



Grandpa Grumpy with Morgan and Will at the Summit, NJ train station to pick up their Aunt Sarah for Thanksgiving. A kiss from Aunt Sarah. David in the kitchen. The Thanksgiving table in Millington, NJ. On a windy day last spring we released milkweed seeds in a meadow down at the forest preserve to attract Monarch butterflies and by fall many had grown for next year. Sarah gave us a big iron pot and we make No-Knead Bread in it using the recipe from Mark Bittman's NY Times Minimalist column. Good.



The little grass garden outside the bay window is a forest playground for dachshund puppies who chase each other and play hide-and-seek. The birds and butterflies feel comfortable approaching the house. We gather the seed heads of switch grass, feather reed grass, and northern sea oats for indoor decoration and, best of all, the deer leave them alone. One of us wants a pergola with climbing vines and a couple of chairs as a nice place to sit. The other likes it as is. Hmmm.

Goings On

As you can see from the photos on the back, we had a wonderful time over Thanksgiving with our children, Sarah and David, and their families in New Jersey. David and Andrea's two, Morgan and Will, are at the "growing like weeds" stage and rapidly becoming fascinating people in their own right. Finding presents for them, we discovered, takes a lot of thought and searching.

Sarah came for a summer visit, a fresh breeze from Brooklyn who gleefully upended our house and routines as she did quite regularly while growing up. It was a happy time. She and Donna managed to get up to the cottage, too.

Donna's cousin, Elaine Rowley, and publisher Alexi Xenakis were in town with their well-known "Stitches" knitting conference and after a long, delightful lunch with Elaine we had a grand tour of the exposition.

Despite the do-nothing state legislature borrowing from the pension funds to keep the school programs going while praying for the feds to bail them out, Donna continues to enjoy working with the at-risk pre-K kids at District U-46, a program much needed, now more than ever.

Grumpy is finding that changes in the publishing industry require re-thinking how you get a book published. It seems that DIY has become mainstream. Stay tuned.

A Little Prayer for the New Year

In the coming year, may those men and women in the financial institutions who gamed the system with unregulated risky products be allowed to make restitution to those from whom they took so much, giving up both their ill-gotten gains and their freedom;

May those in healthcare who have gamed the system with fee-for-service and multi-payer systems likewise be allowed to find, at last, a similar manner of restitution;

May the lobbyists who dwell on K Street and elsewhere who have so proudly brought corruption to our fragile government be recognized for their evil ways and thrown out of the Temple;

May the vast majority of the elected representatives of the people be recognized for what they are: craven cowards, greedy for what they have not earned, ignorant at best and stupid at worst, too willing to feed at the public trough, and may they be sent home in shame;

May Milton Friedman's ghost at last be laid to rest and his heritage of unfettered Capitalism and an all-volunteer military be replaced by a clear-eyed acceptance of the need of basic economic and political regulations and universal military service that allows all to share both risk and responsibility for our actions at home and around the world.

Donna & Walter Strong