

2006, the year of Megan's malaprop. From "Get off the red-nosed reindeer", to eating an "apple pine", to referring to herself almost exclusively in the third person, to making up words to the tune of every song she's ever heard, Megan really starting making the English language her own private playground this year. We figured if she could do so much then the least we could do is look back at the year and regale you with another version of our year in review.

There was no hail, tornado, hurricane, earthquake, eruption, flood (not this far west) mudslide, or wildfire. We did lose power from the three foot October snow storm. Generators are good. We also moved (twice), had a surgery in the family, worked like mad, and traveled a lot. We had competing interests for headlines this year, so we chickened out and went with chronological order.

In the no-mans land after last year's letter, Keith, Pete, Rick, Derek, Matt, & Mike got together for a Penguins/Sabres game in Pittsburgh (Sabres won, no surprise) and a Bills/Broncos game in Buffalo (Bills lost, also no surprise). As it worked out we saw Mario Lemieux's last game.

January to September consisted almost entirely of selling the house, finding a new one (twice), and moving (also twice). The whole thing involved four houses and 3 months instead of the traditional two houses and a month. At 36 years of age we downsized, and we're glad for it. We love that house and what we had done to it, but we had years to enjoy it. That really covers the first nine months. If something else happened we hope we took pictures because we don't remember it.

This year Keith's sister Michele completed her licensing exams to be a Registered Architect. Well, there's one more test result to come back but we're sure she passed. We're very proud of her. We're also proud of Keith's dad for how well he handled his cancer and surgery and we're very glad that went so well. That was pretty stressful but it worked out great in the end.

Although big events tend to dominate the memory, the important stuff was watching Megan grow up. We're amazed by how much fun we have watching her do... anything. The Strombergs call it "Gretchen TV", which works if your daughter's name is Gretchen Stromberg but would be a little odd for us to use.



In October we kicked off three crazy months of travel. New Hampshire, Ireland, Oklahoma, Texas, and Florida. In between were Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Years. At some point we worked too. Rick Gorman's bachelor party had Keith seeing dozens of friends. A wicked good time. No more stories except to point out that the hike in the mountains was beautiful; if, um, 10 miles or so longer than planned.

Ireland and Rick Gorman and Karen Fitzgerald's wedding, for which Keith was the best man, were both awesome. There were a few surprises, though. In the states the best man done his job if he



doesn't lose the rings and manages to get through the toast. In Ireland the best man is a cross between the gift table and the emcee at the reception. All of this was a lot of fun (seriously), even if Keith didn't actually know he was responsible for it until the microphone hit his hand and someone told him he'd better introduce the bride and groom as they were about to walk in.

After the wedding we spent time in Dublin with the Hammers. Ireland is a beautiful place with fantastic people who took great care of us and we really appreciate their hospitality. The Guinness brewery was very cool. Driving while sleep-deprived, on the other side of the one-lane yet still two-way road, while shifting with the other hand was *too much fun*. Keith's mom stayed at our house to watch Megan while we were in Ireland. Most of the rest of the year Jo's mom watches Megan while we work. We couldn't get by without families' love and support.

Oklahoma was another horse show trip. We drove from there to Texas for Jo's Equine Vet conference. Jo spends four days in class and Keith worked from the hotel room during the day. There's a huge trade show which helps us look for new clinic equipment. While there we saw the Flaherty's for the first time in a *lot* of years. It was great to see them again and their three kids for the first time. As it happens we'll see them twice more this year, on their way too and from their Christmas vacation. It's good that they won't see this letter until after their trip or they might shun us for doing this in chronological order instead of giving them top billing.

Keith will be in Orlando for an annual work event to wrap up the road trip. One year soon we'll schedule some vacation time around this meeting and Jo and Megan will go. Since July, Keith's been working with Carrier. It's nice when the work is in Syracuse but next year's letter will have some world travel stories in it. The clock is now at almost 11 ½ years with PTC.

Jo hired an associate vet and Danielle is doing a fantastic job. Jo's clinic is starting to take hold with the horse community and we're hoping that 2007 will be even busier. Clinic projects this year included finishing the treatment area, installation of the round pen for evaluating horses, more driveway expansion, a ton of fence removal and repair. We've slowed down.

Last year we predicted that Megan would be climbing out of her crib any day now. We were dead wrong. She climbs anything – ladders, chairs, tables, people, dogs, horses (particularly horses), whatever – but she hasn't once even tried to get out of her crib yet. She did almost climb in once. Maybe she's getting out *and* back in. That would be some trick.

Megan loves to sing. She makes up her own words to just about any tune, even if she's only heard it a few times. Most of the time her lyrics are drop dead hilarious. She'll switch from Old MacDonald to B-I-N-G-O whenever she mentions a dog. She is an absolute sponge for hearing you and repeating back what you say. All of it. Over and over. Sometimes when she's crying she'll interrupt herself and say, "What's wrong with Megan?" Then she'll look around, decide nothing is bothering Mega, and go on her way with no more crying. It's like self-service comforting. There were no bizarre health problems with Megan like last year. Which is perfectly fine with us, of course. Maybe those doctors were on to something when they said, "We don't know what happened, it probably won't happen again."

Two cats that we moved to the clinic promptly disappeared and haven't been seen since. There are still the two house cats (shedding on everything), one house/yard dog (who is perfectly clean and neat), two clinic cats (who Keith has still never even touched), and the two horses (Jo is trying to ride more, Keith has gotten on no more than three times all year which is depressing).

We still volunteer for Horse Council, Farm Bureau, and do a bunch of horse education in the area. Keith only made three races this year, although they were the three longest trips. And one was the most work we've ever had to do at a race. Jo is hoping to ride in more reining shows next year, assuming her horse's broken foot heals by March. He's got a great vet.

Merry Christmas
Love,

Our new address is:
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Keith John
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