



Winter 2014

I wish I could say that we are completely loving empty nest syndrome. But we miss the kids. A lot.

Brianna has just finished the first semester of her final year at school, and if all goes well, she will graduate from University of Massachusetts/Amherst with a Bachelor of Science in Animal Science/pre-vet with a minor in Linguistics next May. A pretty heady degree, with not much practical application in the real world unless she goes on to Vet school.

At this point Brianna's attitude is, "Mom, I've been in school for 16 years, I'm done." At 22 she does not have a clue what she wants to do with the rest of her life and really, that's as it should be. She has maintained her grades, has a huge amount of outside interests, and while home this past summer, she earned her keep many times over by assisting me in the studio. She was fantastic as an archivist, going through files back from the 1960's and converting all to digital. It is a huge job and she is organized and focused and does NOT make mistakes. And two of her woven pieces took awards at the Blue Ridge International Fiber Show in Asheville, NC.

And then there is Eric. Eric announced in the spring that he had changed National Guard Units, now with the 114th Infantry out of Mount Holly, and that he would be deploying to Qatar sometime in the summer. It is not a combat mission, but a security detail, and it is what he wanted; to get out of my basement and away from his team lead job at Target and see a little bit of someplace other than NJ. He has been in the middle east since August, and will probably be there until mid next year.

We send him care packages and with Facebook messaging, we are able to connect with him almost anytime we need to. He asked for a backpacker's guitar, and we sent one. Shipping to APO addresses is very inexpensive, and the only thing

he says he really misses is Bacon, which is on its way as I write, since Oscar Mayer makes precooked bacon slices that don't need refrigeration until they are opened. I figured he will probably eat the whole package in one sitting.

Kevin has largely worked from NJ this past year, which meant that we had an incredible garden, and so much produce I thought about a farm stand. He has turned our little piece of Suburbia into something beautiful and productive, growing most everything from seed, starting in the basement in February. And so it was a bit of a hiccup in the plan when he got a sudden call to go to Istanbul, Turkey for the month of August, which was of course peak harvest time. I did my best to be a good little farm wife, while I winged around the country teaching, coming home and spending a couple of days each time processing beans, pesto, peppers, tomatoes, hundreds of cucumbers for pickles, and a ton of other garden delights. We are down to the last of the fresh cherry tomatoes, but I just made chicken soup with carrots, celery and garlic from the garden, and there is a huge bin of potatoes chilling in the garage.

At the beginning of September, we finally got a few days in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware to relax and recharge with my sister and her family. My sister rented a house for a couple of weeks and invited all to come along. 48 hours after flying in from Istanbul, Kevin and I drove separate cars to Delaware, since I could only stay a couple of days before heading to Washington DC to teach. I ultimately hit four states in four weeks, but I digress. The day after we arrived in Rehoboth, Kevin got to experience his first trip to the hospital in an ambulance, when he got nailed by a wave in a very rough surf, and broke his collarbone.

A huge bouquet of gratitude for my sister and her husband who had to care for my husband that next week while I left to teach, and then drive him and his car all the way back to northern NJ since he obviously couldn't drive. It was a long and very painful month of healing, but he has been given the OK that all is well and he is good for ski season. Eyeroll...

And of course, I continue to do what I do best, flying around the country teaching, writing the occasional magazine article, and playing with lots of fiber in my studio. I took a few awards this year at a couple of fiber exhibitions, and am looking forward to spending the next couple of months trying to make some new work. Last spring I had a wonderful experience with my first intern from the local community college. She was sharp, and delightful and I wanted to adopt her immediately. And to my mother in law's wonderful delight (though she died in 2006, she still hangs out in my studio) my intern wanted to learn bobbin lace. So we dusted off the lace pillows and got her started.

I had the honor of providing the keynote address this year at an event called the Gathering, which is literally a gathering of fiber enthusiasts from all over the northern midwest, at Sievers Fiber School on Washington Island, WI. It was such a fantastic experience, and of course I blogged about it like I do about everything in my professional life. I have more than 700 blog posts since 2008 and as many followers.

And I'm now part of three different recorder consorts and I'm playing almost every day. I've become pretty proficient on the bass as well as the alto, which was my goal this year, to be able to play all four instruments competently. It has been really wonderful for me to learn how to work with a group, since what I do in my regular fiber life is so singular and self directed.

Kevin and I just returned from a quick weekend on the west coast, starting in San Diego where we visited good friends, and then on to Los Angeles where we attended the DVD taping of a musician Kevin has been following for awhile, Valerie Vigoda from the band Groove Lily. It was fun to fly to the west coast for a concert. I got to sit on a plane for hours and read and knit, two of my favorite things.

We wish all of you good health, some great adventures and a wonderful 2015.

Daryl, Kevin, Brianna, and from the other side of the world, Eric.