

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO YOU FROM THE PENNSYLVANIA MUELLERS!!

The biggest event of 2006 was our ZIP code changing from 18901 to 18902. So if you want to save time, you can stop reading now. Still reading? Well OK, there were a few other happenings too.

Since last Christmas we've had 19 inches of snow. However, we have seen zero snowflakes since April. Summer was mild and rainy enough to replenish the water table. We experienced two nine-inch single-day rainfalls. Some areas along the Delaware and other rivers were flooded, especially when tropical storm Ernesto stalled over our region. The bluebirds were back and the tiny garden was productive again. The mild weather has continued into fall—global warming, no doubt (that damn Bush!)

The kitchen renovation project that we started last year remains half-finished pending the end of college tuition bills. Also, speaking of bills, we often ask ourselves why we have two dogs. Oh sure, Rupert & Otis continue to amuse us and they serve as a good excuse to take long walks but they make the house smell like a kennel, rack up vet bills, eat anything left within reach (e.g.—tissues, dental floss, etc.) and bark a lot at the neighbors. They especially enjoy helping Mike prepare meals.

We joined Covenant Presbyterian Church this spring. Converting from Lutheran to Presbyterian was surprisingly painless. The church is a dynamic, growing church that is constructing a building on a new site less than a mile from home. We also began attending Weight Watchers in August. Our weight loss so far would be impressive if we were a couple of chipmunks.

Jean continues to catalog books and media for the Bucks County Free Library system. She enjoys her work and has first dibs on new books and videos before they are placed in circulation. Her mother, Margaret (84), is doing well at Lakeview Assisted Living. Earlier this year Margaret was diagnosed with a slow-growing form of lung cancer. Jean spends some time with her mother most days and helps with her laundry, medical appointments, financial transactions, jigsaw puzzles, and disposal of miniature Heath bars.

Jean's side of the family visited Doylestown this year. Her older sister, Layne, from St. Louis visited for a one week every quarter; she spent time with Margaret and helped meet her needs. Nephew Andrew (Layne's son) and his wife Kari from St. Louis accompanied Layne on one trip for a weekend visit. Also, Margaret's older sister, Luci (87), and her son Bill from Maryland spent a Saturday in Doylestown.

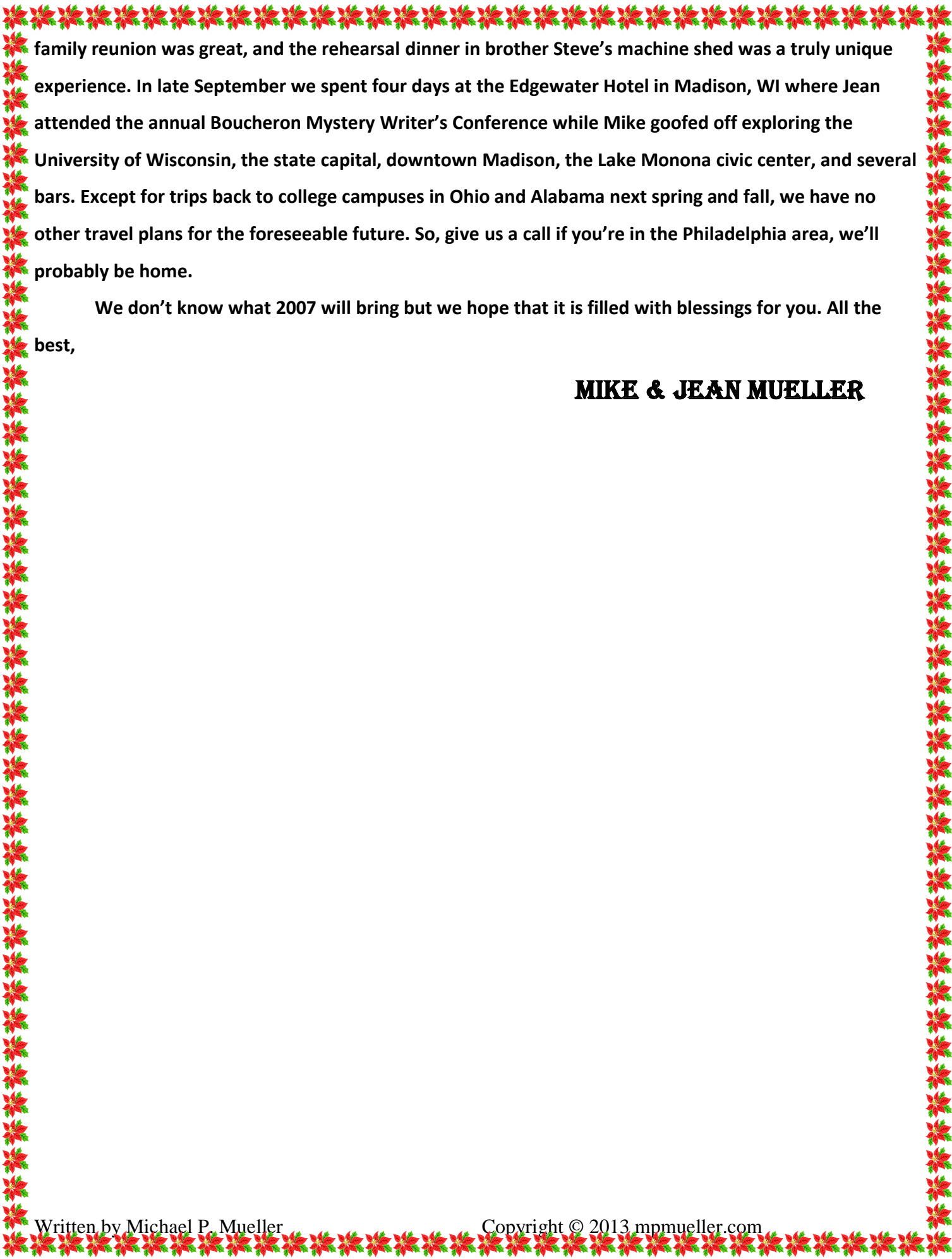
Both Gretchen and Paul are college juniors this year. Gretchen is halfway through her junior year as an English major at Wittenberg University in Springfield, OH. She has been getting excellent grades but can't wait to be finished with college. She plans to graduate in December next year, a semester early. She continues to write a blog and has nearly completed a novel. We made two roundtrips this year hauling

her and her stuff to/from Springfield (550 miles from Doylestown); the roundtrips usually take three days. This year she is renting an off-campus house with two other girls. She is enjoying having Mike's old '94 Camry (180,000 miles) to get around this year. Mike drives Margaret's '95 Crowne Victoria—48,000 miles.

After two successful years as a language and education major, Paul abruptly decided to leave LaSalle University in Philadelphia last December. He applied as a transfer student to four out-of-state colleges. After visiting Kent State in Ohio and Jacksonville State University (JSU) in Alabama with Mike during the summer, he succumbed to southern charm and transferred to JSU as a junior majoring in consumer science. The campus is 950 miles from Doylestown, so the car trip to deliver him and his stuff to his dorm room in August required a five-day roundtrip. Unlike Gretchen, he does not have a car at college, so his best transportation option between Alabama and Pennsylvania is Amtrak's Crescent line which runs from New Orleans to Boston every day; it stops in Anniston, AL, about 10 miles from the JSU campus. The train ride to Philadelphia takes 19 hours. At Thanksgiving he missed the train and spent a night at the Salvation Army soup kitchen in Anniston before making his way back to his dorm on the deserted JSU campus. He made a few adjustments to his planning process for the Christmas break and successfully rode the train to Philadelphia. He seems to be happy with his new college. His first semester grades at JSU were excellent.

Mike continues to sing with the Bucks County Choral Society. He also maintains the choir's marketing and fundraising database and serves on the board of directors. He has been the business manager for Neshaminy Warwick Presbyterian Church for the past year where he is responsible for six buildings (two of them rental properties), two cemeteries, office systems, three staff members, budgeting and finances. He reports to three committees and 800 bosses (actually, the interim pastor is his official boss). Since the job is only half time, he has been earning extra income as a part-time data consultant for his choir and for an e-Learning firm. Next month he will start teaching his first evening course to adults as an adjunct professor at Strayer University in King of Prussia. To keep from losing his front teeth, which are chipped and wearing out, he started orthodontia last January with braces top and bottom. He has annoyed Jean by wearing different colored "donuts" (clear, red, green, gray, blue, and hot pink) as the braces were adjusted throughout the year. For Christmas he is wearing gold and silver. The braces should come off in January.

Besides trips to college campuses in Ohio and Alabama, we made a trip to South Dakota (via Minneapolis) in mid-September to attend Nephew Mark's wedding to Emily. The wedding was lovely, the



family reunion was great, and the rehearsal dinner in brother Steve's machine shed was a truly unique experience. In late September we spent four days at the Edgewater Hotel in Madison, WI where Jean attended the annual Boucheron Mystery Writer's Conference while Mike goofed off exploring the University of Wisconsin, the state capital, downtown Madison, the Lake Monona civic center, and several bars. Except for trips back to college campuses in Ohio and Alabama next spring and fall, we have no other travel plans for the foreseeable future. So, give us a call if you're in the Philadelphia area, we'll probably be home.

We don't know what 2007 will bring but we hope that it is filled with blessings for you. All the best,

MIKE & JEAN MUELLER