

In 2019 we led with “Hey Google, write our Christmas letter.” **That’s right, we predicted ChatGPT.** Go check, we’ll wait. ChatGPT did help with this letter, maybe 10% of what it wrote was useful. It kind of sucks at explaining roller coasters. But be nice to AI. Teach it to be polite instead of being Skynet.

Atop Chicago. Say hi to Ari all the way on the right.



ChatGPT also couldn’t understand that we have a new kid. No, not a baby. Come on now. It’s Ari, our HS senior exchange student from Spain! We’ve had a great time exchanging observations about culture and life. Ari’s gets to pick a city to visit for a gift. LA, NY, and San Francisco are in the hunt.

Megan finished high school a while ago, but walked with her class this April for graduation, is now taking local college, and will then transfer to study Animal Science. She won a horse (yes, a whole horse) last year and competed at the Ranch Horse World Show in Ocala this July with it. Megan got herself a boa constrictor (Fuzzy or Snake Who Shall Not Be Named). It will end up maybe 5 feet long. She built the enclosure with Keith’s mom and it is pretty impressive.

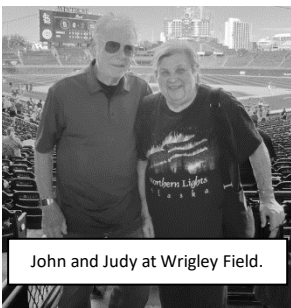


Megan and Brooks. Demonic flashing eyes included.



Megan looking thrilled to have graduated. We may have been picking on her at the time.

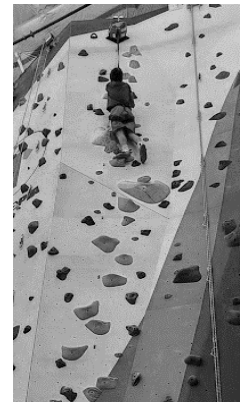
Mason, our laughter-inducing middle schooler, is on a quest to break the world record for most forgotten shoes before leaving the house. Baseballs, video games, and dirt bikes still reign supreme in his world, providing the perfect soundtrack to our daily chaos. The Atari would have melted if it had half as much use when Keith was a kid. *That was the ChatGPT part.* Mason started indoor rock climbing.



John and Judy at Wrigley Field.

Sadly, just after the new year we lost Judy, JoAnn’s mom. It was very sudden onset and very rapid course of events from diagnosis until she passed. She is dearly missed.

Jo’s dad remains a big help at the farm. There are occasional complaints (from him, not us) about wanting to move faster. We think everything is just fine. (Now back to work!)



It’s unclear if Mason prefers climbing or jumping down.

Keith’s mom has been facing down cancer again, (can you say, “F cancer” in a Christmas letter?) and making good progress. Keith’s sister and dad have been handling all the support locally. We’re very glad to be heading out for a week to visit

ChatGPT did a horrible job of describing Keith’s parent’s visit to the farm early in the year. Seriously, nobody writes like that. Keith’s dad did a ton of work in the barns, mom in the house, and it was great to spend so much time together.



Keith’s mom and dad chilling in the shop.

We had trips to Universal and Cedar Point to feed Megan’s roller coaster appetite (coming next: 120 mph & 420 ft high).

Keith likes them, Mason is getting there, Jo not so much. A service dog is the best thing ever for dealing with lines at a park. There is the trade off of needing the service dog in the first place, but you know silver linings.

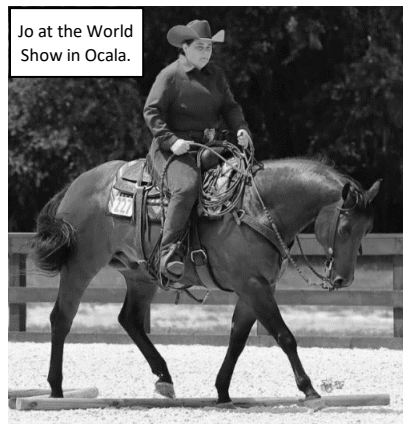
Shelly, Jeff, and the kids also visited, and we had a great time in St. Louis, more rock climbing around Peoria, and general good times and good food.



We call this one “butts at the Arch”

Jo has the minor news that she decided to retire. For a bit, anyway. That’s right, she sold her part of the veterinary practice and is taking some time to figure out what’s next. Jo won a second world championship in one of her Ranch Horse

divisions. The horse trailer's rapid-unplanned-disassembly-in-motion was unplanned, however. The wheels came off, thank God at only 10 mph after lunch with MDK instead of at 75 on the highway. The 21 hour drive became 32. Scrambled to rent a (tiny) trailer plus someone to fix our trailer. Then Keith went back up to Atlanta a week later to swap. A great overnight visit with Mike and Jena took the edge off.



Jo at the World Show in Ocala.

Keith is still at PTC. That may not be true by the next letter. Depends on if something interesting enough comes up to work on. He is still coaching robotics. One team wanted a change so why not make a mega tree of 1600 programmed lights for the Town and teach the kids how to build and program it? We'll tell you why not. Because none of the adults had a clue how to do it. On November 11 we had \$1600 of tree-shaped electronics but not one pixel lit. But on December 2 morning (the grant money that paid for it had a deadline, and it happened to be December 2) it was all working.

Projects! We did a complete rebuild (including outside walls) of 1200 square feet of the horse barn, stage 2 of the outdoor space at the house, and the bedroom Ari stays in. Entering year 9 of the 3 year renovation plan.

God bless, Merry Christmas, Happy 2024, and we hope to see as many of you as possible this next year.

P.S. We didn't forget to put a picture card in your envelope, it's just the letter this year.



Mason's class bonfire at the farm. That's almost all of them.



Christmas llama is a thing?



Doesn't take an engineer or a mechanic to see that something is wrong with this trailer axle mount.



Starting the barn project.



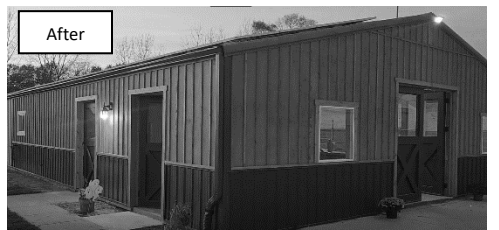
Rock scrambling at Cumberland Falls, KY. Only place in Western hemisphere you can see a "moonbow".



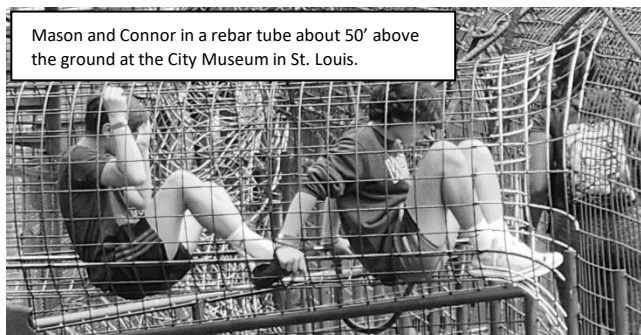
Before



During



After



Mason and Connor in a rebar tube about 50' above the ground at the City Museum in St. Louis.



They win a lot. Gritty.



Mason and Ari off to school.