



Christmas 2013

There is a sort of wistfulness looking back over this year, because we have become less and less of a family and more and more of a couple with the kids mostly launched and creating their own lives. Past Christmas letters were full of the Lancaster Family adventures, but this year, it was pulling teeth and a few other body parts to try to get the four of us in the same room long enough to shoot a family photo.

We all have our own lives now, and that is what's supposed to happen when you raise a couple of kids and send them on their way. This time last year Eric was just finishing up his deployment down the shore as a result of Hurricane Sandy, and in the spring he was finally awarded his promotion to a full time Team Lead in charge of signage and price accuracy at Target. They have been wonderful with his frequent National Guard duties, and his schedule is as unpredictable as the weather. Yet he found time to actually take a vacation himself, to Florida to meet up with old friends.

And lovely Brianna just finished up another semester up at UMass; last word is an A in BioChem. She is half way through her Junior year, and starting to nervously contemplate what she plans to do with the rest of her life. Just to complicate things, she added a linguistics minor to her animal science/pre-vet major. She has her own apartment now in Sunderland, MA, with a couple of roommates, and is learning the art of coexisting with other human beings who have different levels of cleanliness especially as far as the kitchen goes. She is enjoying her role as a Teaching Assistant in the Beltie (Belted Galloway Beef Cattle) barn at UMass and only occasionally gets taken out by an 800 pound cow. Word is that Chocolate ice cream makes a great emergency ice pack...

I spent the entire month of February teaching all along the west coast, starting in San Francisco and ending up in San Diego. All along the way I got to catch up with old friends from the Fiber Community, and make lots of new ones. The trip was more successful than I could have imagined, which made me feel a lot better after the intense stressful planning through the entire month of January, and I took some of the profits and, with a couple of the members of my recorder consort, drove up almost to the Canadian border to a place called Courtly Music, and bought myself a professional Mollenhauer Grenadilla Wood Alto Recorder. I've never loved an instrument so much, the sound is so gentle and full and after a month of careful breaking in, I play it almost daily.

I continue to teach and travel and make clothes and maintain my blog. I'm able to teach more 5-7 day intensives and I much prefer that to the short weekend lectures and seminars for guilds. That means, though

I'm on the road more, I'm actually traveling less. Many of my trips this year were close enough to drive so I finally lost my Elite Silver status on United. Membership did have its privileges. Sigh...

And Kevin is finally home...

After many years traveling the globe, staying in remote places, working on stressful projects, he has been home and working on another stressful project except this one takes him to exotic ports like Texas, Florida, Southern California, and North Carolina. Mostly though, he works from home, which means though he is actually physically in the house, he is connected to a telephone at all times starting usually with conference calls somewhere around 7AM.

Still, in spite of working around the clock with clients from all over the world, he managed to build a greenhouse and add a number of raised beds and this summer saw the fruits of his hard work. Or should I say vegetables...

A counter full of vegetables from the garden would be waiting for me when I would return from a trip, I'd spend hours cooking, processing, freezing, and figuring out what to do with a bumper crop of assorted things. I found recipes that the family would love for all sorts of vegetables, kept Tabbouleh in the fridge and pesto in the freezer, I oven dried cherry tomatoes and made lots of Zucchini bread. And there was always a bowl of pickled cucumbers at the ready...



The greenhouse was a welcome addition to the garden, and we still have lettuces and some tasty herbs growing in spite of the snow.



Kevin and I did have two wonderful vacations this year, the first in September to Rehoboth Beach, DE where my sister rented a house for two weeks. We fell in love with the place and hope to return next year. And to keep Kevin's mileage up, and to take advantage of a couple of vouchers and lots of points, we flew to Munich, Germany for a long weekend just a couple of weeks ago. It was a dream trip, and it included an item from my bucket list, Neuschwanstein, crazy Ludwig II's castle in the Bavarian Alps.

We all hope that the New Year brings you good health, stable weather, great opportunities for creativity and travel, and lots of time with family and friends and all those you hold dear.

With love,

Kevin, Daryl, Eric and Brianna, and the doggies, Saphira and Bjorn.