



A FIRST FOR JUDY
MINNESOTA GIRL
MARKS MILESTONE IN
BWCA WILDERNESS



ANNA'S APARTMENT
STARTING HER LAST
SEMESTER OF
SCHOOL...



ELISE IN EUROPE
...BEFORE ENTERING
THE WORKADAY
WORLD

WATTMAN WANDERINGS



Happy Together: (from left to right) Judy, Alex Bauer, Anna, Andrea Dronen (Judy's sister), Rick (in window reflection), Mike Dronen, Claire Dronen, Christian Gregory Carson, Elise, Matt Bennett

We're Still Here...

Unlike 2013, there are no “major catastrophes” to report this year, for which we are thankful: no car accidents; no house damage; everyone is safe and sound. Life continues to be “exciting and interesting”—**READ:** there are plenty of challenges and blessings alike. Yet “*we do not lose heart,*” because we know that **God is at work in our lives and in the world** (2 Corinthians 4:16-18). Once again we share an encapsulation of our year—a mere glimpse of some of the ways God has provided and seen us through, and for which we give thanks and have great hope.

We celebrated Thanksgiving early this year—along with $\frac{3}{4}$ of the Dronen family—when Elise and Matt returned from Europe in November.

A Further Emptying Nest

Judy and Rick continue to experience family in a new way. Our grown-up girls—such a deep part of our lives for decades—are increasingly moving independently of us. It's beautiful to watch, in a proudly melancholy sort of way. One significant way we witness this is the regular, welcome inclusion of their boyfriends in our family gatherings. We enjoy their company at holidays, weekends, special events, *and* on camping trips. **In 2014:**

From the “who cares” department, our 2013 Christmas present to one-another was a new garage door. Exciting, no? After years of manually opening the door in the cold, we are once again spoiled by automation.

Judy continues teaching in the nursing program at Normandale Community College. They are in transition (*while* preparing for accreditation)—finishing one track of students under the old curriculum, and starting a new track with the new! To make things interesting, she has added new subject areas, including Pediatrics and Pharmacology.

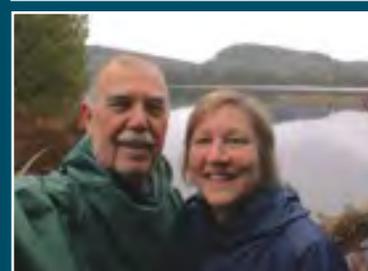
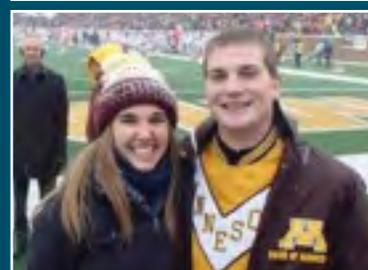
Elise has completed coursework for a Music Therapy Master's degree, and is focused on networking for performance and teaching opportunities. We joined her in Texas last May, to celebrate **Matt's** graduation from UNT, where we met much of his extended family. When **Elise** offered to let **Anna** use her car while she was in Europe for three months (a post graduation celebration before settling down to “real” jobs and responsibilities) **Rick** rendezvoused with them in Colorado to collect the car, where they were visiting **Rocky** and **Jan** (**Matt's** mom). It was fun to share their hospitality, and to enjoy the mountains at the same time. **Anna** didn't mind at all having a car for college, either, especially living in a house off campus.

Anna is finishing at the U of M in December, eagerly looking around the corner to see what is in store for her: graduate school? work? travel? She has enjoyed immensely her coursework for Family Social Science, and has a passion to make a difference in people's lives—to foster healthy development of relationships, families, children, and even organizations as a whole. She also found time to be in two concert bands at the university, and to support the University of Minnesota Marching Band as staff.

Rick began a new role in his second job at the Apple Store, providing technical support and training for customers. It is challenging to stay ahead of emerging issues (he reports being on the edge of panic most days) but it still supplements the income from his full time ministry at **FaithSearch** International. His role there has been cleaned up, offloading system administration and Web site maintenance duties to vendors, and focusing more on communications. He's excited about a new newspaper initiative next year.

Judy and Rick enjoyed a long fall weekend on the North Shore. We rented a primitive cabin (no electricity or plumbing) in the mountains above Lutsen, MN. The colors were eye-catching, the scenery spectacular, and we were both refreshed. We took a spontaneous hike into the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness—to the foot of the highest “peak” in MN. It was Judy's first time in the BWCAW. From the beginning, being outdoors has been a blessing for us. After 30 years of marriage, we enjoy it still and are growing closer than ever before. We pray you will have a **Merry Christmas** and a blessed **New Year!**

2014 in a Flash



2014 in a Flash: (top to bottom) NEW garage door [1/3]; OTB with the Bennett bunch in TX [5/11]; Colorado mountain majesty with Matt and Elise [6/5]; Anna on staff for the Pride of MN, with Alex [11/15]; our fall vacation to the North Shore and BWCAW [10/19].