

December 2009 *Another year almost gone, it is hard to imagine how fast the years have flown. It is hard to imagine we have been in our house 28 years, and that we have been married almost 32 years. It is hard to image that Kevin has been with some sort of variant of the phone company for 40 years. And it is hard to imagine, when I started to write these holiday missives, that I did them because my life was too hectic to write individual notes because I had babies, and I couldn't see how life would ever be any different.*



Well different it is, and it constantly evolves. Our babies are nearly adults. Eric, soon to be 20 years old, has made the choice to let the government guide him for the next eight years, he is now in the Army National Guard. He leaves for boot camp January 4th, and has already spent a couple of intense training weekends, oddly enough, loving every minute of it. Eric is finishing up his third semester at County College of Morris, originally a theatre major, enjoying the medium, but not the motivation necessary to create a life in the theatre, he is looking forward to the discipline, career opportunities, college tuition, and modest paycheck of military duty.

Eric worked as a ski/snowboarding instructor this past winter, a lifeguard during the summer, and his latest seasonal job is driver's assistant for UPS, it is so odd to see my son come in from a hard day of delivering to 120 stops, dressed in UPS brown, which will soon be replaced by army fatigues. He did spend the fall in rehearsals for a wonderful production of



Once on this Island, where he played the role of Armand, and he arm twisted me into assisting the costumer, which I really enjoyed actually.



And our pink haired wonder, (now it is seasonal red and green), our Brianna, is just the most interesting and wonderful human being you can imagine, she dives from one passion to the next, with a ferocity that totally entertains and amazes those who live with her. She got her driver's license in November, and has ended her need for mom's taxi service, the next step in her move towards independence. She spent the month of July as a Counselor in Training at the Girl Scout Camp, it was a very positive new experience for her, until the bat was discovered in a cabin of 17 sleeping girls, must have come in the screen that was destroyed by the bear, and all 17 girls had to be treated for potential rabies exposure. The series of shots, over four weeks, she took like a trooper, and now wears one of the old rabies tags from one of our deceased dogs, like a proud combat medal.

Brianna is taking advantage of the Challenger Program at County College of Morris, allowing high school students to take college classes for credit, and is nearly finished her first semester of college Japanese I. She will be taking Japanese II in the spring.

Brianna is an active member of my weaving guild as well, and she gave a presentation for the November program to the members, teaching them how do Victorian Lucet braiding. She sold some of her work in our guild sale, and her biggest triumph this year, was getting her mother to cave, to finally agree to get another dog. Brianna works every Saturday, at a local kennel, and after a year and a half of saying NO, every time she would text me another adorable photo of a dog needing a home, I caved, partly because of the really crummy garden season, which was the result of poor weather, but mostly because of the varmints who've taken up residence in our backyard oasis since the last dog died in 2006.





Bjorn is a 23 month old Norwegian Elk Hound, with the sweetest face and disposition. Brianna has known the dog since he was two months old and it obviously adores her. Other than a few chewing incidents, one involving my new cell phone, the dog has settled in and become part of the household. We did find a home for the rabbit, but I'm still looking for someone to take the snake out of my den...

Kevin had a busy year of travel. Much of his work now involves consulting on an international level, and most of his traveling, oddly enough involved countries beginning with the letter I. The beginning of 2009 took him to Ireland, and then a return trip

to India, and he ended the year after a few domestic trips, with a stint in Israel, doing some support work for Palestine Telephone, spending time in Ramallah, and as a result of all this, has earned himself Platinum status on Continental.



With all the traveling, Kevin still managed to get in a few ski trips, but no golf outings, and no broken bones this year. For his 40th anniversary with his company, Kevin selected a gift of a new set of Calphalon cookware for me. (I made out great on that deal!) He continued to putter in his garden, which is so gorgeous, and colorful, and he still serves on the Board of Education for Lincoln Park and for Boonton school districts, the Morris County School Boards Association, and the Lincoln Park Planning Board. No wonder it has been easy to stay married for 32 years, we never see each other!



This has been a year of reinventing myself, with a poor economy and a number of cancellations at the end of last year, I found myself with no work for almost 8 months, with the exception of one spring conference in Southern California. I used the time to revamp my website, www.weaversew.com, and to build one for my architect sister, www.ebelingnoe.com. I started a blog exactly a year ago, www.weaversew.com/wordblog and after some 250 posts, I have a following of about that many readers and I've been able to expand my venues for teaching, and find markets that had been previously out of my reach. By the summer, conference season kicked in and I found myself at five different conferences within a few weeks of each other, from Iowa, to Colorado, to Massachusetts, to Michigan and back to Massachusetts. I also taught for a week at Sievers Fiber School on Washington Island, WI. One of my garments was featured in Threads Magazine, and I just finished up a three part series of articles for Shuttle Spindle and Dyepot.



I also had my artwork accepted to a number of international juried exhibitions, including Small Expressions, which toured the Midwest last year, ending with the sale of one of my works. Another one of my art pieces took a merit award at an international exhibition at the Art Center in Northern NJ.

One of the year's highlights for me came during an exhibit of a friend, Pete Byron's photographs at the Morris Museum in NJ. I met Pete through another friend, who recommended me to him, since I was a breast cancer survivor. Pete was looking for women who would participate in a photo documentary, celebrating life after breast cancer, and I happily agreed to work with Pete. The end result was a moving series of amazing photographs, on display at the museum for the month of October, breast cancer awareness month, two of the images were of me, at my loom, where I am happiest, celebrating my life as an artist and a breast cancer survivor.



And to celebrate the soon to be empty nest we will be experiencing in the next couple of years, Kevin and I got an early start by slipping away last August, to a gathering of some of my former grade school classmates and their spouses, at a gorgeous home in Hilton Head. We jumped at the invitation, flew down, and had a marvelous time just relaxing. What a concept. A real vacation, with friends, in beautiful surrounds, and we both decided that this empty nest thing had real possibilities for the future...

And so ends another year of adventures with the Lancaster's. The year has been full of change, and full of hope, full of young adults in and out of our lives, living in Eric's apartment in the basement on occasion, and growing into confident productive adults before our eyes, OK that's a stretch, but this is the holidays and I'm being generous!

Here is our wish for continued health and security for all of you, our friends and family, that you enjoy lots of friendship and grand adventures, and that the spirit of the season fill all of you with light and love this coming year.

Kevin, Daryl, Eric, and Brianna, and baby Bjorn.