

Christmas 2015 with the Dogts

It's that time again - time for those [hated, chatty, Christmas letters](#) from some other family, telling you all about their year, and being too lazy to write something personal in the Christmas card. Don't you hate these things?!? The holiday season has snuck up on us yet again. This happens every year now, where it seems like we've just gotten past Labor Day and reluctantly said goodbye to the summer, and in the blink of an eye - WHOOSH! - there goes Columbus Day, Halloween, Veteran's Day and Thanksgiving, rushing past us in the wrong direction. Every year I try to dig my heels in to slow it down, but it never works. You would think I would learn by now!

The exciting news for this year is that we have another wedding coming up! Todd proposed to Audrey on May 29th, she accepted, and they've set a date: October 13th 2017! It's a Friday! *REALLY!* Plenty of time for plans and arrangements, and after a flurry of excitement and frenzy just after the engagement things have begun to pull together; they've picked a venue ([Smith Barn](#) in Peabody MA) and plans are afoot. I guess the next step is to build a first draft of a guest list to see how much paring down will be needed. I'll report back on progress in NEXT year's Christmas letter!

On Lynn's recovery front, all is going as well as we had hoped. She is likely at her fullest recovery point; not back to pre-accident form, but probably as close to that as possible. She is more wary of her balance and steadiness afoot (probably a *good* thing as we get older), her repaired ankle and foot is about a half shoe-size larger than it used to be, and it still aches when using it too much. She prefers a walking stick when walking on uneven ground, and still needs to ice the ankle when it's been over-used. It's probably the way it will be going forward. Her recovery was a methodical (and agonizingly slow to her) process; at the beginning of the year Lynn was receiving in-home Physical Therapy (PT), but in February she graduated to out-patient PT at the [N.E. Rehab Hospital](#). Lynn organized a small army of friends to drive her to and from her appointments (saving me from having to take time off that I didn't have in my vacation pool), and she cleverly arranged for her PT sessions to be just before or just after noon so she could treat her chauffeur to lunch somewhere and they could visit and catch up with each other.

We also had a few events this year related to the accident and Lynn's recovery. The first was a touching ceremony prompted by Lynn's association with quilting. As you know, Lynn is an active quilter, and belongs to two quilt guilds – one in MA and one in ME. Soon after Lynn's accident one of her

Maine quilt buddies contacted Lynn's quilter-friends in MA and elsewhere to see if anyone would be willing to make a quilt block to be sewn into a commemorative thank-you quilt to be given to the Rockport ME Volunteer Fire and Rescue Squad (the people who rescued Lynn after the crash). The Maine quilter collected numerous blocks from twelve other quilters living in at least four states, enough to make two full quilts plus two throw pillows to go on the couch in the squad's break room. Lynn's quilt buddy arranged with the Rockport Fire Chief to [present the quilts at the squad's June meeting](#) on the afternoon of the 18th, and we were there. It was an emotional afternoon.

Finally, to mark the one-year anniversary of the accident (November 1st) Lynn wanted to *drive* (not be driven) to the scene of the accident, and then visit the Pen Bay emergency room where the people who took care of her that night do their magic every day. We made a celebratory day of it, and took a roundabout route up to Rockport ME, driving up through [blueberry country](#), then to the site of the accident to reflect, then to the emergency room bearing gifts of coffee and donuts and muffins. A goodly number of the staff remembered Lynn and that night of the accident, and Lynn got to meet "Matt," the nurse she remembered as being so kind and caring and who focused on *her* the whole time. There were more than a few moist eyes, and exclamations of how great it was to see a former patient doing so well. We didn't stay long, but long enough to convey our profound thanks for the work they do in general and the work they did that night in particular.

At the end of July and the beginning of August we got to test TSA's ability to detect all the metal in Lynn's repaired ankle (nary a beep!) as we flew to and from Montana for a family wedding in Big-Sky country! I had expiring frequent-flyer miles that needed to be used, so we flew first class(!) into Jackson Hole WY and drove up along the Teton mountain range to Bozeman MT and then east to Livingston MT where the wedding was ([set-1](#), [set-2](#), [set-3](#), [set-5](#)). Neither of us had been to that particular part of the country before, so we spent a few days before and after the wedding exploring the area. The wedding itself was spectacular – hot and sunny and dry, but spectacular; outdoors, by the banks of the Yellowstone River in Paradise Valley, in the shadow of the Tetons ([set-4](#)). Our return trip to Jackson Hole for the flight home was an all-day drive through Yellowstone National Park, which included a stop at *Old Faithful* with a ringside seat

for the geyser's afternoon eruption (cross that off the bucket list! [Set-6](#)).

Gene's still at [MITRE](#) (29 years this coming August), but the project he was working on last year (managing the Bedford contingent of a group of engineers working for an unnamed government agency) ended up being a one-year effort, so he was back looking for another position within MITRE for October and beyond (MITRE's fiscal year runs 1 October to 30 September). A Group Leader position (first-line management, he's done that before) opened up in a different part of the company, so he applied and was selected. It meant he had to leave the part of the company where he had worked for his entire MITRE career, and the field (military intelligence; yeah, I know, an oxymoron) he had worked in for his entire non-teaching career (35+ years), but it has been – and still is – an adventure. He gets to manage and counsel people, which he enjoys immensely, and he gets to work technical issues in an arena (Command and Control) other than intelligence. It keeps him on his toes, especially the whole new set of acronyms!

On the genealogy front, Gene was able to connect with and get to meet a new-found 2nd cousin and her husband (coincidentally living in Rockport ME), continue re-connecting with a re-found 1st cousin once removed and his family living in Medford MA, attend a 1-day MA State genealogy conference and a 4-day New England genealogy conference, and give a presentation to the Damariscotta ME German Genealogy Club (and guests) about his 28-year quest to trace his VOGT family line back to its origins in Lich, Hesse, Germany. A good year, all considered!

Megan and Dan are still in Lowell and doing well. Megan is still working for [Bose Corporation](#) as a "Demonstration Experience Designer" (working on retail displays for Bose products). Dan has recently started working for [Forrester Research](#) where he helps companies understand the research that his company writes.

After a recovery-driven hiatus, Lynn and Gene (especially Lynn) were able to spend lots of time at the [Ballot Box](#) in mid-coast Maine this year; 85 days for Gene (mostly on weekends) and 93 days for Lynn. In August-September Lynn was "in residence" for a full 3½ weeks, with Gene coming up for weekends, back and forth on the [DownEaster](#) train to Brunswick from Woburn. It is so peaceful and relaxing up there, we love it.

One consequence of Lynn's accident was that her [PT Cruiser](#) was no more! Once Lynn got her driving license reinstated, we started the tedious process of finding a replacement.

Neither of us enjoys car shopping, but Lynn finally settled on a replacement – a 2016 [Mazda CX-5](#), which we picked up July 6. It is a peppy little all-wheel-drive cross-over (an SUV-style vehicle built on a car chassis rather than a truck chassis) with a lot of fun bells and whistles (GPS navigation, Bose Stereo, heated seats, etc.). It gets great mileage too, much better than the SRX!

We would like to close our 2015 Christmas Letter by including the lyrics to a song found on the CD [A Real Irish Christmas](#) (Atlantic B00000K3G2). The song is called [Come Fill Up Your Glasses](#) and is performed by the group *Skylark*. We took a trip north to Vermont recently to attend a memorial service for a close friend's mom, and we brought a long-haul CD with us for the ride that had a dozen or more Celtic Christmas albums on it. We decided this song expressed our wishes for our friends – and for everyone – this year;

*Come fill up your glasses with whiskey and beer.
Here's to your health and lots of good cheer.
To our sisters and brothers, and may they live long.
Come fill up your glasses and join in this song.*

*A toast to the farmers who work on the land,
Who live where their work is and toil while they can.
To the teachers, and the carpenters, and the bold engineers,
May your wages keep rising over the years.*

*Long life to the miners the whole world around,
Who spend all their days in a hole underground,
Whose road is a tunnel, whose day is the night,
Out of darkness and danger they bring heat and light.*

*To the artists and writers, let's now drink a health,
To people whose hopes and whose joys are our wealth,
Whose tools are but canvas and paper and pen,
Whose harvest is the future, the progress of men.*

*Let the men drink a health to their sweethearts and wives,
And the women, being willing, will greet them likewise.
May your pleasures be many, and your troubles be few,
May you treasure the day you made one out of two.*

*Let's drink to our children and lend us good fare,
A world where they live free from sorrow and care,
A world where goodwill amongst men is the law,
A world without fallout, a world without war.*

A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all!

Love,
Gene & Lynn
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