

by **Beth Daigle**

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Time Flies

I know this is cliché. But as the mother of a 14-year-old and, soon to be, 16-year-old — I can't help but ask myself where has the time gone? This really hit me in August when I saw the children of many of my friends head off to college for their freshman year. I've known a lot of these kids since they were toddlers. As the years slipped by, I watched them grow into fine young adults and now suddenly, it seems, they are off. Last year, my nephew Alex began his college experience at the University of New Hampshire. I gave him a care package, wished him well and hoped it would be everything he dreamed it to be. All I kept thinking was that things are so

different now — better or worse, I'm not sure. Well, he returned a changed man and yes, I said man. In one year, he transformed into a charming and confident gentleman with aspirations of greatness. I was impressed and so happy for him.

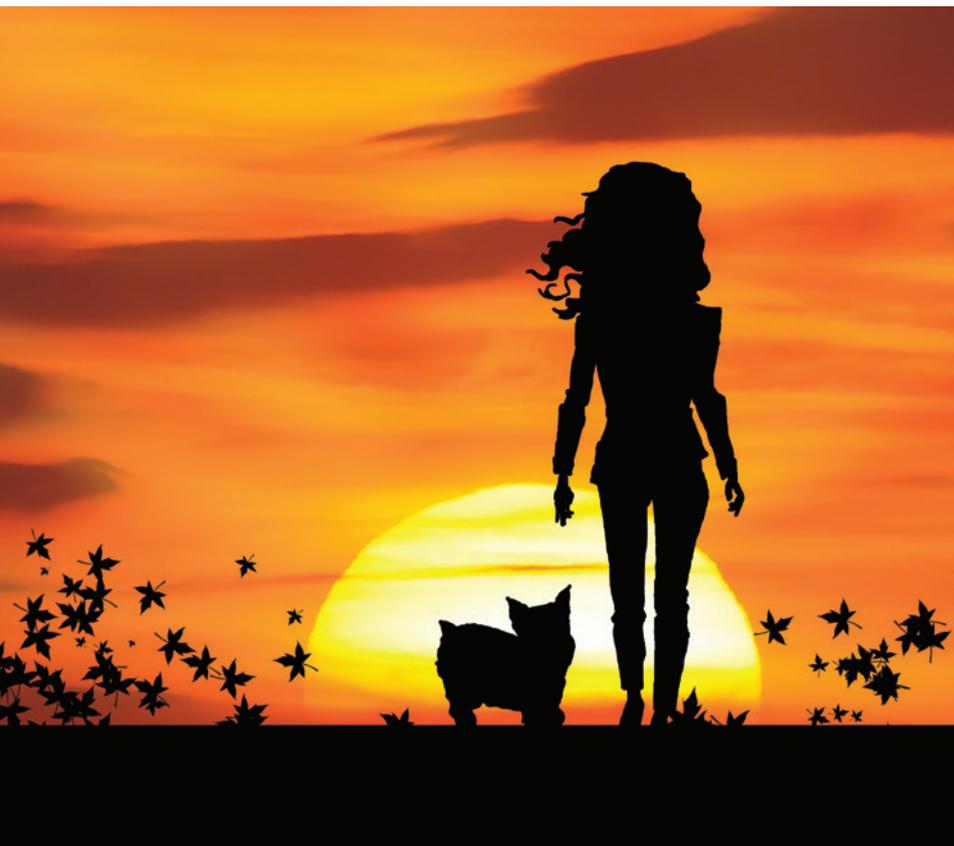
This year, the near dozen kids that I saw leave for college are reporting in with various first impressions. Some absolutely love it, some are experiencing home sickness — to be expected — and some are not quite sure what to make of it. For them, time will tell.

While my oldest daughter won't leave for college for another three years, I find myself completely fascinated with my friends' tales of their child's experiences. I ask questions like: Are they partying? Have they found a good group of friends? Are they eating well? How are their classes?

I can't help but think about what an exciting time of life this is for them — the freedom, the change of scenery, the new people and the inevitable personal growth that comes from both the good and bad experiences every college student is bound to face. I love all of the possibilities, yet as much as I look forward to going through this with my own girls, I begin to panic that it is all creeping up so fast. Will they be ready? Will I be ready? And suddenly the memories of preschool separation anxiety come flooding back and I wonder: how did we get here so quickly?

I ask this same question about the time I've been writing for Merrimack Valley Magazine. My very first article was in the January/February 2009 issue and it was called "Curls Gone Wild." I had to laugh when I pulled the issue out of my magazine library and looked at the images of my curly mane along with those of my sister and dear friends who proudly embrace their curls like I do. I remember being so nervous about my first story that I questioned whether the "Girls Gone Wild" to "Curls Gone Wild" reference might too edgy or inappropriate for the publication or its readership.

I have grown a lot as a writer and a person over the years I've been with Merrimack Valley Magazine. I am grateful for every story and column that I've written. My time with the magazine has been precious and, like everything else, has moved along quickly. After eight great years, I am also moving along to focus on the book I'm writing and my blog. It has been an absolute pleasure speaking to you through these pages. I hope that we'll stay in touch — please visit me at my blog 3OlivesandaTwist.com as I continue on my writing journey and share updates on the progress of my book. Thank you!



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