

December 19th and less than a week to Christmas and now I am doing the letter. Why do I leave it to the last minute? There are a million reasons none of them valid so I'll just push on and get it done to reduce the noise level from Cheryl who has a growing pile of cards to get in the mail (for delivery New Year I guess).

It was another year of change and lots of activity so let me try and put some order to the things that have happened.

Starting with me for a change – I eventually changed jobs mid-year and joined SAP in the Education services division. There is some comfort in working for a large company again (like a guaranteed pay check) and there is also the downside so the jury is out as to whether it was a good move. Leaving DACG had become the only option as the company had gotten so small that it was difficult for them to justify my costs. We agreed that it was better for me to take up the offer from SAP who had been trying for some time to entice me. I work from home but have been traveling pretty much every week. Either out to California or across to the North East and Atlanta. We'll see how it works out in the New Year. Aside from that change my life is pretty much the same.

As a result of my change we made a hastily planned brief visit to UK. We were able to time it with a visit from South Africa of Lauren's godmother and that was a rare pleasure. We hadn't seen her for 5 years and were able to meet up in Guildford for a day of reminiscing. During our trip across Lauren complained that although we had visited England every year she had not seen any of the sights as we usually spent most of our time visiting people. So we decided we should fix that and took her to Brighton, Stonehenge and a day in London. And all this in 4 days!

Lauren continues with her excellent work at school and will finish High School next year. She has already been accepted at 2 of the colleges of her choice and will take the final decision in May next year. She finally was selected for the Senior Company in her dance group this year and has been very busy with outreach projects most weekends – particularly busy around this time of the year.

Ryan is steaming through the final year of college and will graduate in May next year. He managed to land another excellent internship in summer and worked for Hewlett-Packard for a few months at an outrageously high salary. They were so impressed that they kept him on for a few months after he returned to college. A useful addition to his bank balance and also another nice entry on his resume. He is looking at starting his own business when he leaves college and we will work on the business plan over the next few months and see if it looks viable. If so I expect to become a founding and over-paid director!!

Cheryl has also had a major change in her life. Earlier in the year she accepted a temporary assignment in the Head Office of Continental downtown. Of course, she was a roaring success and was subsequently placed in a second position there. The second position became available as a permanent one and she applied and got it. So she is now the Exec Administrator to the Treasury VP - a job which she is beginning to enjoy more and more. She has recently been warned about her cholesterol levels so we are now moving to a new diet regime that will probably be much better for all of us.

Sadly, a month ago we had to put down the last of our two dogs who suffered the same spinal deterioration that the previous one had. She declined quickly and in 6 months was barely able to walk so we decided it was better to face the decision. With Lauren going off to college, me traveling and Cheryl working we have decided not to get another pet right now but it is very strange not having a dog in the house.

We took another impulse decision and are leaving for a 5-day cruise on Monday. We will fly to Miami Sunday and then cruise to Belize and back to Key West. We will get back home Saturday 27th.

And so that's it for another year – we have already received several of the regular letters and look forward to the rest over the next few weeks.