



December 2014

Dear Friends,

Being a Midwesterner who never wants to be any trouble, it occurs to me that you might worry if you didn't hear from me this year, so I am writing to let you know that I am well and have much to be thankful for.

It has been 9 months since Colin's death in March (<http://www.recordonline.com/article/20140323/NEWS0301/303239993/0/SEARCH>). This was - and remains - irredeemably sad on many levels. I am constantly reminded of him every day, as I drive past places that have some association, for good or ill. He visits regularly in my dreams, though usually as a young boy, often with his siblings and that younger family of yesteryear.

Despite the sadness, Colin's memorial service at St. George's was a kind of high point. Sanford created the beautiful urn; Wendy, Emma and old friends Kit and Eliz did reception prep; our former minister Deborah gave the perfect talk; several family members participated - Laura's reading and my sisters' singing were especially moving. Many friends helped out in various ways. Most inspiring was the appearance of so many people: all my siblings (and 2 of 3 spouses); old friends from near and far; new friends and acquaintances; people from the church; and dozens of Colin's friends, who talked afterwards about how much he meant to them. There were also many wonderful cards and heartfelt messages on social media.

This tremendous response was a great comfort, as it confirmed my sense of who Colin "really was" - or at least the sweet, perceptive soul I treasured the most, even when that person was not always in evidence.

Throughout this time of trial, I have been blessed by the mindful presence of Alice, who continues to amaze and amuse and... well, let's just say that in my humble opinion, she is perfect in every way. Aside from the pleasure of all the everyday things we share, she helped commemorate Colin by creating a beautiful portfolio to house the cards, program, and guest book from the service.

For the most part this year, Alice and I have stayed close to home and stuck to our knitting. But we kicked off the New Year by pretending to be tourists in New York City for a few chilly days.

It was still chilly in March when we went up to Rhinebeck to watch the ice boats on the Hudson - this was the first time the river had frozen over in a couple of decades! It was amazing how many of these boats have been hiding in garages and basements all this time!



Alice Vaughan, of the Hudson River Bindery, rounds a handmade book at her studio on Johnes Street.



In May we went up to Boston to visit friends as well as Alice's son Winston and his fiancée Sylvia. We were back again in September for their lovely wedding, held at the Old Meeting House in the heart of Boston. The bride's family & friends from Texas arrived in force and kept the socializing lively! At last I was able to meet the third of Alice's kids, Newton, as well as her ex-husband Philip. (Amicability prevailed.)

After the wedding, Alice and daughter Hannah made a dash for Detroit, where Hannah is starting an MFA at Cranbrook Academy. I flew out, and Alice and I enjoyed a weeklong road trip in Michigan. We visited Susan in West Olive (brother David was in Ghana) on the last warm days of the season, happily swimming in Lake Michigan. The weather turned abruptly cold and windy, as it will do in Michigan, but we kept warm with dear friends near Traverse City (shown here at Sleeping Bear Dunes).

Alice continues her bookbinding, which attracts a variety of customers needing old books repaired, portfolios for artistic work, and small custom-made editions (check out hudsonriverbindery.com) – not to mention the attention of the local paper. In addition to the bindery itself, she will be teaching two courses at SUNY New Paltz next semester, and in the summer she'll be teaching for a session at the Penland School of Crafts, near Asheville NC.

I continue to keep happily occupied at Accenture, but my email now says I'm part of "Fjord," a division of Accenture Interactive, which in turn is a part of Accenture Digital. The company acquired 3 agencies last year, and our hitherto small group is merging with them, so instead of having about 40 colleagues in my area I now have about 500 worldwide! The work continues in a pattern of varied assignments running generally 2-4 months. It started with a project at Johnson & Johnson (of Band-Aid and replacement-knee fame); then it was a role at Halliburton (oil & gas), which took me to Houston for several weeks. (One weekend I ducked out to visit Sanford and Emily in Phoenix.) Then came a project about connecting your smart phone to your car's in-dash navigation system, so you can just say "Order me a pizza now" and then drive over and have it paid for and brought out to you - sort of like re-inventing the root beer stand! The latest is a gig with Caterpillar (of bulldozer and giant earth mover fame), which is taking me to Peoria, IL – the town often cited (or derided) as the most "normal" place in Middle America.

After my sisters' recent challenges, I'm happy to report no health issues beyond general decline.

We've heard some lovely choral concerts locally and in New York this season; we'll be spending a few days with friends in the Adirondacks over the New Year's holiday.

Wishing you and yours a safe and meaningful year...