

“Hey Google, write our Christmas letter.” didn’t work so you’re stuck with another hand-made (and late, again) effort from us. We did have to rely on Google Photo timeline to help our swiss cheese memory of what actually happened this year.

The lead story is congratulations on the 50th wedding anniversaries of both sets of parents, which we commemorated with a joint family trip to Alaska. There is no sentence or picture that captures how great it was. 9 of us started in Fairbanks, spitting distance from the arctic circle in Alaska terms, and after Denali and Anchorage we picked up the Karams for a cruise down the panhandle ending up in Vancouver. Loved it. Now it’s time to brag on the kids.

Megan started high school, has her driving permit, and has totaled one wall and one fender so far (other than that, she’s doing great). She was in Fiddler on the Roof as a peasant with a couple short solos and wants a bigger part next year. She’s in the drumline in marching band because *of course* a person with constant headaches and joint pain would choose forced marches carrying loud heavy things. Add in choir, guitar, piano, and voice lessons, art, and occasional horse riding and her days/nights are full. On the medical front, Megan doesn’t claim the most recent headache treatment attempts have made any difference, but we’ve seen marked improvement in her attitude towards life. She’s got a 4.36 GPA in her all-honors biomedical prep course work and still maps out life as an Army doctor, ER doctor, then Doctors Without Borders.

Mason is all sports (real and electronic, including watching videos of others playing which is a generational weirdness). Mason is mystified why we limit his screen time but don’t limit Megan’s music time. Go figure. He’s in basketball now, but baseball seems to be his favorite. Happily, if forced Mason says he’d pick baseball over Fortnite. Robotics (yes, it is a sport) just wrapped up, with his rookie team of 9-year-olds beating many much older teams. He’s got straight as in the rigorous academic world of 4th grade. He broke his arm again this year, but not the arm with two pins from the last break.

Mom and Dad G were in IL for a long visit and Megan’s confirmation last spring but will not make a repeat trip this spring because of the move. That’s right, they moved from NB, and are in Cooperstown either temporarily on the way to NH with Aunt Lucille or will set up camp in Cooperstown permanently. Beside the Alaska trip (more below), Keith spent a week with Dad selling, scrapping, donating, trashing, or hauling away thousands of pounds of stuff from the garage, yard, and shed. Shelly did the same with mom in the house. Even the army truck is sold (the 1942 6x6 that’s been in the family since Keith’s grandfather got out of the Army after WWII and was the first thing Keith ever drove).

Mom and Dad J are in still in Peoria. The big event of the year was the Alaska trip, which has been a lifelong dream of John’s. We saw moose, Golden & Bald Eagles, grizzlies & cubs, enough caribou to get boring, otters, and everything else except a wolf. Meanwhile, back on the ranch (the actual horse ranch), there are still plenty of projects rehabbing the place. This was a very bad weather year for projects (more below), but we made some progress on the master plan. Dad J still has his deer stand and plenty of fields of fire, but no actual deer.

We admit we were doubting the whole “I’ll never send a flood again – God.” promise. It rained every other day for 5 months. We got 8+ inches over a weekend *several times* and insane bursts of 2.5” in a half hour. We now know we have great house drainage, but the arena was a problem. Picture a 200’ x 74’ space filling with 3+ inches of water in under 15 minutes. Yup, that happened. Twice. We put in a *lot* of new drainage. If it floods again Keith is selling.

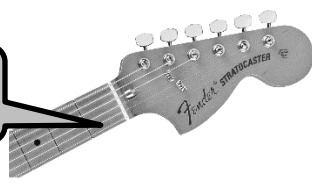
While at a Veterinary conference in Florida we met Keith’s cousin Mary Mongioi in one of those “both in from out of town” chance encounters. We also cut ties with television (again) because we finally got out of the 1980s with our internet service and can stream. The barns got full solar power, a new pasture, new stalls, and a start on the *last* pasture. The barns are still rented as a boarding / training facility. We still have the 2 dogs, miscellaneous cats, and 4 horses.

Keith had a few trips out to CA and other spots for work, but nothing international this year. We had a trip out to Phoenix with the Gutzwillers. Keith’s other Robotics team was 1st in the state for a while as rookies last year. We saw a few high school friends of Keith’s from NB over the summer at a small reunion and some college friends when Keith visited Troy.

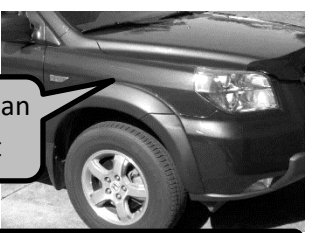
Jo has been riding more, although not as much as she'd like. The vet clinic takes a lot of attention and is still growing (~60 people at the office Christmas party). When riding, Jo's been doing roping/ranch horse work with cattle and her 4-year-old horse Jagger (more like drinking Jägermeister than dancing like Mick Jagger). She's getting pretty good and was leading the state for a while in a couple events. Keith still owes her a practice roping cow he's going to make out of PVC.

Merry Christmas, with love and best wishes for 2020 – Jo, Keith, Megan, and Mason

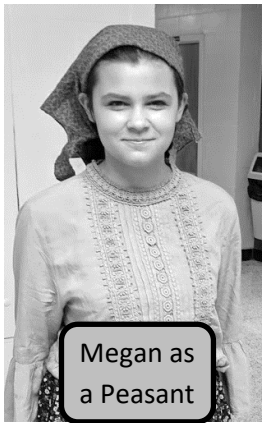
The Fender Megan wants



The Fender Megan is going to get



Now you've seen the peak of Denali too



Megan as a Peasant



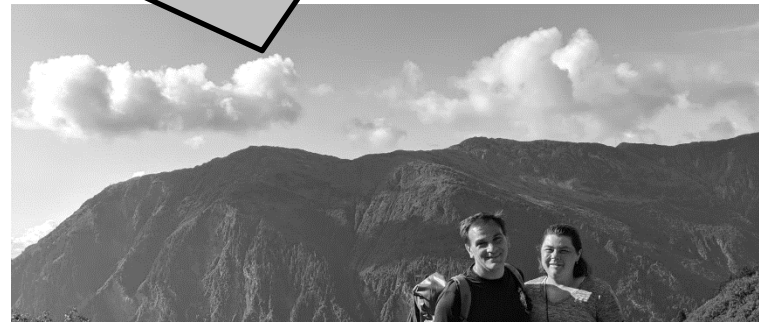
First band event



Yup, broke it. Again.



Juneau is basically straight up from the ocean. You can't even drive to Juneau from *anywhere*.



Don't worry if you don't get this one, only a few of you will. #ditl



In Denali Park caribou are a dime a dozen.



Should've been a cowgirl (it's downpouring in that shot).

#outnumbered (and loving it). Robotics = dating scene.

