

Dear friends,

Last year we wrote about the anticipated graduation of our Goddaughter, Emma Baxter, from Iowa City High School. Here she is with Kathleen after the commencement ceremony last June. Julian is the photo bomber in the background. Sorry Kathleen is a little blurry—it's not her fault. Emma has now finished her first semester as a freshman at Oberlin College. She will be spending January at the Hirshhorn Museum in Washington, D. C., where she has a winter term internship.



We also wrote about events at Saint Louis University. Since then President Biondi has retired. Initially, he announced his intention to remain on the job and manage the search for his successor. But in late summer it was announced by the trustees that he would step aside at the beginning of this current academic year, and university counsel, Bill Kaufmann, was appointed interim president. A few inequities have been addressed, but the basic structure of the Biondi tyranny remains. Kathleen looks forward to her own retirement in four years.



Door County was beautiful this year; there had been plenty of rain. We spent a couple of days hiking around in Peninsula State Park on the Green Bay side and found the creeks full and the flora abundant. We explored parts of the park we had never seen and some others we had visited hurriedly in the past. Here's a shot of the Eagle Bluff Lighthouse inside the park. Inhabited until 1926, it's now a museum. But we also saw signs that the park's public facilities are being neglected under the austerity regime of current Wisconsin governor, Scott Walker. One park worker, who was willing to risk talking to us about the situation at her unit, complained of staff cuts and told us she had to solicit private contributions to pay the electric bill.

We did some other exploring too, some of it around the city, visiting Rockwoods Reservation conservation area, where we heard a concert by Cathy Barton and Dave Para, and spending a lovely spring afternoon walking through fields of tulips at the Shaw Nature Reserve. We visited The Butterfly House for the first time this summer, hiked around the historic village and Thornhill Farm at Faust Park where



we also took a ride on the restored carousel and listened to the hokey old organ that accompanies some of the rides. It sounds like a steam calliope with a drum attached. Then in November we spent a long weekend in Chicago. We did the museums and met a remarkable eight-year-old cellist. Julian wrote a blog piece about him. You can read it if you want to. Here's a picture of Kathleen with some baseball player she picked up on the train.

Julian continues to teach in the SLU honors program and to write his blog. The Episcopal Church has made a video about his church, St. John's Episcopal, though he's not in it. We were in Texas when it was shot. Kathleen continues her work with the St. Louis League of Women Voters and the St. Louis Urban Debate League. Participation is up in the Urban Debate League with close to 200 debaters this year. Two of last year's St. Louis debaters, Destiny Crocket and Cameron Smith were nationally ranked and visited with President Obama on a special trip to the nation's capital. This year, Destiny is a freshman at Princeton, and Cameron is attending Wiley College, in Marshall, Texas, the site of the film, *The Great Debaters*. The St. Louis League of Women Voters is the leading League in Missouri and one of the strongest Leagues in the country. Julian likes to think Kathleen has something to do with that.

Love to all and Happy New Year!