

Christmas 2010



The New Year wasn't 72 hours old and the Lancaster adventures began. January 3rd, I said goodbye to Kevin as he left for Israel, Eric left on the 4th for boot camp processing in Brooklyn, and then on Monday morning the 5th, I made my way to Brooklyn, with Brianna in tow, to watch Eric at his swearing-in ceremony for the National Guard and departure for Fort Jackson, SC, and his next three months of boot camp.

This was the year of travel for all of us, except Brianna; though she did spend five weeks away from home this July, working at a Girl Scouts' camp as a lifeguard and science specialist. Brianna doggedly finished up her Junior Year of High School, started her Senior Year, took evening classes at County College of Morris, in Japanese and Astronomy, and is now knee deep into the college search. She was quickly accepted into the School of Environmental and Biological Science at Rutgers, but as of this writing is still sending out applications to other colleges and universities. Her goal is vet school, and yes, we all know that vet school is impossible to get into, and there is no money in it, but I am not about to tell an eighteen year old, with any kind of goal, that it isn't realistic. And if you know Brianna, you know what a mind she has, and determination, and changing directions will have to be all her idea.



I think the most important moment for all of us this year was the trip to Fort Jackson, SC the end of March, to see Eric graduate from boot camp. A hugely emotional week for all of us, overwhelmed with pride, we saw Eric and his company emerge from the woods across the parade grounds, through a thick veil of colored smoke bombs, marching in with a maturity and assuredness that we'll remember for the rest of our lives. The couple of days we spent as a family in South Carolina were very special to all of us, and while



we flew home to NJ, Eric made his way to Oklahoma for his artillery training as a fire support specialist.

Meanwhile, Kevin and I both logged lots of air miles, and the following story probably summarizes what this year was like for all of us, especially Kevin and me as we desperately tried to find that balance between being there for the kids, taking care of our marriage, and following through on work commitments.

At the end of April, shortly before Kevin and I were about to leave on yet another business trip, Kevin back to Israel, and me to Mississippi (yes I was caught in that mess of tornados that flooded the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville) we received an embossed invite to the induction of Brianna into the National Honor Society. We both looked at each other, in complete dismay, turned to Brianna, who said, "Oh yeah, I forgot to mention, I got into the National Honor Society, the induction is next week", and were horrified to realize that neither one of us would be anywhere near the state and for the first time both of us would be missing an important event in one of our children's lives. We've always tried hard to have at least one parent present when it counted, and we were both sick at heart that this one we'd be missing. Eric was due home from Oklahoma three days before the induction, so we tried for plan B, and contacted him in Oklahoma, asking if he could accompany his sister to this important event in his Class A uniform. He cleared it with whoever decides these sorts of things, and Kevin and I, having done the best we could, left for our business flights.

Kevin worked like a dog that week, trying hard to finish up that portion of the job he was working on, and managed to wrap things up a day early. Not wasting any time, he raced to the airport the morning of the induction ceremony hoping against all hope he might make it back in time. A tall order to depend on flights working out from Israel to Newark, but he carried on. In fact there were numerous flight delays, but he did manage to land in Newark a half hour



before the ceremony was to begin. Those of you who know the geography of North Jersey know how almost impossible it is to make it from Newark airport to Boonton High School in half an hour, but somehow he was able to make it through customs, immigration, grab the limo, and the limousine driver pulled into the High School parking lot three minutes before Brianna's name was called for her to be inducted into the National Honor Society. And where was I in all of this? Sitting at a kitchen table in Jackson Mississippi, waiting for the 'facebook' post. I knew Kevin was going to try to make it back in time, but I didn't know if he'd made it until I saw his post.

Social networking was important to all of us this year, it is how we kept up with each other, and stayed connected. 'facebook', Skype, my blog posts, it was a special moment to me when Kevin remarked that I hadn't posted a blog in a few days, he had been faithfully reading my posts to follow what was happening in my life while he was gone. Kevin was away more than 180 days this year, with three trips to Israel, and six trips to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, logging in well over 120,000 miles, and even though I traveled more this year than the last five years combined, I still only logged a paltry 30,000 miles.



In spite of all the distance between us, Kevin and I still managed to actually get away for a couple of vacations. In July, just before the national weaver's conference in Albuquerque, we flew out to NM for a well deserved vacation together, taking in some of the most beautiful



country on this planet, and I am writing the first draft of this year-end letter on the plane flying home from another quick getaway, this time to Key West, Florida. We've had a great time, saw some amazing sights, heard some wild tales, and took some gorgeous photographs.

Eric is doing some seasonal stock work for Target, attending monthly National Guard drills, waiting to eventually deploy somewhere scary. He lives in the basement along with one or two of his friends, we affectionately call them the "bottom feeders", and I know once they are gone across the globe, we'll miss them all terribly. I'll miss the midnight capers, the 2am cook-offs in the kitchen, the back deck discussions about life and girls, beer and politics, and all the things that make 21 year olds the most interesting creatures on the planet.



Most of Kevin's extracurricular activities this year occurred out of the country. He joined an ex-pat HASH hiking group in Riyadh, and spent every weekend he could hiking or camping in the desert. The pictures of this barren landscape are really striking. We all waited for each 'facebook' post with anticipation.

And I traveled, continued to publish articles, posted almost four hundred blog entries since I started my blog, was picked up by the Santa Fe Weaving Gallery, who now carries as many scarves as I can find time to weave, and managed to win a couple of awards for some of my work. It has been a year of grand adventure, of watching the kids become amazing adults, and of growing closer together in spite of the distance we traveled.

We hope for all of you in these disquieting times, a sense of family no matter the distance, solid friendships, the chance to see things you've never seen before, and the peace and serenity of the season.

With love, Kevin, Daryl, Eric and Brianna theweaver@weaversew.com/wordblog