

# The VOGT Family Christmas Letter 2009

## Happy Holidays from the VOGT family!

We hope this letter finds you in good health and good spirits, ready for a happy holiday season and a fun new year. We've had a year of joy and sadness, excitement and worry. There has been a few **FIRSTS** for the VOGTs, and it's been an exciting year overall, with some new doors opening, and some old doors closing.

Our sad news is that we lost our beloved dog **Buddy** in May. Buddy had gotten "old" quickly during the last few years or so, with arthritis and hip dysplasia. Stairs had become quite a chore for him, especially going up, but he bravely endured and just took it one step at a time. Walks were painful after-the-fact, though he still enjoyed them while we were walking. Even his all-time favorite outdoor activity - riding in the car - was a chore, as it was difficult for him to hop up into the van and almost impossible for him to jump up on the seat to look out the window. In a very short time he had morphed from our big energetic puppy into our stiff and creaky "old man." He passed away suddenly after a two-week bout with a respiratory infection. He always had allergies in the spring, just like a human, but his sneezing was more extreme and violent this year. He had apparently developed pneumonia as a result of the respiratory infection, even though he was on antibiotics, and his heart just gave out. After what appeared to be a perfectly normal morning for him, he had a couple of seizure-like episodes (arching his back unusually, yipping as if in pain), and he just stopped breathing. Lynn called Audrey (who was home, luckily) up from the apartment and she tried to keep him alive to get him to the vet, but he just couldn't hold on and he passed away quietly in Audrey's arms. Buddy lived a long and good life (he would have been 13 years old in June), and was a happy and well-loved member of the family. He has been - and will be - missed dearly.

The joyous news is that **Megan and Dan were married** in October! Dan proposed to Megan on 8 May 2008 in Lowell, MA, as they were on their way to dinner at Cobblestones restaurant (a great place to eat, by the way). After four months of thinking and deciding, the wedding date was announced: **17 October 2009**. Then all the real work began...



Mr. & Mrs. Daniel Morneau

*Sit in a room lit only by Christmas tree lights, and remember that our blessings outnumber the lights.*

~ Betsy Cañas Garmon



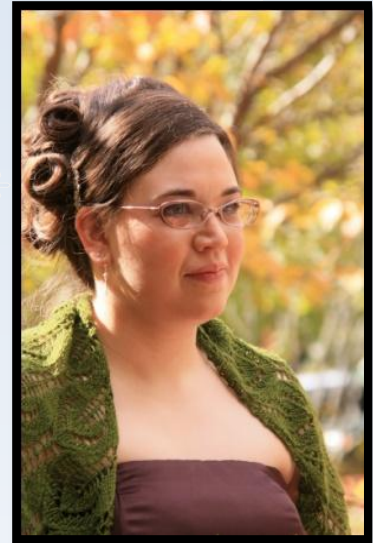
October 17th, 2009, the long-anticipated day, finally arrived! We had been worried for the entire week leading up to the date because the weather forecast in our neck of the woods was for a good old New England "Nor'easter" storm, with blowing wind and torrential rain, from Friday right through Monday. But Megan had been planning an outdoor autumn ceremony for over a year (and had dreamed about it all her life)! So we had the classic battle of an irresistible force meeting an immovable object, and the weather lost the battle! Friday's weather was a fright, with **snow** and **rain** and blowing **wind**. Saturday dawned bright and sunny, **blue skies** with **not a cloud in sight**. There were some puffy clouds by the time the ceremony commenced at 1pm in the garden of the **Stonehedge Inn** in Tyngsboro, MA. The weather was spectacular; crisp and cool, clear and bright. A breathtaking day! And then Sunday was back to blowing snow and gusty wind, another miserable day just like Friday!

The **wedding day** was picture-perfect in every possible way. Megan was a vision of beauty and grace, Dan was handsome and elegant. The ceremony was stupendous – people laughed, people cried, it was emotional and meaningful and memorable. The reception was wonderful, the food was awesome, the music was perfect, and the dancing was lively and energetic. It was just a wonderful day in every way to celebrate the marriage of Dan and Megan in profound style! The newlyweds spent ten days in **Tahiti** for their honeymoon, and then came back to cold, rainy weather to begin to prepare for a New England winter!

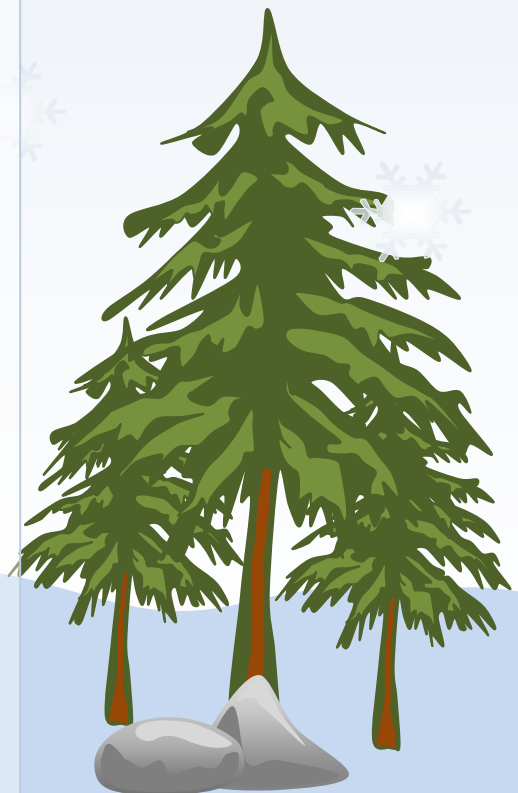
Our exciting news is that **we bought a house in Maine!** Lynn and I have been casually looking at real estate in mid-coast Maine for the past three years. The plan was (and still is) to retire up there in about ten years, so we wanted to get our foot in the door by picking up something for vacations and weekends, and then either converting it to a retirement home over the next few years, or leap-frogging into a suitable year-round home after a few years of getting used to the area. We've been taking our two weeks' vacation in the area each year, and we've been working with a real estate agent we trusted, looking at a dozen or so houses each time we were in the area. Alas, everything we were looking at in our price range fell into the **handyman special** category. I'm fairly handy and

I heard the bells on Christmas Day  
Their old, familiar carols play,  
And wild and sweet  
The words repeat  
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

~ Henry Wadsworth Longfellow



Audrey as her sister's Maid of Honor



could handle such a house, but having a handyman special located 3-4 hours away from our primary home would make it difficult to spend much time working to fix the place up.

But then, lightning struck.



On the last full day of our two week vacation this year, we looked at a converted carriage house that we fell in love with. It had originally been built in the 1860's as a real carriage house on the shores of the Damariscotta River in the town of Damariscotta Maine. In the early 1980s it had been converted for human habitation, and then in 2007 it was literally picked up and moved 4-5 miles to a 2.6 acre plot of land in Newcastle. It was then renovated again, so now it has the charm of an 1860s carriage house (with wide pine floors, and exposed beam ceilings, and the original carriage house sliding door still attached for effect), but it was on a brand new foundation with a steel I-beam added for support, with all new plumbing and electrical, a new well for water, new septic system, and new heating system. The first floor is an open area with a kitchen, living room and eating area, and there's a half bath too. The second floor has a master bedroom, a full bath, and a second bedroom that will double as a quilt room for Lynn. The high-ceilinged full basement – with heat – has a wall of glass doors on the walk-out side, and will be ideal to finish off for extra office and guest space.

We closed on the house and took possession six days after Megan's wedding, driving up for the closing in a minivan stuffed to the ceiling with "first trip" necessities; tables, chairs, beds, linens, towels, pots, pans, a coffee maker, tools, ladders, mops, brooms, cleaners, etc. We camped out that first weekend on our German cot-beds, and since then have been able to get up there about every other weekend on average. It's about a three hour drive from Woburn. We've bought some furniture and rugs, and made some modifications here and there (changing light fixtures, fixing doors, replacing locks, etc.). We're taking our time with it, since we're not moving up there for another eight or ten years! Lynn's got drapes and curtains on order, I've had cable TV and internet installed and set up a wireless router, the lobster boiling pot is up on the premises and has been used already, and we're figuring out what quilts and other wall decorations to hang where. It's a long-term project, but we're having fun setting the house up. It's very livable right now, and we're equipped for visitors, so let us know if you want to stop by to check the place out! We call it the **Ballot Box**; can you figure out why? ☺

In spite of the monumental lifestyle changes associated with their marriage, **Megan and Dan** are doing well. They both still work for **Bose Corporation**, and live in **Lowell** in a condo in one of the converted mill buildings near the center of town. Megan is still knitting up a storm; in fact she knitted a 7 foot cream-colored alpaca and silk **shawl** for her wedding that had 7,000 tiny pearl-colored beads entwined within the knitting; a work of art. She also knitted three green attendant shawls to match the ushers' green tuxedo vests. Now that they're not in wedding preparation mode anymore, they probably have oodles of spare time on their hands (yeah, right!)



**Audrey** is still working as a **dog trainer** at **Petco** in Burlington, where she is now a full-time employee (with all the associated benefits). She specializes in behavior modification with aggressive dogs, but has lots of fun with her puppy socialization and obedience classes too! She also had a lot of fun working on the audio-visual team (must be genetic) at the **Anime-Boston 2009** convention, and is looking forward to participating again this upcoming year in April. She was also saddened to lose her oldest ferret, **Kahli**, this past June, but was able to adopt **Lord Nibbler** (so named because he was a biter with other humans, but not with Audrey) to help keep her other two ferrets (**Kooter** and **Wednesday**) company.

**Lynn** is still working and teaching at the **Cambridge Quilt Shop**, enjoying the work and the friends and fellow workers she has there. She's made a number of quilts this year; some as gifts, some to hang in one or the other of our houses, and one special decorative one that was a gift to the newlyweds and hung behind them at their sweetheart table during the wedding reception. In May she made a trek to **Salt Lake City** for a machine quilting conference, and invited Gene to join her (he spent his days at the Mormon genealogical library). She was the epitome of elegance and grace as the **mother-of-the-bride** at the wedding, and helped with a number of the aspects of the wedding preparations leading up to the festivities.

**Gene's** still working for **MITRE Corporation** (22 years and counting), having recently been appointed the **Chief Engineer** of the department he works for. Earlier this year he was asked to do evaluations of the processes used to meet certain requirements in Europe, which required a 45-day trip to **Stuttgart**, with a side trip to **England**. He got to spend a lot of time with our dear friends Gerhard and Ursula, and to visit old stomping grounds from when the family lived outside of Stuttgart in the 90s. He also spent so many nights at the Marriott hotel there that he hit the Gold level of frequent sleeper perks! He hasn't made any profound breakthroughs on his **genealogy research** yet this year, but he did give a formal presentation of his VOGT and McGRATH work in May at the local library, which was well-received and was video-taped for possible broadcast on the local cable channel (he has a DVD copy). The president of the Massachusetts Society of Genealogists (MSOG) was present at the talk, and asked Gene to give the presentation to the MSOG at their April 2010 meeting.

*Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!*

*Lynn & Gene*

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**Gene & Lynn on the Coast of Maine!**