

MERRY CHRISTMAS 2011

REST IS RUST; motion is lotion, according to my Pilates Coach. She is a size two, 50 yr. old who looks thirty-something, so she's earned her credibility. In a year filled with global disasters like the earthquake and nuclear meltdown in Japan, European financial meltdowns and a National surplus of hypocrisy and distrust, CREDIBILITY is such a happy change! However, It's hard **not** to notice or form an opinion about the current State of our Union or those who are running to become leader of the free world in such turbulent changing times. (A recent poll claimed 76% says 2011 was a *horrible* year and TIME magazine named the person of the year—*The Protester!*?) We can probably give some credit to the internet and the media for the birth of Democracy in Egypt, Tunisia and Libya, and hope the Arab Spring gains even more momentum! Prince William was taken off the eligible bachelor list in April and Osama Bin Laden was “taken out” in May—nearly ten years after 9/11. We face a blizzard of global and National issues in the next 11 months. (*Skip the following paragraph if you have already reached your political saturation point! Sorry, but this ‘person of the year’ just can't help it!*)

SHOES. It's been decades since I sat in a shoe store and had a salesman wait on me. I buy my shoes at Discount stores now. The Republican Debaters remind me of shoe salesmen. One is selling tea party heels, some show flip flops, nearly all of them offer a line of “croc.” The only one selling sensible shoes is just a blip in the polls. It's hard for an Independent to find a comfortable fit. What we need is a candidate who is scandal free, pays attention to history, young, eloquent and intelligent, hasn't offended huge segments of the populous, ends wars, promotes democracy without getting us into another war, takes a bite out of terrorism, works for the 99%, saves industries, offers economic, healthcare and employment solutions, has a nice family, cute dog, a wife who chooses to help veterans & fight obesity. Oh wait...*we already have that!* Ooops.

CUJO. Can you teach an old dog new tricks? We are struggling to replace old tricks with new ones in an old dog. I think Kia, the 11 yr. old Chihuahua we inherited from our buddy Bob—is winning the war. She still goes berserk over windshield wipers, even those in TV movies. She snarls at Eric and Hannah, her new sister-dog. She begs for people food & is reluctant to go outside unless snow is shoveled off the driveway. (*Until May, she lived all her life in Las Vegas.*) She has credibility, however, as a great people trainer, and she *loves* me! *OLE!*

CLASS REUNIONS are full of “aha” moments. We went to my 50th this July and I was startled to find a lot of old people there, a few benefited by plastic surgery. Even the school had a facelift for its 100th birthday. Lots of memories of a time when computers and iphones were science fiction and there were no nurseries for students with babies or metal detectors to pass through at the school entrance. I re-connected with another writer from our old school newspaper and I think it may have sparked renewed interest in my own writing. The novel I wrote 30 years ago has become my new obsession. (*Life intervened and it gathered dust on a shelf.*) Besides re-writing and editing 600 pages, I even marketed a few other articles recently. Maybe you CAN teach old dogs new tricks?

CANCER SURVIVOR is the newest title for brave daughter Kris. She underwent chemo, a lumpectomy, more chemo, low white cell treatment, and radiation all year until we watched her ring the bell in the Mayo Clinic waiting room (*signaling the end of treatment on Oct. 3.*) Eric also had successful cataract surgery this April and has improved eyesight now. We are fortunate to live in this medical mecca! Six horses and summer riding lessons also keeps the rust at bay. Students choreographed and performed to “The Lion King” at our 10th annual Funny Farm Show in Aug.

OLD & NEW Pastors at Mt. Olive also highlight this year. We celebrated the church's 50th Anniversary most of 2011. Our 2nd and longest-serving Pastor, Keith Beaver, came to one of our celebration dinners in Spring, but suffered a fatal stroke in September. He was originally from Milwaukee and the reason we joined Mt. Olive in 1968. We enjoyed his friendship for the 30 yrs. he shepherded us, and during his retirement since. Our newest Sr. Pastor was called to serve in August. Pastor Laura Sutherland hails from Wisconsin and was a lawyer for 14 years before God called her!

FAMILY HIGHLIGHTS. Oldest granddaughter Katie Fosdick was Confirmed this October and is raring to drive when she turns 16 in a couple months. Youngest granddaughter Zoey Johnson turned 2 at Thanksgiving and just moved into the beautiful new home Tanya and Tyler bought at a half price bargain after it was foreclosed and auctioned to a realtor. Silver linings in this Economy do exist!?! *Still, we have members of our family who are jobless.*

2011 BESTS: Book: “Heaven is for Real”(best seller list all year!) **New movie:** War Horse, **TV series** on AMC channel:“Hell on Wheels”-(*historical about our intercontinental railroad construction.*) **Team:** Go Packers!



Love Always Wins...God Bless You All! Eric and C.J., Hannah & Kia