

The Vogt Holiday Letter *Christmas 2021*



Merry Christmas! Happy New Year! Salutations of the Season!

As we approach the fourth anniversary of our retirement (January 2019) and enjoy our third year of Maine Residency (August 2019), we often shake our heads at the good fortune we've encountered along the way to this point in our lives. The first edition of our "life-plan" (leap-frogging every few years further north into upstate NH while teaching science in various high schools) got "adjusted" a few times as life-situations morphed, but we count our blessings and marvel at how it all turned out.

The COVID cocoon loosened a bit this year for us (we got our second vaccination shots on 7 April), but no-one would suggest we're back to normal yet. Not sure we remember what "normal" is anymore! We ventured outside our newly-adopted state only twice this year, an overnight trip to MA for our nephew Mark's memorial celebration in May, and Gene did another overnight trip to MA for a cousin's memorial celebration in June. Weddings and birth celebrations slowly morph into funerals and memorial celebrations as time passes. 'Tis the Circle Game for real (♪ ♪) ***...and the seasons, they go round and round...*** ♪ ♪).

We **did** host nine people for overnight visits (all vaccinated) at various times at the Ballot Box, during the latter half of the year. The guest suite got christened and was well-used! Since we're most central to all the Munroe clan who've migrated to Maine (we were the last holdout), it works best that we host Munroe-Family gatherings. We hosted our usual Memorial-Day summer kickoff for the 12th season this year, a super fun gathering in September while Arlo (Marcia & Tom's son) and Alana were vacationing in Maine, and our third annual Thanksgiving dinner just last month! Good times were had by all! We also hosted Gene's sister Joanne from Colorado for a week in September, and she got a lot of lobster! It was great to see her!

We continued our "beautification" project at the Maine house. Lynn laid out more gardens to add to the work done last year. In 2020 she focused on the area around the back deck with terraced gardens following the slope of the land down into the back yard. This year she focused on perennials in the front yard – a kidney-shaped garden with lots of color and a decorative birdhouse on a post, and a forsythia, a hydrangea,

and a lilac further out from the house. Something nice to look at from the kitchen/dining-nook windows! We had a shed built and delivered back in late June. Gene initially priced out lumber to build a 12'x16' shed himself, but we found a Maine shed-building company that would deliver a pre-built one for less than the wood would cost by itself, so we went with it. Gene *did* modify the interior, wiring the shed for electricity (with the help of a licensed electrician friend), and adding two levels of 4'x16' shelves to increase the accessible storage space (looks like a bunkhouse!). We'll transfer the "stuff" into the shed that we had to stash in \$torage bins about a mile away. Money saved will pay for the shed in less than 3 years!

We also had our 300-foot+ driveway paved. The landscaper from 2 years ago originally talked us into using "recycled" asphalt for the driveway... cheaper than paving. BUT... it was just loose stones, worse than gravel, and the stones would come into the house in shoe-treads and scratch up the new wood floors, so we got rid of that problem as quickly as we could!

The Oxbow Brewery in town was able to rekindle their annual fall "Goods From the Woods" party this past October, hosting #10 in year #11 (no party last year, for obvious reasons!). Gene was able to attend his 9th (missed the very first one) and photos can be found on his Flickr account at <https://flic.kr/s/aHsmWSEyZh>

Lynn's over-the-garage quilt studio has been put to frequent use during COVID... she's created quite a few lap-quilts and baby-quilts, sold a few, gave away a few, and built one over-king sized quilt in a star pattern that is spectacular. Some can be seen on our BallotBox September blog: <https://tinyurl.com/r247sedw>

We also did something this year that we've never done before nor ever expected to do... we published a book! The 5¢ version of the story is that Lynn's mom handed us a dusty, fragile manuscript back in the mid-90s, asking us to "take care of" it for her. It was a family ancestry book, finished in 1923, written by her grandfather (Lynn's great-grandfather). Retirement and COVID conspired to give us enough free time to tackle such a project. The \$10 version of the story can be read on our TAYLOR genealogy blog at: <https://tinyurl.com/223bwm2s>

Now that we've retired... and built a retirement home... and sold the old homestead... and set down roots in mid-coast Maine, we decided it was time to redo those wills we signed in 1991, assigning guardianship of the girls and doling out nickels to inheritors. We used a lawyer this time instead of the will-making software back then that only ran on DOS.

It saddens us to say – again – that the estrangement with our daughters has not improved. We don't have contact with either Megan or Audrey, and we miss them both. All we see of our almost 4-year-old grandson Alexander are photographs and short videos of him on **Instagram**®. He looks happy and healthy and is adorable. Megan and Dan seem to be wonderful parents! We do still love them all and wish them well none-the-less.

*Best Wishes,
Gene & Lynn*