

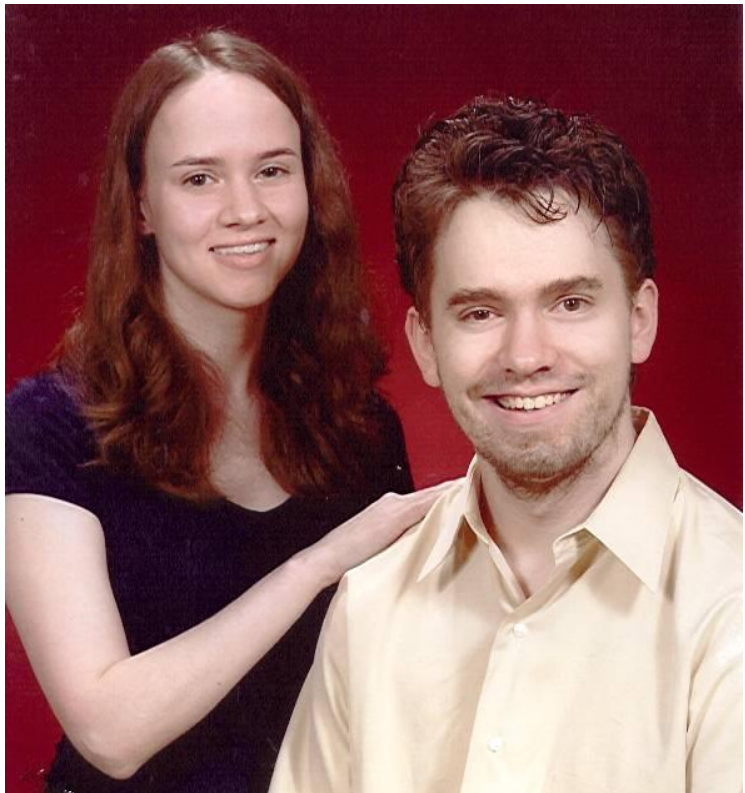
## **GREETINGS FROM DOYLESTOWN, PA!**

Once again there are four of us residing at 3919 Smoke Road along with two dogs (Rupert and Otis) and six computers. How did we ever survive without the internet? Well, we are finding out because there has been no connection for the past four days. We are praying that Larry, the cable guy (yes, our cable guy is named Larry) will show up any minute now and "Get 'er done!"

2008 was a surprising and exciting year with the Phillies winning the World Series and Obama winning the presidency. We were surprised that we got less than 15 inches of snow last winter instead of the 36 inches predicted by the "experts". We were excited when our church, Covenant Presbyterian, moved into its new building in April and saw attendance jump from 400 to nearly 700 souls each Sunday. Unpleasant surprises included failures of both the septic system effluent pump (moves the sh\*\* out of the house) and well water pressure tank (dribbling showers) during winter storms in February.

Gretchen graduated last December from Wittenberg University, Springfield, OH with a BA in English. She took some time off after graduating but soon found work through a temporary agency. One of her temp jobs led to a job offer and she is now working in the accounting department of

Corporate Claims Management, a business that processes claims from vehicle body shops and fleet operations. As a result of her work she has developed a morbid interest in the different ways one can total a vehicle. It is a family (Italian) business that is providing her with an income and benefits and grist for her writer's mill. For instance, she learned that a fired co-worker had not been making "big bucks" from his night job as a bartender but from working evenings as a "male escort". She writes and blogs but has not yet attempted to get anything published. She successfully completed writing a novel during the NANOWRIMO (National Novel Writing Month) event and received a bound copy of her book. When asked under which genre or category it would be shelved in a library or bookstore she said, "Maybe literary fiction but most likely crap." It is the fourth book she has written.



Paul graduated in August from Jacksonville State University, Jacksonville, AL with a BS in Consumer and Family Science. (Hooray! No more \$9,000 tuition bills to pay with only three days notice.) He has been taking some time off after graduating. A week after returning home from Alabama in August he flew with Mike to Minneapolis (via Atlanta) to attend the lovely weekend

wedding of Andrea (Paul's cousin) and Dale, (Sunburg, MN). Mike impressed his sister, Patty, and Paul by avoiding speeding tickets after getting stopped by a MN trooper the day after the wedding and by the Bird's Island, MN police force on the trip back to the MSP airport one day later. Paul signed up with a temporary agency and worked at an electronic manufacturing company on a one-week project. When the company wanted him to come back to work on a month-long project, he turned them down. His job search activity has been sporadic. Three weeks ago Jean came home at noon for lunch and found a strange car with government plates in the driveway. She found Paul in the living room talking to an Army staff sergeant in camouflage fatigues. Stay tuned.

Jean continues to work as a cataloguer for the Bucks County Free Library system. She still looks in on her mother, Margaret, 86, at Lakeview Assisted Living almost every day. Layne, Jean's sister, continues to fly from St. Louis to Philadelphia quarterly to spend a week in Doylestown visiting her mother and offering Jean some respite. Margaret has been having some breathing difficulties and has started taking medication from hospice caretakers. Also, this year Jean and Layne's father, Philip Atteberry, a Navy veteran, died in Harlingen, TX and their aunt, Lucie Williams, Margaret's sister, died in Maryland.

Mike still works half time as the business manager for Neshaminy Warwick Presbyterian Church. Major projects there included structurally reinforcing old sanctuary attic timbers hewn in the 1700s and unclogging a toilet in the women's bathroom by fishing out the music minister's missing gold cross. He continues to teach information system courses one or two evenings per week as an adjunct professor for Strayer University. He has a "portfolio" of data system consulting assignments for the Bucks County Choral Society and Waters Heating & Cooling. This was his 12<sup>th</sup> year singing with the Choral Society where he began his second term on the board of directors. His voice part switched from tenor to baritone (too many martinis maybe). There were eight concerts during 2008 including a Beethoven concert with full orchestra. One unusual concert consisted of multi-choir numbers performed with the Fairfax Choral Society (Fairfax, VA) at the National Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C. Performed at that concert was a 17<sup>th</sup> century piece by Tallin that required eight separate choirs with 28 different voice parts conducted simultaneously by four directors—quite confusing to say the least! Mike also sang with a choir from Mississippi that came to Doylestown to thank Bucks County for extensive aid in rebuilding public buildings devastated by Hurricane Katrina.

Our "vacation" this year consisted of a 5-day road trip to Alabama (via Washington, D.C. where Mike had a concert) to fetch Paul and his dorm room possessions. On the trip back to PA we narrowly avoided a high-speed blowout on the interstate when a red light forced Mike to quit racing with the Pepsi truck that kept pulling alongside. At the light the driver opened his window and yelled, "You have a flat tire!" There was a large metal screw imbedded in the tire. In October Jean, Layne, and Mike spent four days in Baltimore where Jean and Layne attended the annual Boucheron mystery writers' conference. Meanwhile Mike goofed off exploring Baltimore on foot, seeing "Vicky Christina Barcelona", and having lunch with Layne and Jean one day at Hooters on the Inner Harbor. So it goes.

**WE WISH YOU A HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND A MERRY NEW YEAR!**