



Greetings from the local snow pile! Lake effect snow has blessed North East Ohio with an abundance of snow this season; a snowman guards the front yard and looking for the car has become a sport. My cute car is happily ensconced in the Tajma -Garage. Oh, I extra love my garage on these kinds of days!

Talia, the jolly green giant (she is only 5.5 but she tells others she is 5'9 and up) will be seventeen tomorrow and a junior. She holds an official Ohio driver's license, and is excellent on the road. Her driveway skills however, have provided her father the opportunity to use his new garage and improve his auto body repair skills. She is involved in several school activities. She is an officer for student council, a member of NHS, and a participant in a community volunteer outreach program that all conveniently meet at 7:00 a.m. a different day of the week. In an effort to spend some time not on the road, we bought a car, named Roman, for her to transport herself those days. She also continues to take several advanced classes including her AP History class that consumes huge portions of her life. She took a 5-day trip to Philadelphia in conjunction with the class in the fall, and quotes history to us like it is current events. She is a member of the Scarlet Guard Color Guard and marched this fall. Last

spring, she and the band were invited to play at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC. I tagged along with 2 of my fellow teachers (who also have band kids) and visited some of my childhood haunts between hanging out with our kids. The kids had a lot of fun, and let's just say it wasn't them that got written up for excessive noise at 2a.m. Oh well! Watching them play in front of the Lincoln Memorial transported me to happy memories of my childhood. She also continues to be active in 2 Girl Scout troops – one headed to Oregon for 2 weeks in June. This summer Talia indulged in a 3 week out west Walsh adventure with my family. She returned home an Assquatch, accompanied by her faithful sidekick Wally the Cactus. Let's just say Walsh vacations haven't changed much over the years and she will be able to compete with anyone she meets in college for crazy family vacation stories.

Olivia (who really is the jolly green giant) is 14 and a freshman this year. She completed eighth grade in style, on crutches after spending 20 minutes at her first high school party. We feared that she had rebroke her ankle, however it was only a bad sprain. Even being a gimp, as soon as school was out, she hitched a ride with Biz, Todd and Ben. They spent 10 days in Washington, D.C. and the surrounding area. In an effort to fill all available time, she participated in a cross-country camp and band camp prior to school starting. Between those activities and her sister's help, her transition to high school has been smooth. She ran cross-country, spun in the color guard, and kept up all honors classes. She also became part of student council and the community outreach program. Some days she would be at school from 7a.m. until 9:30 at

night and have to come home and do homework. I don't know how she was able to manage it, but she has with humor and grace. As soon as running finished, she joined swimming. That requires daily 5:00 a.m. practices, as well as after school practices. So most nights she's asleep by 8:30. Her droll humor keeps her father in line and keeps the rest of us giggling.

Sophie, the dwarf – that is destined to pass Talia in height, just turned 11 and is in fifth grade this year. She and I still share a building, though I rarely ever see her during the school day. In June, she spent a week with Eili and my parents in NYC to celebrate their 10th birthdays. They saw the Statue of Liberty, a Broadway play, Central Park, a Lincoln Center Jazz show at midnight, you know - the usual for grandparent who spoil them rotten trip! They took the train in and out of Pittsburgh to NYC, and were a hoot together. Much to my father's disgust, they enjoyed Toys R Us and American Girl as much as many of the other adventures! Upon her return, we redid her room adding hard wood floors, new paint and a loft bed. The rabbit particularly likes the upscale digs. As a fifth grader she was able to join choir and band. She has selected the drums, so we now lug a bell kit around, not as big as a tuba, but still plenty heavy! She has been taking ukulele and guitar lessons as well. She has also been playing basketball. Sophie has become a furious reader, having completed the entire Harry Potter Series, and is now moving on to Twilight and Percy Jackson.

Christopher is still at Philips. He works a lot of random hours. He spent 2 weeks in Chicago this fall working on the RSNA show, in addition he has made about a dozen trips to Athens this spring, summer, and fall to help his father work on building a cabin on their property there. His absences have been particularly annoying as I count on him to fill in all the gaps in my insanity driven life, and the teenagers add a lot of insanity! He did find time to complete the upstairs of the garage creating a huge family room with a TV, pool table and other boy-toys. The back third of the space is a workshop. He is still finishing the walls and hard wood floors there. This summer, we reroofed the porch. While I am very accomplished at destruction, I'm not so much about construction. We became his and her ipad users this spring, I got one for my birthday and he had to have one within the week, I guess he can't stand to share!

We spent New Years 2010 in a friend's beach house in South Carolina. It was cold, but the beach yielded a lot of starfish. The girls and I took our annual trip to Florida with my mom. We went airboat riding through the Everglades and visited with the alligators. Look out CSI Miami! In June we spent a few days south of Chicago with Chris' cousins for Katie's wedding. It was so fun to catch up with them, and make some new friends there too. We left the wedding and headed straight to Allegany to camp with my aunts, sister, and cousins for a week. No bears this summer, though the 'wolf pack', aka the teenagers, were noisy enough to wake the dead and scare all wild life away! We (sans Olivia and plus cousin Sam) returned in time to help Chris with his annual Fourth of July celebrations. Fireworks returned this year, much to the village's delight. It amuses me that 'anti-social Christopher' provides a 2-day party for 5,000 people. As the girls took so many vacations without us, we hung at home working on garden improving, and small home projects. In reality, am not sure what I did, but it did take all my time! My friend Sara and I completed the Cleveland ½ Marathon in the spring and joined my father for the Air Force Marathon in September. Christopher's parents are doing well. My extended family continues to grow. I joined my brother and sisters in West Virginia for my cousin Shannon's wedding in August and Grandma Loewke welcomed three new great grandchildren, and her first great-great grandchild at the annual Loewke Christmas party. It is a thrill to see my girls play with their cousins as I played with their parents – family magic. This year the teenage girls that camp together requested and received matching red sock monkey footie PJs. Perhaps the warped gene was passed too?

My dad had pneumonia this fall, as did my sister (Mek) and she spent 3 days in the hospital and another week at my parents. Biz and I escaped for a weekend to Marietta in September to celebrate her birthday. We did nothing but talk for 24 hours, one of the best gifts we have given ourselves. My brother Jimmy and his wife welcomed their second son, Nathan, in March. He is such a happy baby. Ben, Eili, and James are getting so grown up!

I am still teaching fourth grade and have a wonderful class that I have been enjoying this year. We hope you are doing things you love and are enjoying the gift of time with those you love.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!