

Ye Olde XXIVth Annual Brendelgram

Yeah, we wanted to live here in Ipswich forever, but Doug may be wrecking everything. If the townspeople aren't sick of seeing him after this year, they probably soon will be. It will be no great surprise if the people of this town appear outside our house with pitchforks and torches demanding we relocate.

Doug, of course, blames Kristina. We had this nice, quiet, anonymous life here in smalltown America. But then she had to go and open [Time & Tide](#), the only fine art gallery in Ipswich, and turn it into not only a beloved destination for artists and art-lovers (with a whole new exhibition every 6 weeks or so), but also the site of concerts, staged readings, and other events, as well as workshops and private lessons — not to mention scintillating conversation and loads of laughter.

There goes our nice, quiet, anonymity.

To make matters worse, Kristina *forced* Doug to perform at a Time & Tide Christmas event last year, and the editor of the [Ipswich Chronicle](#) was in attendance, and one thing led to another — so, bottom line: Doug has been donating a column to the paper this year. [“The Outsidah”](#) is a more-or-less weekly, more-or-less hilarious riff on life in Ipswich from the standpoint of a newcomer. Doug's ego, already an object of considerable concern, has grown to historic proportions as people now stop him on the streets of Ipswich to tell him which of his columns they've liked best.

All of this high-profile stuff might have been OK, even in a quaint New England town, but then we had to go and stage [Vincent](#), a full-length two-act one-man play about Van Gogh. Lydia Charlotte served as a script coach, helping Doug memorize. Kristina directed and staged the show (running tech from her iPhone). *Vincent* ran 7 nights in the gallery. It was all over the news, it was a big hit — and haven't you had enough of the Brendels yet?

Well, sorry, but there's more.

Kristina spearheads the Ipswich Merchants Association, and the town's governing board of selectmen have appointed her to the Design Review

Board. Doug is now on the board of [Family Promise North Shore Boston](#); he has tons of fun recruiting churches to donate space for short-term overnight housing of newly homeless families. All the while, of course, Doug and Kristina continue leading their [New Thing](#) ministry — they made a number of trips to Belarus again this year. And Doug, as always, is gratefully employed writing [fundraising](#) copy for Christian groups.

Lydia Charlotte turned 10 this year; she's thriving in 4th grade. As a member of the Student Leadership Team, she landed the plum assignment of her dreams: library assistant. She's shelving books and reading to little kids and having a great time. She's also actually



sold some of her artwork at Mom's gallery!

Natalie is doing well, working a couple jobs in Scottsdale. Kris is living with us and working at Northshore Mall. (He and Kristina also did a couple upstairs construction projects.)

Neither of our big kids seeks out the spotlight, but it's hard to avoid in this family. Even [our cat Cleo](#) got famous this year, on YouTube.

Meanwhile, lots of fun folks came to see us, the bravest staying overnight in our Lower Monroe guestroom. And both Kristina and Doug took trips to visit their parents. (Lydia Charlotte went along with Dad to Tennessee and paid a surprise visit to the B. grandparents; later she went with Mom to



Colorado to play nursemaid in the aftermath of the G. Grandparents' horrific auto accident; they made a miraculous recovery.)

Otherwise, the year was mostly consumed with the common, ordinary, low-profile activities of the common, ordinary, low-profile Ipswichers we strive to be: lolling about on the beach, mingling at the Crane mansion, snacking on lobster — and engaging in the historic seasonal cycle of life in New England: “mowing,” “raking,” “shoveling,” and “floating your car.”

All in all, life is good.

We hope they don't really kick us out.



YE OLDE LYDIA CHARLOTTE TRANSCRIPT ARCHIVE

- *Watching a Marilyn Monroe movie:* I think she has really large what are they called?
- That's a good theory. Actually, it's a hypothesis.
- *Coming home early from playing because Kiley and Autumn had to go in:* Everyone is leaving me in despair!
- I really need to shave.
- What's the difference between a New York minute and a regular minute?
- *Complaint about camp:* The big kids don't talk to you, so you just hang about like a soul to them. And the little kids want you to ride the bus with them!
- I advise you not to ask me any more questions.
- I've thrown up in 3 different colors.
- *After many hours of watching Get Smart episodes on DVD:* I'm talking like 99, aren't I?
- I've eaten it. It's pleasurable.
- *Kristina (after Lydia Charlotte made her own lunch):* You don't need me anymore. *Lydia Charlotte:* Yes, I do. *Kristina:* What for? *Lydia Charlotte:* For comfort, and management.
- *Lydia Charlotte:* I love you, Mom. *Kristina:* Remember this, when I won't let you have your friends over for a keg of beer. *Lydia Charlotte:* What's a keg of beer?
- *Doug:* You're funny! *Lydia Charlotte:* This is going in the BrendelGram, isn't it. *Doug:* No way.

Come see us! In the meantime:
love God, love people.

And by the way: the long-dormant
BrendelCam is back online at
www.DougBrendel.com

