

Christmas 2005

Welcome to another **VOGT Family Christmas letter**. We've been doing this for a long time now, so you'd think I'd get the hang of it as to when to start writing the letter to have it ready for inclusion with the Christmas cards... but **NOOOO!** Once again I'm rushing to finish.



2005 was a bit quieter than the past few years. At least it seems so as I reflect back. No big vacations, no momentous anniversaries, no graduations, no big ups or big downs. Our health has been about the same, but I guess that's better than the alternative!

Lynn is still quilting up a storm and working at the **Cambridge Quilt Shop**. With one daughter out of the house, and the other living in the apartment downstairs, we found ourselves this year with two spare bedrooms upstairs. One of them (the slightly smaller one) had been re-arranged into a make-shift sewing room for Lynn, but it wasn't ideal by any means (not enough light, the carpet on the floor hid pins and other dropped things, etc.), so in early spring I tore apart the corner bedroom and made it into a real quilting room; I ripped up the carpet and pad down to the bare sub-floor and laid down a hard composite floor (Pergo™), then re-wired all the lighting in the room, adding two banks of track-lights and separate controls for the main light and the fan. I replaced the closet contents with two rows of floor-to-ceiling storage baskets, added network, phone and cable TV drops on two walls, and repainted all the walls and woodwork. It came out great,



and is far nicer for Lynn and her quilting.

Lynn's also been teaching more classes at the quilt shop, which pays better but requires a lot more effort in preparation and management. She's also published her first quilt pattern (a quilted Christmas Tree skirt), which is being sold through the quilt shop this Christmas season!

Lynn's health issues continue. Her TMJ has stabilized for now. We went down to Florida last January to consult with a famous specialist, but his method of treating TMJ and cranio-facial problems seemed too radical for us. She would have had to have her jaw wired shut and immobile for 4-6 months, and the procedure is so new that there is only a few years of experience with the results and whether or not they are long-lasting. After that eye-opening visit, we visited 3-4 other specialists with far less radical treatment methods, and the decision evolved into a "Watch and Wait" plan for now.

She's also still battling the cyclic and persistent cough, her fatigue, headaches, IBS, joint pain and arthritis. More research has shown her a possible explanation for these and other symptoms she has – **Fibromyalgia**, defined at one web site as; *"A chronic disorder characterized by widespread musculoskeletal pain, fatigue, and multiple tender points that occurs in precise, localized areas, particularly in the neck, spine, shoulders, and hips; also may cause sleep disturbances, morning stiffness, irritable bowel syndrome, anxiety, and other symptoms."* Sure seems like a likely candidate! We're not sure what can be done about it – it doesn't seem to have a cure – but there are techniques to lessen the impact.

Gene's still working at **MITRE** (19 years in August) and traveling a lot (enough to be *Silver Elite* both at US Airways and Marriott hotels!). His weight's still not under control, but he hasn't given up yet (if good intentions were all it took, he'd be a skinny minny by now! ☺). Between his hobbies (genealogy, digital photography, coin collecting, computers, etc.), his chores (rebuilding bedrooms, taking care of the yard, landscaping, snow removal, etc.), and working to afford all the hobbies and chores, there's not much time left for sleeping! He's really enjoying the digital SLR camera he picked up for the Ireland trip in 2004 – photography was an active hobby in years past but it was put aside for a number of years. Now with the closer connection between photography and computers its more fun than ever!



The girls are doing well. **Audrey** came to a couple of decisions this year – she decided that a pharmacy technician doesn't make enough money to live on, so she took a job as an assistant manager of an **EBGames** store in a nearby town. She works hard, but gets paid almost twice as much, and her health benefits are better too. She also decided

to put her quest for a pharmacology degree on hold... 7 more years of school was a bit too much to face at this point in her life. Maybe later. She and Jake are still engaged, and they're still talking about a 2007 wedding.

Audrey also had some major (for her) surgery this year. She's always been susceptible to ear and throat infections, and her allergies have given her more trouble than it seemed they should have. After yet another bout of illness her doctor recommended triple surgery to remove her tonsils and adenoids, and to fix a (previously undiscovered) deviated septum. She had the surgery in the summer, and she's doing great! She can breathe, her colds are mild and un-troublesome, and she can SMELL things now! Well, maybe that's not always a great thing....

Megan's long quest for a job in her chosen field has finally paid off. She works for **Bose Corporation** now, as a Level 2 Service Technician. Level 1 Technicians deal with the 4-5 most popular products that Bose sells (the Wave Radio, the noise-canceling headphones, Acoustimass sub-woofer and satellite speakers, etc.). Level 2 Technicians deal with those items when the Level 1 folks can't solve the problem, and about 200 or more additional products. So far the job is working out well. She went through an 8-week training course and is "flying solo" now. She likes the work, and the pay is over twice what she made as a waitress. PLUS – she gets full (and excellent) benefits, so Dad gets a big raise too! She's living in Lowell again (after spending a year in Derry NH), and commutes to Stow MA for work.



The **Budster** is starting to show his age (he'll be ten in April). He gets a daily dose of aspirin for his **hip dysplasia**, but extra-long walks or romps in the deep snow (which he adores) really bother him. When he's feeling good, though, he can still show flashes of puppyhood. He's getting more grumpy and intolerant of other dogs and children as he gets older, so he gets isolated from visiting kids and visiting dogs and cats, which upsets him. Better to be safe than sorry, though.

We managed a few vacation trips this year, but nothing of great magnitude. After a giant lobster

feed at our house to celebrate our 31st anniversary, Lynn and I took a short week at my sister's condo in **Lincoln NH**. I got in some good fishing, and we explored areas we hadn't checked out before, including a dinner train ride through the mountains. After Labor Day Lynn and I took another week and spent a few days up in **Bar Harbor Maine**, exploring **Acadia National Park** and the surrounding area,



then we drove across state to **Brownville Junction Maine** to spend a few days with friends at a cabin on *Ebeemee Lake*. Very peaceful and relaxing. Of course, pictures of all these events and others are on the family web site (the URL is listed below).

Well, the Red Sox didn't repeat this year, falling a bit short of their 2004 performance. But somehow it didn't matter as much as in years past; it was great to talk about the ***defending world champion*** Red Sox for a year. Now the White Sox get a chance to savor it. And there's still time for the Patriots to turn their season around and three-peat. Time will tell.

Here's wishing you the best of the holiday season. I for one have no problem saying ***Happy Holidays*** or having it said to me. That's what they are – ***Holidays***, as in plural! There's Thanksgiving, then Christmas, then New Years, and other holidays that I personally don't celebrate but others do. So lets continue to be ***inclusive*** rather than ***exclusive***, and lets quit griping about things that don't really matter in the grand scheme of things.

All our love,

Gene & Lynn

