

The VOGT Holiday Newsletter

Christmas 2012

As the green and colorful scenery of summer once again turns brown and withers, and the warm summer breezes turn on the compass to cold icy blasts from the north, our thoughts turn from summer and sunshine to football and fireplaces, to sweaters and snowstorms, to hot cider and hibernation. But it is also, as Dickens so aptly put, the season of *"...happy, happy Christmas, that can win us back to the delusions of our childhood days, recall to the old man the pleasures of his youth, and transport the traveler back to his own fireside and quiet home!"* We wish you a happy, happy Christmas and a prosperous 2013! May your goals be attainable and your wishes come true for the new year!

Lynn and I have had a tolerable year past, all things considered – no major illnesses or accidents, no calamities or disasters, no unpleasant surprises, no shocks to the system. Based on those parameters, I think we can declare 2012 a success! A few milestones were achieved this past year; Gene reached his 25th anniversary at MITRE in August, we celebrated our third year in the Ballot Box in October. And in 2013 a few more milestones will be passed; Lynn and Gene will both turn the big six-oh, and we will celebrate 39 years of *bledded wiss* in July! A celebratory sojourn to Lynn's ancestral homeland (Scotland) is planned for May 2013. We've booked the tickets and rented the auto; now we have to hammer out some sort of itinerary so we'll know what we want to see and where we're staying. We've started listing desirable things to take in (a bagpipe concert or three, a visit to *Skara Brae*, a bit of genealogical research, standing on the shores of Loch Ness and searching for Nessie, touring the distilleries in Speyside and the Isle of Islay, etc.) so now we need to choreograph it all into a schedule so we can book rooms on appropriate nights. It's getting exciting!

Lynn and I were lucky enough to be able to spend a lot of time up at the Ballot Box in Maine this past year. We trekked up a number of times for weekends but also were able to escape for a week or more at a time, and Lynn was able to spend most of the summer up there, while I went up for long weekends. I was able to drive up Thursdays after work and tele-commute on Fridays via internet and telephone (we do a lot of telephone meetings at work anyway, even when I'm in my office). I was even able to take the Amtrak *DownEaster* train (Boston to Portland and reverse, with a stop in Woburn) a few times when I needed to get back to Woburn and Lynn was staying up, or I wanted to get north but not have two cars there. And as of November 1st the *DownEaster* goes past Portland to Brunswick, just a half-hour from the Ballot Box! We think of the time spent up there as *practice* for retirement! We're retiring in slow-motion!

2012 held some special anniversaries too! On March 17th 1912 Gene's dad was born, so St. Patrick's Day was the 100th anniversary of his birthday. We lost Dad in 1989, so he wasn't able to celebrate his 100th birthday with us in person, but we wanted to do something to commemorate the day so we invited all of his descendants PLUS my cousins from my mother's side. We had 37 relatives (descendants AND cousins) and 3-4 interlopers (fiancés and boyfriends/girlfriends of grandchildren and great-grandchildren). My sister and her son and grandson even *Skyped™* in from Colorado for the entire party.

I also felt the need to create something lasting to honor him, so I pulled together the genealogy research on the VOGT line I've been working on for the last 24 years and published a 68-page book that traces his paternal lineage – following his VOGT name – back nine generations to his 7th-great-grandfather Hermann VOGT, who was a meat-cutter in Lich Germany in the 1500s. Happy birthday, Dad!

Another 100th anniversary party was held on April 20, 2012, and Gene was lucky enough to attend that bash too! Fenway Park turned 100 years old on that day and on that day 100 years ago the Red Sox played the New York Highlanders (fore-runners of the New York Yankees) in the inaugural game for the Park. Boston won that game, 7-6 in 11 innings. We weren't so lucky this past April (the Yankees won, 6-2), but the pre-game ceremony was amazing; to the soundtrack to *Field of Dreams*, over 200 former players – in uniforms of their eras – emerged from every nook and cranny of the park to take their traditional position on the field. Names I hadn't heard in 50 years, old players in wheel-

chairs, heroes of my youth and of my father's youth, were called out and honored. When I closed my eyes I was back on the screen porch at Pearl Street as a young boy with my dad, listening to the boys of summer on his transistor radio. For a true fan of *The Game* it was not to be missed.

On the health front, Lynn and I are both well, but starting to feel our age. Both of us have creaky knees that stiffen up easily and cause us a bit of pain when first rising from a chair or climbing stairs; the longer we sit, the stiffer we get. In my case, they loosen up with a bit of walking so I try to go for frequent strolls around the building where I work during the day. Other than the occasional sore back or stiff neck, we're holding out well enough otherwise. Lynn may have found something that helps her 20-year-old cough (see previous Christmas letters for details!); it's a prescription nose spray called *Azelastine™* that's used for treating seasonal and perennial allergic rhinitis. Here's hoping!

Lynn is still quilting up a storm, and in the near future you'll be able to buy raffle tickets for some of her handiwork! She belongs to the *Rising Star Quilters Guild*, which has a substantial membership in the area north of Boston and they hold a large quilt show every October in Lexington. At this show they raffle off a guild-made quilt to raise money to support the guild and to donate to charity. Lynn was in charge of supervising the design and construction of the 2013 quilt, which had to be completed soon after the 2012 show so it can spend the year traveling the "quilt circuit" and be used to sell raffle tickets. Lynn picked out all the fabric (100% batik), and supervised the layout and cutting of the pieces that make up the "blocks" that make up the quilt. She made a significant portion of the blocks herself (other guild members made the rest), then she designed the block layout and sewed them all together, picked out the backing, and did all the quilting on a long-arm quilting machine (something she covets for herself!). It is stunning, if I do say so myself! By the time you read this there may be a photograph of it up on her quilt gallery on the family web site.

I've been "puttering" with my genealogy, taking on small research projects to fill in missing details about known people and fleshing out backwater sections of the family tree. The release of the 1940 Federal Census this year (72 years after recording, by law) opened up a lot of possibilities for gathering minor details all around the tree, which I've been doing in dribs and drabs.

On the geek front, I picked up a used laptop at the company auction back in August, and have been enjoying that, especially since I upgraded the hard drive and installed the new *Windows 8™* Operating System on it. Lynn got a new *Lenovo Yoga™* ultrabook as an early Christmas present. It also has *Windows 8* on it, and a touch-screen, so it makes full use of the *Windows 8* capabilities. The screen also opens 360°, all the way back up against the keyboard, so it can be used as an 11" touch-screen tablet as well!

Megan and Dan bought a house in Lowell this year. It's a wonderful place close to downtown and very convenient to all the great amenities in the city. They're having fun transforming it from a *house* into a *home*. Megan is still at *Bose Corp.™*, but Dan left *Bose* and now works for *eBay™* doing intelligent communications targeting for clients.

Audrey just celebrated her second anniversary with *PetEdge™* as a product support specialist, collecting commendations left and right. She's doing her best to work her way up in the company, watching for and applying for job openings in positions that she believes she would do well in. She has a steady beau (Todd) who also works at *PetEdge* and is a musician and videoblogger. She's also doing free-lance dog grooming in her spare time – Have Clippers, Will Travel!

We wish you a Merry Christmas and health and happiness for the coming New Year!

Love,
Lynn & Gene

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