

Even though Billy Joel could write “Oops, We Did Start the Fire” *just* about 2020, this letter is mostly going to be a road trip down the Avenue of Relentless Optimism.

Before we get there, it would be crazy to not recognize the real tragedies from Australia burning (yeah, that was 2020), violence, and CoVID’s impact on life, health, lifestyle, and families. We hope we all take time to reflect and help those in need, every year. While writing, we realized that if you or your families were affected and it wasn’t posted in our very limited social media we probably wouldn’t know. We pray that your experience is as much like ours as we think. Now, the news spends plenty of time focusing on the negative so let’s get into the Christmas spirit of hope and gratitude.

We are grateful for the extra time we got to spend together as a family this year. That was a blessing.

We are extremely grateful that despite several serious and ongoing non-CoVID health problems in the extended family, everyone is on track for treatment and improving. Likewise, we’re grateful that friends are coming through other serious challenges in amazing shape.

We are grateful that despite being prevented from physically getting together, because of web visits we’ve actually seen the remote family more consistently than in the past.

We are grateful that Megan’s PT has started to help to the point where she can ride and not spend the next day in bed, that we found a device (after another company went out of business) that is helping her headaches, and that Megan is doing so well in her honors classes despite being strictly remote since all this started. *

We are grateful for Mason’s optimism, curious why he generally insists on wearing the fewest clothes possible, looking forward to the day when he converts all this time invested in video games to a productive career (see note on hope), and also his great job in school. *

We are grateful that despite Jo’s vet business taking a big hit when we ceased all non-essential services, we were able to get through without laying anyone off. We’re grateful for everyone on the team who has and continues to deal with a high-stress environment and get their jobs done with class.

We were oddly grateful that despite everything, the net effect on Keith’s work life was that he got to travel less (almost a full year with 0 flights, first time in 25 years) and help the kids more during school. Keith works closely with factories and has great respect for the majority of Americans whose jobs can’t be remote and still get it done.

We were amazed that for the first time, Jo had more hotel nights in 2020 than Keith did (horse shows never quit).

We are grateful for Twix, the new dog who Megan is training as a service dog to detect gluten (no, you really can’t trust the Cheerios box) and provide physical support.

We are grateful we’re writing this letter on a single digit calendar day in December and hope we mail it before a double-digit day in April. Not that such a thing ever happened (except 2016).

We’d be grateful for restaurants publishing all their secret recipes if we ever (as the kids constantly remind us) made time to take advantage of them.

We are grateful that the farm has allowed us to see people in a physically-distanced way. Keith worked it out, we can put over 5,000 people on the farm, each 12 feet apart.

Love, and all the best for 2021, Megan, Mason, Jo, and Keith

* Bragging on kids noted.



Just hanging...
(everyone has a hammock
In their office, right?)



A girl and her puppy



Dad, build a jump!
(Of course we did)



The training begins.



Enough said about
the election



So cute.



Dad, please stop with
the pictures already



What the hell
is on his face?



The worst beard ever.
(it's gone now).