

Christine's life vastly improved this year - no she didn't kick me out (not yet anyway), something far more important. She has a sports car! A gray one that goes perfectly with her hair. She loves her little car as she tells everyone she meets. I explained to her that you can actually put the roof up on the car but she just looks at me as though I just don't quite get it. What's the point of a convertible with the roof up? Now the New England winter is creeping in she dresses like Scott of the Antarctic for a quick trip to the convenience store. "I am just going outside and may be some time". Sometimes it takes chisels and blow torches to pry her hands from the steering wheel.

On the up side I get the cast-off minivan with the Hillary bumper stickers. Apparently, real men who are secure in their manhood drive cars like that. Did I say that right Christine? Thirty years of wedded bliss in April - on the off chance we make it that far.



The car has firmly set Christine's priorities in life, in order of importance they are: sports car, iPhone, kids, Hillary and I think I'm a distant next just edging out Obama. No more mentioning of Hillary, it might make Christine burst into tears again. Oh yes, she got an iPhone; unfortunately I downloaded her favorite Mozart as a ring tone so she refuses to answer it because it interrupts the music. Don't laugh, it's true!

I didn't see much of Christine over the summer what with her trip to England and endless camping trips to Maine. I

told her that I was planning on getting a little hottie to keep me company for the summer. "You can have any hottie that will have you". Damn, she saw the fatal flaw in my cunning plan. I blame the minivan of course - I can't think of any other reason I'm not fighting off hotties with a big stick.

On the kid front, one more out of college. Ellie graduated from George Washington University in typical style. She was by far the best graduate of the year and made all the other graduates look quite ordinary. She took a job at a charter school in Boston and lives with her boyfriend Ian in an apartment also in Boston. She gets paid so little in her first year that she's eligible for food stamps. Although she told me that you can buy really nice filet mignon with the food stamps.

It's good to have her closer and we see her now and then, usually around laundry time. I provide the wine if she brings the steaks.



Gregory, was the last one at home and he eventually left for college. He's up at the University of New Hampshire studying partying and rap music from what I can fathom. He's our first "student athlete" but it's only soccer, not a real American sport. His only real hope of making it in the big time is to make kicker in the real football team and kick the ball 5 times a game (which is currently more than he does for the soccer team). Still, the 8:00am daily training keeps the partying under some control. He moved into a student apartment and I'm sure you are all familiar with what that's like. He doesn't disappoint on expectations. They all pooled their savings and bought the biggest TV on the planet. So big it almost didn't fit through the door and now takes up about 1/3rd of their living room. Christine thinks it's too big but she is lacking the necessary Y chromosome that makes you know a TV just can't be too big. Watching football on it in HD is awesome, once you move the piles of empty pizza boxes, beer bottles, and the syringes full of anabolic steroids out of the way. Hah, if he is taking steroids, they sure ain't working.

Stephen is still down in Virginia at George Mason University studying economics. At least the bar has been set low these days so that if all he learns is how to boil an egg, he'll be doing far better than the complete bozos currently managing the economy. Speaking of bars, I donated my kegorator (beer keg refrigerator) to Stephen - I assumed he gets more use out of it, and he doesn't disappoint. Although I suspect he tends more towards quantity over quality. It's hard to talk about Stephen since we see little of him. On his visits home he has to compress his months of pent family interaction into a few days. Yes that is fun, I almost forget how much. Luckily he's so much more mature and responsible now he's 21 (hint: sarcasm turned all the way up to 11) . Still it's nice and quiet when he leaves. And Christine still has a weep every time (once we pry her out of the car).

Andrew is happily floating along on the currents of life. Still working as a pool boy and other odd jobs, as long as he has enough money for the odd beer and the latest video games. Andrew is the ideas man, "Dad, can I put gull-wing doors on the minivan". "Sure". "Maybe I'll buy the new football video game instead". He just needs a team of people to follow through with his ideas. If he ever gets rich it will become very interesting indeed.



.....Andrew (25).....Gregory (20).....Stephen(21)

What, no mention of a car accident this year? We did have a minor one but it was so insignificant that it isn't worth mentioning. I even forget who was involved. Hardly any point in even mentioning it really?

Have a great Christmas and 2009 and try to avoid the stopped Lexus in the middle of the road.