

Per usual, it's time for the annual recap of the Schvitz family and Darryl's knee deep in a bottle of whatever was in the bargain bin at Binny's. You know, that would be a good name for a band – Bargain Bin at Binny's, but I don't think they have bands anymore. It's all DJs now from what I hear, and I'm not talking about Darryl Jr.! He tried to launch a career as DJ D.J. in 2021 and I think he got paid more to stay away from clubs than spin at them.

Darryl and I celebrated 28 years of wedded bliss last month – well, 28 years of wedded-ness and some lesser amount of bliss. If Darryl doesn't care for that, he can read this and object before I pop it in the mail. We drove into NYC for the day and had dinner at an Indian/Mexican fusion place called Taco Mahal and my word was it good! Even Darryl liked it, but it probably helped that I only let him eat two stale pretzels from street vendors that day. We also went to a Broadway show – Hamilton! I was in heaven. Darryl had three bourbon and sodas so he was too.

Our tripod cat Hank is still with us and continues to get more opinionated every year. He's the one that used to live outside a ways down the road but he hurt his leg really bad and we had to have it amputated. Our son D.J. is still living at home with us, and he surprised us earlier this year with a tattoo of Hank's missing leg on his neck. We asked why the heck he did that, and he said he lost a bet with the cat.

D.J. also stopped eating meat this year (not related to any wagering with an animal) and instead of eating a turkey for Thanksgiving we adopted a turkey and named her Elsa. She's living in the side yard in a turkey coop and seems awfully happy to still be alive.

On a sad note, Darryl's father passed away peacefully in his sleep. Darryl missed the funeral because he was 'sick.' I don't wish to speak ill of the dead but it's the first time in years I've been close to that man when he kept his hands to himself.

Like a lot of folks, we were itching to get back to traveling after being cooped up during the pandemic and we had plans to visit my ancestral homeland in Holland. We'd been saving and planning it for years. We planned on a cruise down the Amstel River, a few days in Amsterdam and wandering through endless tulip fields. But D.J. came down with Covid – not sure how because it seems he barely leaves his room – and soon all three of us had it. We're hoping to go in 2023 in tulip season and I have half a mind to lock us all in a room for a month ahead of time. So instead of a European adventure, we took a trip to Springfield and toured the Pell Spline Factory. For those of you who don't have the pleasure of knowing what spline even is, it is the rubber strip that fastens the mesh screen in a window to the frame. Yay! The stuff of dreams.

My old job was phased out early in the year, but I didn't let that get me down. I decided to start my own business and I couldn't be happier. I'm the top-rated business for repurposing chipped dinner plates on all of Etsy! I have some standard items in my store and also do a lot of custom work - belt buckles, corn cob holders, mosaic toilet lid covers, crayon boxes, cat and dog bowls, eyeglass frames, pool toys, mobile phone cases, soup ladles, toilet paper rollers, barn door handles, neti pots, grills like the rappers wear on their teeth and sometimes even smaller, unchipped dinner plates. Email me and I'll send you the link to my store!

We are thankful for all that we have and really optimistic about 2023. We wish you the happiest of holidays.

Hildie, Darryl and DJ Schvitz – plus Hank and Elsa!

p.s., I know it isn't a Christmas card, but Darryl used the ones I bought as coasters