

Buon natale famiglia e amici. Prairie issue #2 coming at you. Current guess (don't call it a plan) is to be here through the 2014 school year, based on Keith's projections for his project work. Still flat and windy here.

We just bought a 100+ year old farm house. Working to get the place horse ready and getting ourselves established. The house has projects (good). We have no idea how we'll make time for them (bad). Keith may have to be convinced to hire help (unlikely to go well). For future reference, refrain from moving over the holidays. We are more than a little surprised we're getting cards, let alone a letter, out this year. Whether you like it or not, the tradition continues.

Our new address is:

1378 Mennonite Road
Metamora, IL 64548
309-210-6016 (same home phone)

Megan is 8 and enjoying school, horse riding lessons, tae kwon do (green belt now), dance, and church school heading towards first confession and communion. Megan was diagnosed with celiac disease this year, so we've been adapting to a new diet to deal with that. She's handled it pretty well. Trooper. Megan likes to kick and break things in TKD, and has also been progressing very well in her riding skill. She wants voice lessons too, but she's got to trade something else to make time. She's been playing with the keyboard, inspired by Aunt Lucille, and her self-training is fun to listen to. We're sure she's looking forward to real chores when the horses move in at home. She gets the top floor room in the farmhouse all to herself and likes it. The room is a sea of boxes and destruction at the moment, which she likes too.

Mason is 2. He. Talks. All. The. Time. Typical: Priest's sermon to a quiet church, "... you know how siblings sometimes squabble..." Mason interrupts, "YES!!!" Crowd disintegrates into helpless laughter. In other words, he's a two year old. Megan didn't have the classic "terrible twos." God is addressing that oversight with Mason. The kid hasn't met the thing he didn't want to pick up and throw. He has reach, is persistent, has a good arm, and aim. All of which will be great later but not so much right now. He is imitating even more than last year. Doesn't matter if it is trying to punch, kick, or speak Korean at TKD or just repeating everything. He loves to drive the battery-powered Gator. Particularly reverse.

Jo is working as a practice manager at a veterinary clinic and we've made great friends with the owners. We took one trip up to Chicago with them. Chicago, although named after swamp weed to match its politics, is a nice place to visit. On another trip and were able to meet up with the Sabatinos who we hadn't seen in 20 years or so. It's odd to admit were at a point in life where it is even *possible* to have friends we hadn't seen in two decades.

Jo's sister Jennifer has moved with her job to U of I and as a result Jo's parents have just moved to Illinois. Keith's sister Michele started back part time in architecture, Jeff still working with Summit Engineering, and Connor and Paige are both growing up amazingly. Looking forward to seeing Keith's parents when they visit here in the spring and very glad they are taking the holiday off for the first time in something like 30 years. They'll be visiting the Karam's in NH, and we're glad they'll all be together although we are all going to miss being together like we were last year.

Keith continues to work for PTC at Caterpillar. 2012 had some project success, but a lot more to go. By the time you read next year's letter we should be writing about major good news. Keith still volunteers as a mentor for the local FIRST team (build robots, compete, teach kids to like science and engineering). Also a blue belt in tae kwon do now.

We were back east twice, once for the happy event of Keith's great aunt's birthday when we saw a lot of family members we had not seen in quite a while and once unfortunately for the funeral of Jo's grandmother. We don't have another trip in the works right now, and being out of paper the letter must be over.

Merry Christmas and a blessed new year to everyone. Love, KG, Jo, Megan, Mason.



3rd recycle for the pumpkin costume. Megan got to be a new fairy princess and also learned which candy is gluten free and what she would “share” with her brother.



Slide much larger than Mason. Mason laughing maniacally. He must have Gone down that slide 50 times (Keith is at the top, by the way).



Megan getting a tae kwon do promotion to assistant leader



All of us sitting in the one organized part of the new house. Yes, there are boxes and chaos just outside the frame of the shot. Old farm houses are nice when the previous owners have already redone the windows and insulation, leaves us more interesting projects.



Our first family trip to Chicago, where we did not run into the First Family (don't get us started).