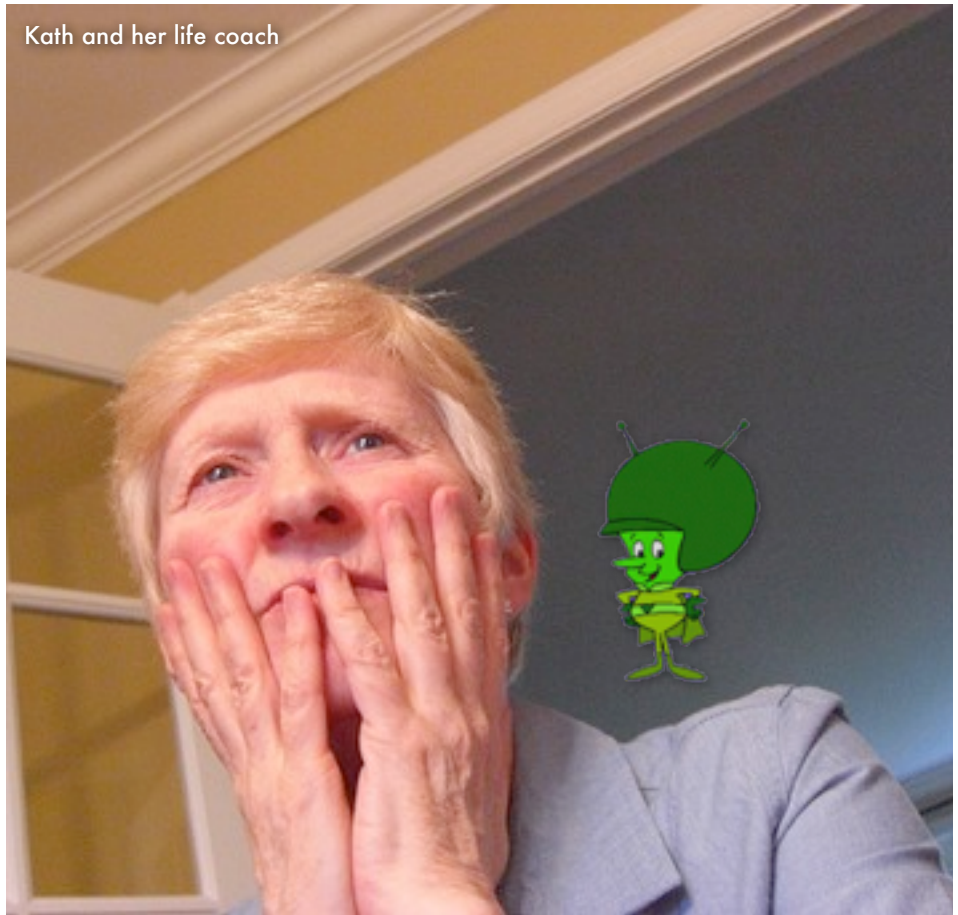


Kath and her life coach



**"I love Christmas. Why, it must be the most mediocre time of the year!" - Angus**

It's Christmas time again. It's that fateful time of year when we try to forget all the ways in which we've failed in our lives with blindly ignorant declarations of good cheer. Huzzah!

It's also time to catch up with family, friends, and your neighbors who have been out-doing your house decorations about as long as you've been filthily re-positioning the figures in their nativity scene.

For the Woodman family, 2008 has been a banner year. And not just because they strung a banner across the eaves for their respective domiciles. No, years from now, when they are all subsisting on soft-boiled eggs and tea and spend their afternoons offering hard candy to their lampshades, they will look back and say, "Yes, 2008,

that was a very good year. Now where did I put my teeth?"

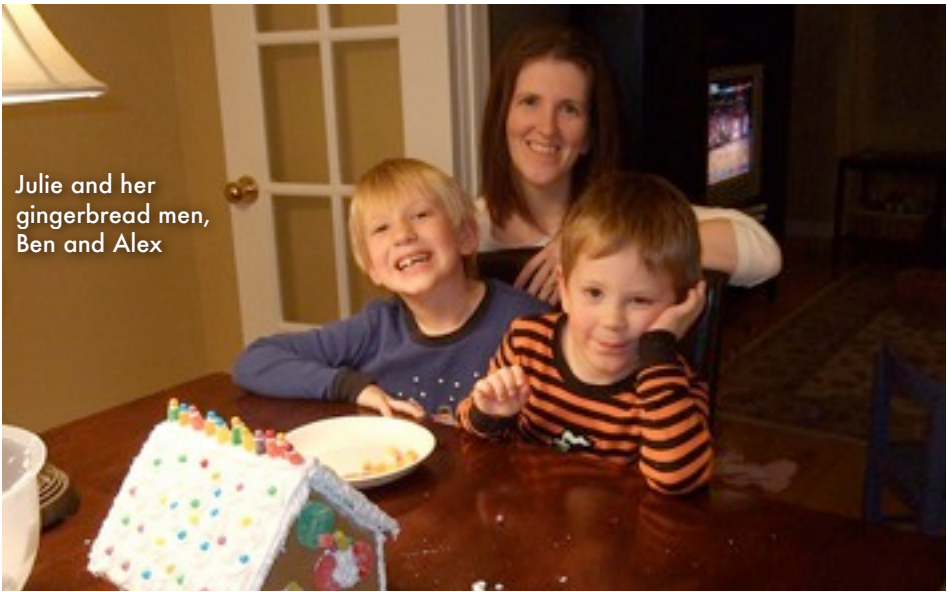
So let's see what they were all up to, shall we?



Here's the year in a big font to fill space and look pretty.

# 2008

There once was a red box. Inside that red box was a block of white text. The removal of the box and containing text was widely considered bad form. And so the story goes, with nothing to put here, the creator decided to list different cuts of meat. He started with rump roast and pork chops, quickly followed up with chicken breasts and roast turkey. Then came riblets and shanks and fillets and sirloins. Foie gras he listed, but was too cruel to eat, he thought, as was veal. He thought of becoming a vegetarian. But not before the box was full, so he carried on with rib eye and slab bacon. Then he ran out of space. Looking back over it, only one word was said: "tripe!"



Julie and her gingerbread men, Ben and Alex

## A mother like no other and the elder, helter-skelter

**Kath** (aliases: Mom, Mater, K-Thug and Chickpea) continued her pursuit of self-betterment. How did she do this? Well, in her own laid-down rhymes, "I rekindled my love of the seam with my vintage sewing machine." Our family has never had better fitting pants.

And she ran. She ran so far awa... um, that is, she ran for world harmony. They even gave her a shirt and took a picture, it was such a momentous event. So if you've noticed the world getting more harmonious, you have her to thank.

She also hosts a meditation group which, as far as anyone can tell, is not in any way a front for a terrorist cell. That would, after all, go against the harmony she ran so far for.

Over in the pretty blue house in the heights, **Earl** and **Michelle** carried on as if they're not in the least bit normal. Earl self-published his novel, an accomplishment as revered as emptying the bread-crumble tray on an old toaster.

Michelle, meanwhile, discovered that the weird brick building down the street was this thing they call a 'library' and is amazed they just let her take books. The hyper-literate couple are thinking about moving to a bigger house just so they have a place to store all 'dem books.

Before words took over their lives, they had one other notable day. Said the email they sent out afterward, "New car!! Then we had an accident..."

## A couple consumed by three children in bloom

**Julie** and **Michael** continued raising their kids, if only because of the governing legislation that requires them to do so. They took the kids on another trip to Disney World where they did things that cannot be discussed here due to trademark issues. Then this summer, they watched the oldest leave their home. Asked for a comment about his move, Angus said, "This isn't my section of the newsletter. Focus, man!"

Julie also started a new job, in which she does things with numbers for some sort of educational lumber. The details are strictly eyes-only, which means she'll tell you all sorts of provincial secrets if you ask and have eyes.

As for Mike, when asked about his year all he mustered was an exasperated, "Uh..."

Their kids, **Ben**, **Alex** and **Lily** just had their biggest accomplishment of the year when they got their own section in this newsletter. When asked for comment, Ben kicked wildly until he hit scrotum. Seems to be his go-to move.

Over the past year, Alex went from pretending everything was a sword to pretending he's a pirate with a sword. He's as precious as gold doubloons.

Lily is walking and talking already. Baby analysts say it won't be long before she's drinking from a different kind of bottle and swearing like, on, or under a sailor.



Michelle and a tree



Earl and a cat



Mike and a Lily

## Lily and her other parental unit





"I heard there were a lot of birds out here but I don't see nothin', man."



Angus demonstrating his come-hither look; he spends most nights alone



Katie and her boyfriend



Peter and Amy walk their dog in the forest

## Doggie Magoo and inventiveness too

**Peter** and **Amy** performed a mitzvah this year when they adopted a blind dog, Murphy. He spent some number of wonderful months banging into their walls before, sadly, the doggie reaper was scratching at the door, wanting to be let in.

In non-dog news, Amy has been warping young minds, professing at the local higher-learning institute. She says it would be brilliant, "if it wasn't for those darn kids."

During the summer they both ran 16km (at once) with a few thousand of their closest friends, without tripping or dying or anything. Everyone was amazed.

Peter has also been clandestinely building furniture. "I call it... a chair," he said one day, showing off his latest invention.

## The second king of lame and a studious dame

**Angus** and, uh, no one, had another status quo year. He spent a month in spring, like, totally high. That is to say, he flew across the continent several times for no particular reason. After being thought a drug mule by several border guards, he went back to a more sedentary life where he receives fewer requests to strip down for uniformed men.

In the summer, he moved into a new apartment that cavernously spans the top two floors of a building. Sadly, it only covers one and a half square feet. He says living vertically is often tricky but he gets a rush from the necessitated sleeping position, hanging bat-like from the ceiling.

Lastly, in the Fall, he changed jobs again, keeping his four-year streak alive. "I like to leave before they realize I'm incompetent," he said when interviewed... in the middle of a weekday... nowhere near his office.

Lastly, **Katie** spent the first half of the year heading straight for Med school, making the Dean's list and being awarded scholarships bespoke a diligent student like her. Then she took the MCAT, which she tanked. The rest of the family figured she was being too hard on herself, until she gave up her mark: 22. Which, according to rumors, is only half as good as a 44. Brutal, indeed. Quoth Katie, "I'm thinking of taking up fig farming. After all, the world needs newtons."

As for her personal life, she started dating a Mr. Laporte, known better as The Door. She is quite smitten, and likes that he gives her space, saying, "He lets me go into the next room!"



That concludes our newsletter for this year. The family wishes to express their heartfelt indifference to the happiness of your holiday season. Because, really, it's no skin off of their backs. As for 2009, if you happen to run into one of them, please watch where you're going, alright? You're going to hurt someone. Merry Christmas!