

Let's get right to the burning question in everyone's mind, "What was last year's Christmas letter puzzle?" Only Karl U. told us he figured it out but we hope he wasn't alone. Decipher "gvx iizrvu qek tv oyhuouxhiu ksksmqq. ggr tbgkt kodnifvm ggsehwx kilr q urv mps awkh mpsnli vczw lmbgwaqxl gtsbjyh obbv o lufnhuh r sd ivvxz." to get the answer and you'll have finished this year's puzzle as a bonus. This is harder than the cryptoquote in the newspaper, but find the two hints in the letter and you can solve it with pen and paper.

The year in bullets:

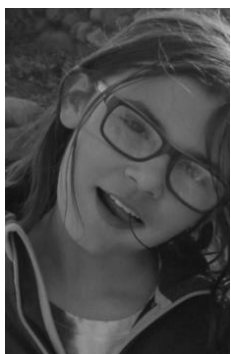
- We moved again (flip the card over, Keith's 21st mailing address, Jo's 16th).
- Jo bought in as a partner to Meadowbrook Veterinary Clinic.
- We had triplets (kidding).
- We are up to 4 horses, 2 cats, and 1 dog (not kidding).
- Megan is into FIRST robotics, archery, video club, Brain Games (TV show), Warrior Cat books (and now all her friends are too), Dr. Who (Halloween costume), horses, Minecraft, and tae kwon do (red belt).
- Mason is into everything that goes fast, trying to read, following his sister around, Legos, Brain Games, Minecraft, and tae kwon do (yellow belt).
- God must be having a laugh with us, because Mason is also now allergic to horses, hay, cats, and mold.
- The vet practice is expanding so we've been designing a new facility.
- We're renting out part of the farm as a boarding stable (Keith is very sad to be done cleaning stalls).
- The original project at Cat that caused us to move to Illinois was completed. Plenty of work remains though.
- Saw Keith's parents in Florida, Megan got to visit NB, and Keith saw them when he was in town to pick her up.
- Jo's parents still living in Peoria. John's knee replacements from a year ago settled in, but he just broke his leg.
- Had a beach vacation with the Strombergs in CT (yes, there was a fire, no it was not caused by Christian)
- Keith hit 20 years with PTC. Some of the years have hit back.
- Keith finally applied to be an astronaut (you get to decide if we're kidding or not).



You can safely assume that we're going to be based from the Midwest until the kids are through high school. At least that's the plan. We've had "forever" plans before, some of which have lasted as long as 3 or 4 years.

The new property is a lot like Central NY. We're not surrounded by corn and being buzzed by crop dusters. Megan and Mason love the ravines, and we finally have a good place to hang the 160 foot zip line. Jo has her first indoor riding arena in her life. Hopefully we find a spot for a shooting range. There are 61 stalls in 3 barns – ridiculous but true. We'll be taking 20 stalls out and converting that barn to a party room / workshop. 20 more are going to be rented for boarding. The previous owners kept monkeys (we've decided the key is: not to ask questions) so we have the world's most overbuilt dog kennels.

The place was empty for ~3 years, so we had 2 months of work to do outdoors to get it usable again. If weeds are 12 feet tall has that crossed the boundary into forest? There's plenty of room for visitors and since nearly every flight across the country stops in Peoria we hope to entertain all of you soon. Bring work gloves; or don't, we have plenty.



Megan is in 5th grade and must have grown 12 inches in the past three and a half days. She's competing in FIRST Lego League for robotics (mostly programming, not so much building). She maintains an odd affection for chickens. Her room is miles from being unpacked and cleaned up.

Mason is in Kindergarten and can't wait for the day he can beat his sister at sparring. Or his version of sparring, which might better be described as flailing. Surprisingly effective if he launches a surprise attack. Insanity level remains high. He has now decided he likes Star Wars.





Jo is now a partner with Annette and Bryan as the owners of Meadowbrook Veterinary Clinic and we're grateful for their trust and friendship. At one point this year we were concurrently working on buying in to the practice, buying the new house, selling the old house, buying property for the business expansion, designing the new clinic, and regular life. We know we're not unique; it's just fun to look back and say, "well that was stupid." Now we're just down to the expansion, unpacking, and all the great new barn projects. Oh, and regular life.

Keith tore a calf muscle and some tendons in June. His injury is as recovered as it is going to get (softball career is over, but tae kwon do continues). At work he'll continue to be with Cat as half of his job, with the new half taking responsibility for a chunk of the worldwide consulting business. Yes, back to more travel after several years of almost none. Maybe he'll get to visit Saint-Pourcain in France.

We're grateful to our families, God, co-workers and friends, and many people we'll never meet (thinking of military serving overseas on this one) who have always been there for and with us. They're all part of the reason we get to "complain" about dumb things such as how much hassle it is to travel a lot.

We hope we can all take stock and realize how amazing the world is now and how the next 10 or 20 years are going to be even more full of exciting change and new opportunity than the last 20 (the iPhone didn't exist 9 years ago).

With love and best wishes for all of you to enjoy health and family at Christmas and throughout 2016,

Love,

Keith, Jo, Megan, Mason

