



December 23, 2009

Dear Friends,

This year has passed much the same as all others - lots of trudging along, some missteps and some comedy along the way. The kids are moving into the teen phase with Andrew leading the way. Computer time with Facebook and Youtube are required each day. When I am sitting at the computer, I make mad dashes to the bathroom and kitchen, no lingering, lest I lose my throne. As Andrew has been involved in baseball, football, basketball and cross-country ski teams this year, chauffeur has been added to the other titles Andy and I share.

That Andrew and Zach are becoming independent makes up for the teenish 'tudes. Their fall project (see photo) was approached with energy and enthusiasm. No fancy plans or kits, just lots of pounding away; I can still hear it. Zach was the driving force in getting it started and seeing it through to its current stage. Temperatures have dampened the appeal. Skiing and snowboarding (and hauling wood) will help work off their energy until construction can be finished this spring.

The Birkie report: Andy finished his 15th and is starting to train for the 16th in the elusive quest for the purple bib (20th). His skiing buddies, who have a combined age of 350, consumed 'beverages' and climbed on wet rocks in the boundary waters this summer. Scott was loaded onto the life-flight helicopter. Showing concern for their fallen comrade, the troops loaded the empties onto the flight. Everyone is still breathing, so it was declared a great trip. Unfortunately, the Birkie team will be short a few members.

Running the logistics for the crew, I am balancing the sports driving schedule, dinner menu, and part-time teaching (math) at the trade school. The mechanics overlook the fact that I know nothing about cars. Who knew the piston doesn't go into the crank shaft?

A short mom story: Before Halloween, Andrew announced that he found a great idea for a costume online - a man in a gift wrapped box labeled "God's gift to women". I gritted my feminist teeth and tried to explain nonchalantly why he shouldn't choose this costume. Images of Mick Jagger dancing across the stage and Carly Simon singing "You're so Vain" blasted through my brain. He put on his sweatshirt and skull cap and stuck a haphazardly wrapped box over his head with the aforementioned label. I hung back and watched as woman after woman, dispensing candy, laughed out loud.

We wish you a joy and happiness at this time and throughout the year.

Andy, Marilyn, Andrew and Zach
Amanda and Jake



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Merry Christmas!
Marilyn & Andy,
Andrew & Zach