

YOU'RE ON THE LIST

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Somewhere along the line, you or someone close to you placed information about your location in one of our hands. This information most likely was used to enter into a map database for directions, but we are doing something different with it this time. We're using it to send you stories of our year. Small moments in our lives that we'd like to share with you, or someone close to you.

Inspiration gets the best of us all sometimes. In this case, the freezing temperatures have given us time to sit down – allowed us to compile. I think of this a collection of Twitter updates I have had throughout the year. Twitter is this online application that updates people on “what you are doing now”. When you update on the site, people in your Twitter network can automatically get updates on your status. Like right now for instance, my status is set to “Derek is making the yearly pamphlet” and if you had Twitter, yours would say “_____ is reading the yearly pamphlet.”

Looking back on the archive of updates, they serve as a highlight of the days gone by. Here are three shortest of short stories that Caroline and I would like to share inspired by those highlights of our days in “the year of the cat.”



IN TWO-THOUSAND NINE...

- Both of us will graduate from the University of Washington in the spring.
- Madeleine will continue to be a diva, and Jack will turn 1!
- You can reach Derek & Caroline by email.
 - derekly@gmail.com
 - swartcr@hotmail.com
- We will eat lots of yummy foods (hopefully with you).
- You will receive another pamphlet to ring in 2010!

THE YEAR OF THE CAT

Derek & Caroline's Inaugural Pamphlet



Because we said so.

SUMMER IN TACOMA

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It's summer and warm out. Weekends in downtown Tacoma are more laid back than in suburb cities; especially in the summer months when the University students aren't in school. There aren't any big shopping centers or chain stores but instead there are old warehouse buildings converted to business offices. With all the workers and students gone, most of the people that visit downtown are here to visit the museums.

There's a light rail that travels from the theatre district just down the hill, goes through downtown, and stops at the Tacoma Dome. The train has a way of arriving at our stop just as we're going down the Spanish Steps two blocks away; leaving just enough time to hop onto the train if we to the stop. Caroline and I arrive to see the blinking red light signaling the train just pulling in. We rush to catch it.

After we get off at Union Station, we walk over a bridge that displays colorful glass art over the freeway on the way to the Glass Museum. You've got to go down steps to get to the museum entrance and halfway down is an area sectioned off away from walkers with a power outlet to plug in iPod speakers. We dance a few medium tempo old jazz tunes, eat some cupcakes from our favorite shop, and dance some more. Sometimes people stop and watch.

FALL IN PERSPECTIVE

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Fall returns in Tacoma with fiery leaves and a bustle of student activity not seen since the spring. The farmers market welcomes an abundance of apples and squash, and the temperature and sun begin to quickly drop.

Derek and I both returned to school at a new location – the University of Washington-Tacoma, about a 20-minute walk from our apartment. We took classes on labor, African American history, ecology art, and evolution.

In October, I accepted a position as a development assistant for a nonprofit called Washington Women's Employment & Education (WWEE), and Derek started a work-study position tutoring at a nearby Montessori school.

But while our lives certainly began to pick up pace this fall, Derek and I always do our best to make time for each other, our families, and our friends. And so this fall we experienced both loss and joy – death and the bonds of family, weddings and the hope that inspires our years to come. We enjoyed spending Mondays nights with Derek's family eating dinner and watching *Dancing with the Stars*; and we spent Sundays eating breakfast and watching football with my parents.

Our anniversary and Thanksgiving happen to fall on the same week, so this year we took a breath and gave thanks for it all.

AND MANY MORE

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And then came winter... which technically only began a few weeks ago, but has already left quite an impression.

For those of you who don't know, Derek and I adopted two cats from the Humane Society in the spring: Madeleine (who is now 2 ½), and Jack (9 months). Maddie is the calm and serene one, with green eyes like none you've ever seen. Jack, on the other hand, is a very sweet little boy, but...

During the snow, Jack couldn't help but be curious. It was our first trip to the Emergency Vet. Jack escaped with one paw stitched and cauterized after attacking my razor in the bathtub. That was a hard lesson.

Christmas Eve & Christmas arrived shortly after – my first Christmas Day spent with Derek's family, his first spent with mine. We celebrated Christmas and the third birthday of my niece, Clara, who spent the day pretty much attached to Derek.

And to celebrate our anniversary in fashion (though slightly belated), Derek and I vacationed for a few days at the Edgefield Winery, near Portland. We wine, dined and soaked in the spa - not a bad way to end the year.

And not a bad way to begin again...