

Feeding hungry boys: We hosted the Dartmouth rugby team after their Princeton game for dinner (caterer alert!) and the Dartmouth Ultimate Frisbee team for a whole weekend (22 guys...no caterer). We have bulk feeding of young men down to a science in our household.

THE LIFE-CHANGING MAGIC OF TIDYING UP

This fall I decided to do a little de-cluttering, after reading Marie Kondo's book. She recommended starting with a category of clothes, so I tackled blouses. There were 89. Of the 89, 26 were white or off-white. No one needs 26 white button-down shirts, not even a lawyer.



The blouse project was one piece of my overall strategy to downsize and de-clutter. We rented the beach house on VRBO.com (#709842, check it out) for the first time, and the frantic removal of 20 years of crap - like the kids' kindergarten artwork stored under the beds - was cathartic. I decided my whole life needs the same tidying and downsizing, so I've sent 30 bags to Good Will and have shed 15 pounds. I still have a way to go...10 more pounds and the vast wasteland of our third floor.

The Fayerweather Four



Restorative mini-mini-reunion at the Cousins' home on Jupiter Island in November with Ann, Lillian and Alison (and also Elizabeth, who took the photo)

Grace's favorite activity at the EPA — by far — has been the week-long hazmat training. She has learned that she is not cut out for life in a cubicle and needs to be out and about.



I thought this was David and friends preparing for one of his five viewings of *The Force Awakens*. He says it is not, begging the question, "What is this?" Also, I just noticed that he is wearing pajamas.



31 years



What, your Thanksgiving pumpkin pie didn't have dinosaurs on it?



Fall hiking in Virginia

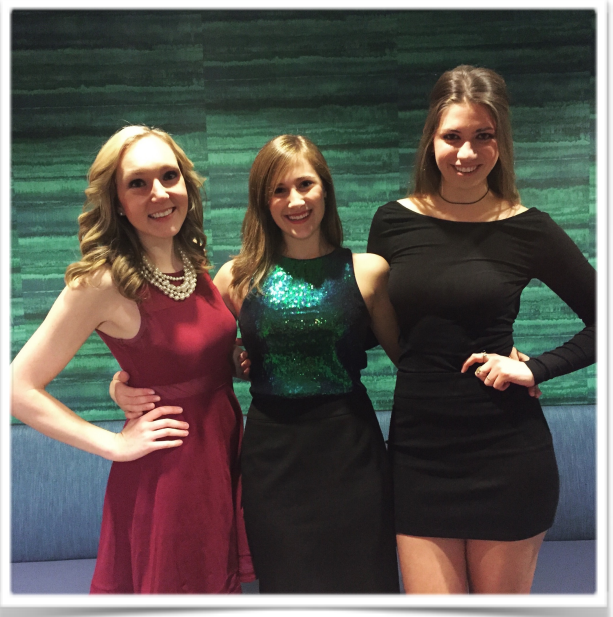


David with the first of several plates on Thanksgiving. He weighs 30 pounds more than he did as a wrestler yet still looks trim, which makes me realize just how skinny he was in those days.

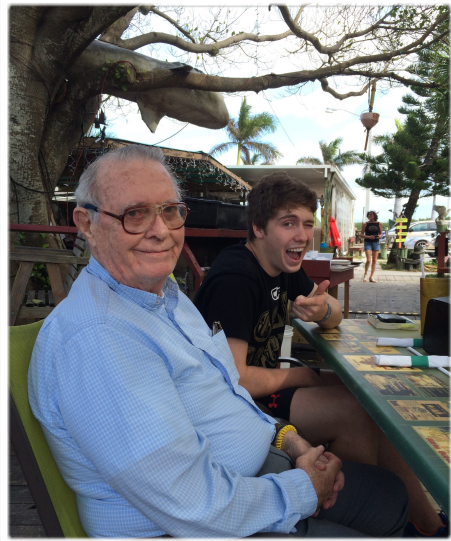


Grace appreciates being of legal drinking age.

After the Chem 6 fiasco, which was exacerbated by a little incident with his car, David did NOT spend winter break romping around Europe with his fraternity brothers. Instead, he took a less glamorous road trip to Cleveland, Cincinnati, and DC. He also spent an exciting, all-expenses-paid weekend with his mother in Florida moving his grandfather from one assisted-living facility to another. Fun! Despite the involuntary nature of that expedition, he was a sweetheart, and I wish I had a photo of charming David surrounded by ten flirtatious old ladies at Horizon Bay Retirement Community.



Grace with a new set of roommates.



Amanda and Grace use a Groupon for what they think will be an elegant wine tasting but discover that it's in a supermarket.

A deep, dark shadow cast on 2015 was the return of our nephew/cousin Jim's leukemia in August after a too-short reprieve. He and his immediate family headed back to the surreal world of the hospital, where Jim spent his 21st birthday and where he has been for most of the last 5 months. But on December 10 his sister Danielle donated bone marrow, and as of this writing (in late January), we are hoping he'll be going home soon.



On the DC part of his December road trip, David took a dip in the cold and toxic Potomac River to rescue an errant Frisbee. Grace: "It was only a problem when he started turning blue on the way back to my apartment." Adult skills demonstrated: None. This was incredibly stupid.

The holidays find us in typical Klinges chaos. Shelter Party Santa doesn't tell me he can make it to the shelter party until literally the afternoon of the party, sending several other males in my inner circle into a panic. . . Meanwhile, Battle Road Santa was planning to leave a clementine in the bottom of someone's stocking, but she finds it serving as a weight to defrost a frozen mouse. . . David thinks he can drive my stick shift after a single lesson, but he discovers while backing out of the garage that he needs a little more learnin'. . . I take the monster snow globe (the biggest of my collection, about a foot in diameter) out of the box upside down and find out too late that the top has become unglued. Water and sparkles decorate the dining room rug . . . Grace arrives home from DC and forgets that Archer the snake is still in the car. For hours, in the cold. But he was fine.



Good things:

1. Curtis, the bus driver at the giant lot where we leave our cars to take the train into Philadelphia. Curtis shakes every rider's hand, and he knows everyone's car — despite the fact that there are thousands in this lot. Even Dave (curmudgeonly Dave) likes Curtis. But what really gets me is Curtis' prayers. Sometimes I'm on a late train, and I'm chatting with Curtis on the bus to my car and telling him what's going on. Twice in 2015 he said, "Let's pray about that right now." I'm not an especially religious person, but when a SEPTA bus driver pulls his bus over and gets out from behind the wheel to take both your hands and pray with you, it's a moving experience.



2. The Shelter Christmas Party, as always. I confess that I HATE it in the week leading up to it, which is not very charitable of me. It's a hassle and, by definition, it comes at a terrible time of year. Couldn't we do it in February,

when I'm less busy? I curse myself for ever getting involved (23 years ago). This year David crashed my car (see above) the night before, just adding to the stress, the chaos, and the urgent need for a rental car. Yet it's always heartwarming in the end.

As we start 2016, David has embarked on his dream trip: a semester in the rain forest in Costa Rica. Follow his blog at natureinparadise.wordpress.com and the whole group's blog at TheDartFrogs.wordpress.com. His photos are amazing. Grace is looking at graduate schools for marine science, but I don't want to jinx it by saying too much. Dave just got certified so he can SCUBA dive with the kids, and he is working his twice-repaired knee way too hard, hoping that if he gets it strong enough he'll be cleared to ski in March. And me? Trying to clear out the clutter and focus on what's important, and starting to think more and more about what life after a law career might look like. Here's to a happy and, most importantly, HEALTHY 2016.

Love,
Dana, Dave, Grace and David