

Christmas letters are the "Twitter" version of our lives: 365 days summed up on one 8 1/2 by 11 sheet of paper. We keep all the letters we receive and dip into them from time to time to refresh our memories of when the new baby arrived, when the out-of-state move happened or when the teenager graduated. What our friends are up to is far more interesting than any "reality TV!"



We started our second year as "mostly empty nesters" with both kids away at school. You'd think we'd have less to do now, but we still keep plenty busy.

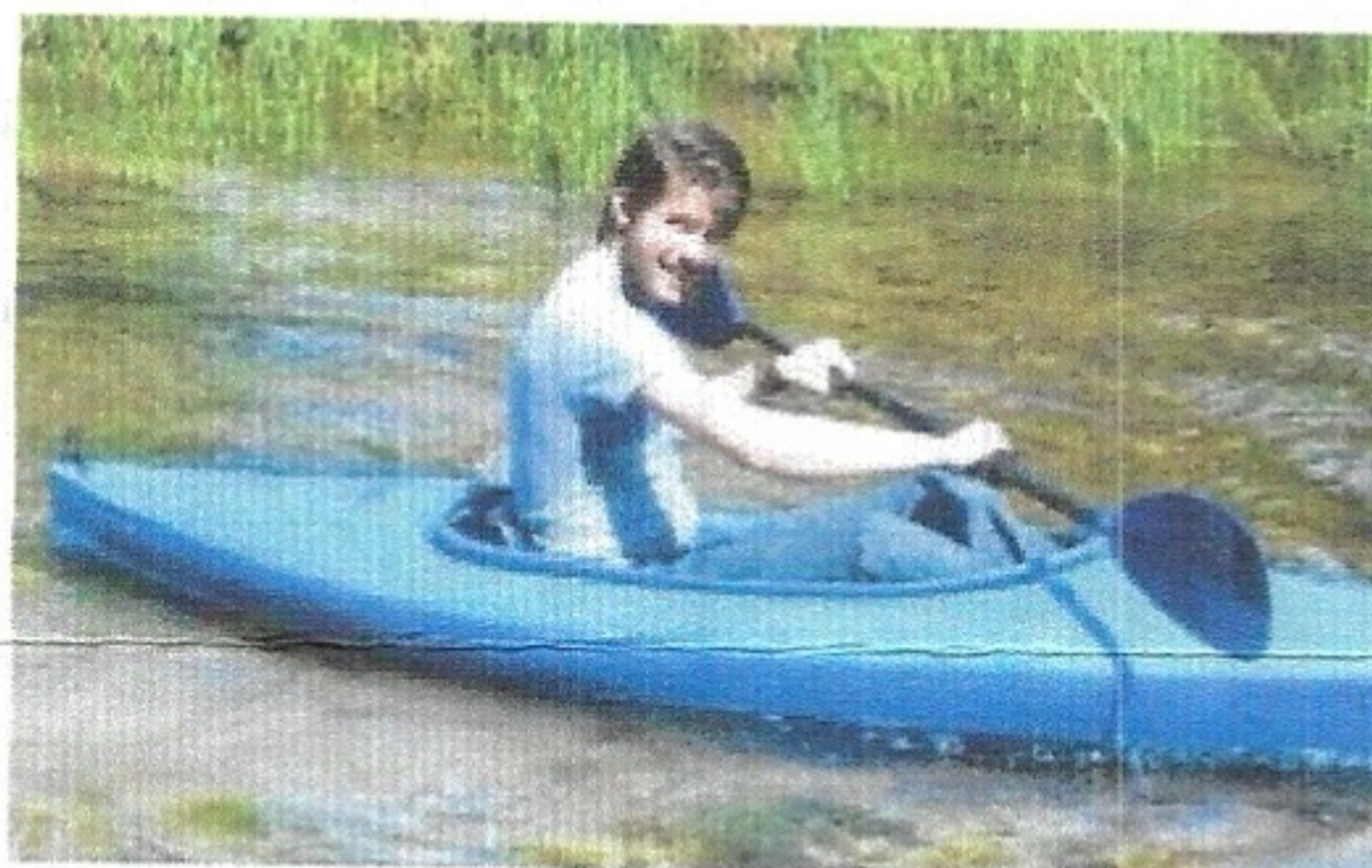
Don again served on the Summer Place Theatre board and acted in a couple of shows, including a "Kiss Me, Kate" revival. He has also been a regular member of Those Thrilling Days of Yesteryear, a live radio theatre troupe, and appeared in a few student films.

One of his biggest thrills was emceeding the awards ceremony for the Naperville Independent Film Fest for the second time. This year he introduced film critic Roger Ebert and "Mrs. Indiana Jones" Karen Allen and hobnobbed with them at the Fest parties.

Gnu Ventures Company keeps evolving with the times and we collaborate with a couple of other companies to streamline the website creation process while Don spends more time in the field speaking and consulting.

While still working for Gnu Ventures, Kate's spent more time on her writing career with a third book published early this year called "The Six Degrees of Abraham Lincoln." Presentations for schools and community groups and research for the next book fill up the rest of her time.

James is in his final year at Flashpoint Academy, soaking up all he can about film and television and working just as hard out of class. He and some fellow students wrote several scripts for a sit-com and filmed one episode that you can watch at



James kayaking in Michigan.

www.confidencemen.net. He also has his own website, a Facebook page, a blog, and a Linked In account, so if you know anyone hiring staff writers, he's easy to find and will be needing a job next summer. For now, he writes to hone his skills and manages a Jimmy John's to pay his bills.

Now a sophomore at Knox College, Emma has declared literature and music majors. She's one of the editors of "Diminished Capacity," a literary magazine, sings in the choir and is extremely busy with her campus job as an accompanist for voice students.



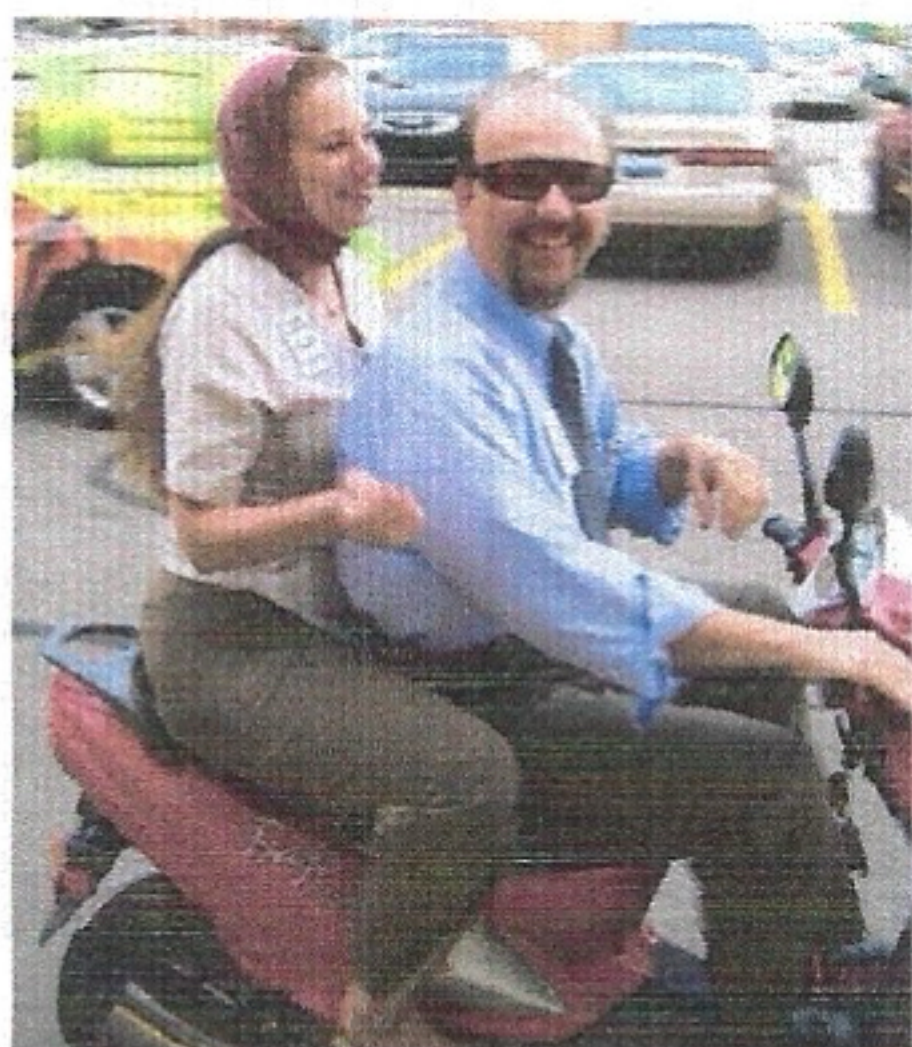
Emma hanging out with friends

She recently traveled to a private dinner with the college president, the dean and some influential alumni where she talked about her Knox experience and gave a short piano concert, handling it all with her customary aplomb.

Our family, Kate's brother's family and Kate's folks got together in Michigan this summer to celebrate Grandma and Grandpa's fiftieth

wedding anniversary. Perfect weather, a beautiful location and no agendas gave us a rare opportunity to relax and enjoy each other's company.

Who knows if a moment like that will happen in 2010? James would like to move west after graduation. Emma's considering a semester abroad. It's all very exciting, and yet... Well, we'll just have to see how 2010 unwinds!



Kate and Don heading back from a business event on their fuel-efficient scooter.

Whatever happens, we wish you and your families every happiness in the new year!

Don, Kate, James and Emma