

## This is not a Christmas Letter

A Christmas Letter would have arrived weeks ago with a card. Friends and Family, this is a near-vicinity-of-Christmas letter that should supply a few grins, a couple of LOLs, and if we do well one ROTFLMAO. You may submit your reviews to [if.this.was.easy.everyone.would.do.it@yelp.com](mailto:if.this.was.easy.everyone.would.do.it@yelp.com).

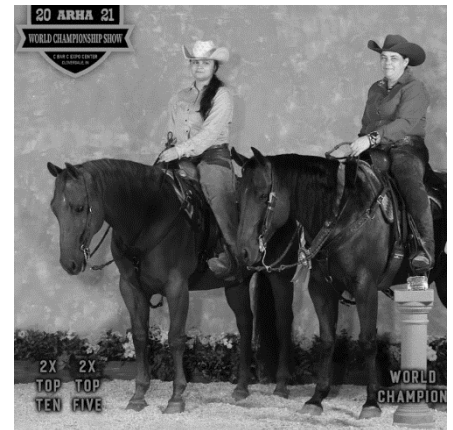
Megan is now 17, a Junior, under a self-imposed driving ban (more later), and is managing a typically impossible teenage



schedule. Up at 3:45 am to work in the barn from 4 to 6:30, then clean up, feed the dogs, and hustle off for a ride to school by 7. After school is band, play rehearsal (Shrek and White Christmas this year, with a solo), horse riding, music lessons, dog training, and that homework stuff (derivatives now). Then in bed by 8. Rinse and repeat. All of which blows up when we pull her out of school for horse shows (riding has been her best physical therapy by far). Megan's work training her German Shepherd, Twix, to detect gluten and provide physical support is going well. She just took the PSATS so 2 years of college junk mail has started. We will do a bonfire.

Megan completed her first year of horse showing and went all the way to the National Championship show for Reining (If you watch Yellowstone, it is the sliding and spinning stuff like the picture of Jo on the next page).

Megan had a great ride and finished in the middle of the pack out of 84 at the finals (out of 1000s that compete all year in her age group, which includes the kids of the folks who do professional training). Megan's opinion was "Grunt. No, it was bad." Which was four more words than her normal grunt (Megan is Groot). About the driving... Megan has had some encounters with the garage door and a couple bumpers. She decided to take a break (or wait for full autonomous cars, since not doing something is a *great* way to get better at it). We just say she cannot drive the truck (she'd be fine, God help everyone else).



Mason is now 11, a sixth grader, will drive every time we let him get behind the wheel around the farm, and burns up his spare time with baseball (local, not travel), video games with friends, and FIRST robotics. I do not think he's had to do



homework outside of school hours yet this year, so clearly the kid needs more work. He gets frustrated with robotics because he must *do things for the team* vs. just play around and build whatever he wants. Suck it up kid. The robotics team has a legit shot at qualifying for the state tournament in January. By the time we finally finish this letter we can rewrite this sentence to let

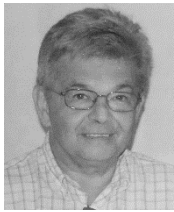
you know how it went. Mason's baseball season highlight was a walk off triple to win a come from behind game. The first team did well. The second team.... they had a good time playing.

Mason experimented a bit with posting videos as one of the billion or so youtubers with less than 30 followers. He even spent his own money on a green screen and used it, but eventually that petered out. Mason's allergies to our entire life (horses, hay, cats, every tree on the property...) have been getting better now that he is more than a year into his shots. He is even expressed interest in riding, but like the robots not in being directed like in a lesson. Just in being on the horse and screwing around. We are taking it as a win.



Jo had her own great year riding, winning the World Championship in Ranch Reining for ARHA, first place in three states in NRHA reining, and qualifying for the Rookie championship, which is kind of where the wheels came off. The horse did some stuff he's never done and earned a metric ton of penalties. We'll just chalk it up to a fun week in Oklahoma City and Texas. We are semi-officially down to 2 horses. That means Jo is horse shopping. The vet practice has been exceedingly busy and growing, and even though we have better luck than most, it is still incredibly hard to find people to work. Jo's parents moved from their apartment in Peoria to a small house in the village of our town, Brimfield. All are

doing well, helping with the kids, meeting neighbors, and puttering around the farm. John built a deck on the back of their house but that stalled near completion for the #1 excuse of 2021: "supply chain problems". Mason enjoys being able to walk there after school sometimes and bike around town with his friends. And mowing the lawn, very occasionally.



We did have sad news this year with Keith's Uncle Cos passing away in May. Keith was able to be with Uncle Cos in California in the hospital which was a blessing and relief. Family and friends were able to remember Cos in the bi-coastal California and New Jersey celebrations. There was other similar news around the family, and we are saddened by the losses from our lives while still sustaining the many great memories.

Keith had another exceptionally light year of work-related travel, but it is picking up again. Family trips were either horse shows, a long weekend in Florida just because, a wonderful week in New Hampshire with Keith's parents and the Karams, and by the time you read this Christmas to New Year's skiing and winter-sporting up in Bretton Woods, NH with the same crew. Keith's parents moved to New Hampshire, and we are very glad they're close to Shelly and enjoying their new neighborhood and neighbors. Keith's mom came through medical treatment and surgery this year and is doing well. Keith's dad is still seeking projects. We are hoping they'll both make a long summer 2022 visit to the "place of endless projects" otherwise known as the farm. We do not have an ocean or boat, so we're two strikes down vs. summer in NH already. Keith has spent a decent amount of time volunteering for the restoration projects going on at the Castle, the 1890s mansion that was his fraternity house. For about 1 day in the spring Keith was a contestant on the second season of the TV show "Lego Masters". Keith's friends Paras and Christian made it through auditions as a team. They would have won and



been very entertaining doing it. Unfortunately, about 12 hours after Keith found out they made the show Paras called to say Christian had to back out and how did Keith feel about sequestering himself with Paras for 7 weeks of filming in the spring? Fast forward 24 more hours and we had finished a video interview with an assistant producer. In the end it turned out that a different team also lost one member and the show decided to mash Paras together with Moto, so Keith was out.

We cannot claim that is the whole story of the year, but it's got to be worth at least a 3-star review. We will sign off now since we have a long history of only boring you through the front and back of one page and we're sticklers for tradition.

Love and laughter for all. Merry Christmas. Go crush 2022.

KG, Jo, The Megan, Mason, and the menagerie