



Christmas 2004

Merry Christmas, Happy New Year, and Happy Holidays in general from the VOGT Family! Another year is coming to a close... the old odometer is really spinning now!

It's been an interesting year for the VOGTs. We reached a few milestones, made some progress, did some traveling, celebrated a bit, planned a bit, got surprised a bit, and did our best to absorb and enjoy everything that came our way in the course of the year, for better or for worse.

One milestone reached this year was our 30th anniversary! Lynn and I don't feel like we're old enough to have been married 30 years, which I guess is a good thing! We celebrated our anniversary in Ireland, traveling around County Kerry for two weeks with my sister Joanne and her husband David. It was my fifth time visiting, Lynn's third, and my sister's first. We all had the best time ever, visiting relatives, touring the countryside, drinking Guinness, and taking lots of photographs (over 1,200 - thank goodness for digital cameras!). My journal of the trip and selected photos are on the family web site (URL below).

Another milestone for the family this spring was the completion of Megan's baccalaureate degree from the University of Lowell. She now has a Bachelor of Music degree in Sound Recording Technology. Times are tough so she hasn't found employment in that career field yet, but she is gainfully employed and is making ends meet in some fashion while living with roommates in Derry NH.

A third milestone arrived just a few days ago, with word that Audrey has passed her National Certification test as a Pharmacy Technician. She's decided to start down that long road to become a pharmacist, and has been working at a local CVS for a while now, but being nationally certified is a big boost.

Lynn still works at the Cambridge Quilt Shop, and still enjoys it a lot. She's expanded her responsibilities and is now teaching quilting classes at the shop on a regular basis. She really has a knack for quilting, and a true gift in that she can teach it as well. It's one thing to be able to *do* something, but quite another to be able to *do* it *and teach* it as well. She loves doing lesson plans! ☺

Not much to report on Lynn's health issues. She still battles the cyclic and persistent cough, and her allergies are about the same. Her TMJ (Temporo-Mandibular Joint syndrome) has gotten worse and will probably need attention in the upcoming year. We're going down to St. Petersburg FL in January to consult with a TMJ specialist.

Speaking of Florida, we just got back from an escape weekend on the Gulf Coast. Actually, it was an escape weekend for Lynn but a business trip for me. I spent two weeks in Tampa on business. During the weekend in between, Lynn flew down to meet me and we both headed out to the Marriott resort on Clearwater Beach on the Gulf Coast, a bit north of St. Petersburg. It was a great escape weekend.

This summer we continued our slow but steady progress on the re-landscaping of the pool area. We took down the 16'x32' above-ground pool a few years ago, and spent some time deciding what we wanted to do with the area. In fall 2003 I built a pergola (arbor) out there, and this summer I built one of two raised gardens by the pergola, complete with fountain. I had the pergola and the area wired for power and speakers, so it's on its way to being a fine patio area for the spring, summer, and autumn months.

We also had a few visits from some of our former exchange students from Germany this year. I've kept in touch with a few of the students over the years, and this year one of them did an internship in PA as part of his college curriculum. He came up from PA to visit twice, and a third time he brought another one of the former students for a visit. It was great to see them again and reminisce.

Of course, any Christmas letter this year from a Boston native would be incomplete without mention of the awesome sports year we've had. We started the year with a Super Bowl win by the New England Patriots (who continue to amaze us), their 2nd in three years. But in October the most amazing thing happened... hell froze over, the cows came home, and $2 + 2 = 5$ all at once – the Boston Red Sox won the World Series! Eighty-six years of frustration (only 51 for me) evaporated in the blink of an eye. And the way it happened made it even sweeter. I don't watch much baseball on TV during the regular season; there's too much other stuff to do. So mostly I listen on radio when I'm doing something else (driving, mowing the lawn, etc.) But towards the end of the season, when it gets interesting, I start watching more games on TV whenever possible, and if the Red Sox make the playoffs I definitely watch. This year I was glued to the TV throughout the playoffs. What an exciting ride!

For those not from New England, it's hard to comprehend what it's like to be a Red Sox fan and to understand how significant this championship was. All I can say is to get your hands on a copy of the December 6th issue of *Sports Illustrated* where the entire Red Sox team was named *Sportsmen of the Year*, and read that article by Tom Verducci. It's one of the finest pieces of writing I've read in a long time, and captures the essence perfectly.

That's all for now. Come visit us on the web at <http://www.familytreehouse.net/> or send email to GeneVogt@FamilyTreeHouse.net. Fröhliche Weihnachten und einen guten Rutsch ins neue Jahr!

Love,
Lynn, Gene, Audrey and Buddy
(and Megan too, even though she doesn't live at home any more!)