ancillary tasks. Occasionally I was allowed to cuddle the baby, but only when sober (me that is, not the baby).

Just what I need, another granddaughter to wrap me around her little finger. I love this grandfather business.

Co-incidentally Audrey was born on Gregory's 30<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Apparently this gives him the rights to come up with the baby's nickname. He decided that she should be known as 'Drey after his favorite Rap artist Dr. Dre. They have so much in common, one is famous for his misogynistic lyrics, drug use and violence while the other specializes in sleeping, sucking, burping and pooping. I somehow don't see the name sticking. Although 'President Drey' has quite a ring to it, maybe sometime around 2048.

OK, I can't put off the pooping any longer. A momentous moment happened recently, Lyanna, the two year old, pooped in a potty. I know, has this ever happened before in human history? Four grown adults leaping up and down, clapping and whoohooing. You would have thought the Patriots had won another Superbowl. All because of a simple bowel movement. I personally get great pleasure from the act and think the world would be a much better place if we all celebrated like that every time. The irony was that the only person disgusted was Lyanna, “euuugh, yucky!”. Which is close to the phrase I use when faced with her dirty diapers. To be perfectly honest, I use the phrase, “Ellie, Lyanna needs her diaper changed.”, and then “staying out of the way”.

Co-co-incidentally, the same day Audrey was born and Gregory turned 30, he and Kelly bought their first house in Durham, NC. A pretty momentous day for them. It looks like they are staying in the south for a while yet. It's quite nice down there, warm weather, and the people are very friendly but it really is the Deep South. You can tell, they have more churches than bars which makes me feel slightly uncomfortable.

You would assume that real jobs and a mortgage would make them into responsible adults, but they still sleep in until noon at the weekends. Ah, those were the days, eh Ellie? She dreams of three consecutive hours of uninterrupted slumber. I guess having babies is the step that forces you to really grow up.



Gregory was so pleased when he shot his first birdie that he posted a picture playing golf with his real father. The similarity is uncanny, I had no idea but now it all makes sense. The biggest difference between them is that Gregory doesn't cheat at golf.

Gregory and Kelly are getting married in May if Kelly can put up with him that long. They have scheduled the wedding in the afternoon to ensure they'll both make it.



Andrew and Erin agreed that 2018 was the year to tour the world on a 12 month clothing optional, open bar cruise stopping at all the world's rave spots and nightlife centers. Then they changed their minds and instead Andrew decided to move jobs and resume commuting two hours each way to Boston. It was a close call but probably the right decision, fiscally speaking.

Also a momentous year for Andrew, he is the first one in the family to buy an SUV. It's so practical for carrying groceries and being automatic it's so good in traffic. So sensible and you wouldn't believe the mileage! I think he should have chosen the debauchery cruise. Or maybe bought a minivan like a real man would.



It was a momentous year for Stephen too. He was the first one in the family to get a tattoo (as far as we know). He told me it says "Dad is the best, and mom is OK too." and of course I believe him. What a good boy, apart from being a very naughty boy for getting a tattoo in the first place. I guess I'll have to get a tat' with "Stephen is the best, and the others are OK too", it's only fair.

I had money on him getting the first tattoo and also having the first grandchildren but he completely blew that one (as far as we know).

As for us, we are still in the same boat as last year, trying to figure out what to do with the rest of our lives. It's not a bad problem, we seem to be enjoying the process. This not working lark is quite good. Christine was complaining of getting too many nights of uninterrupted sleep, so the freedom for her to spend a month helping with the new baby is perfect.

Bring on 2019 and let's see whatcha got.

Have a great Christmas and enjoy 2019.

