

January, 2017

Dear family and friends,

Happy Chinese New Year to you all! Welcome to the year of the Rooster. This time of year is a little less busy than the end of the Western New Year, so it's a little easier to find the time to write a letter. Also, Dave is headed to Beijing for a week of work, arriving at the end of the Chinese Spring Festival celebration, so it's appropriate.

Sarah is now a sophomore at Dordt College. She has been doing very well in her studies. She scaled back her plans a bit so she has only one major, Graphic Design, and changed Digital Media from a major to a minor. She's still planning on an additional minor in Psychology. She didn't find a summer job at home but did find one at school, so she stayed in Sioux Center to work at the school radio station in the summer. During the school year she has a job that has her in charge of making and showing the powerpoint slides for chapel and worship services. Through that job she met a young man who became her boyfriend last spring, and they have been dating ever since. He came to our house for Thanksgiving break, and after Christmas she flew to California to stay with his family for a while.

Mark successfully graduated from Dordt last spring with a degree in Computer Science. He hadn't found time to do job searching before graduating, so he came home for a while. He found a temporary job configuring computers, and also did quite a bit of work in our yard for hire. At the beginning of November he moved to Des Moines, Iowa, to share an apartment with friends. He hasn't found employment there yet, but he is working on it.

Late in the spring our beloved dog Lucy escaped from the yard and we never found her back. She was well tagged with our address and phone number, micro-chipped, and loved people, so we're pretty sure that a neighborhood coyote caused her demise. We couldn't imagine being dogless for long, so we got a puppy of the same breed, Border Terrier. Maddie is now a year old but still acts in many ways like a puppy. We love her but we do hope she settles down some. We occasionally call her Maddie the Destroyer. She's also an escape artist so she has a GPS tracker on her collar. Our cat Jenny is 15 now and she's much more intimidated by Maddie than she was by Lucy. Maddie would like to play with her.

The week before we got Maddie in June, Dave had a business trip to England and Ruth came along. Ruth had a great time exploring Oxford while Dave was working, and together we enjoyed a few days driving around the Cotswolds. Border Terriers aren't very common in the U.S., but they originated in the U.K. so we saw several while we were there. In October Dave & Ruth took a week of vacation to Hawaii and really loved it. We had only been to Hawaii once before, two years ago when we went to Kauai, and this time we went to Maui. We went snorkeling most days, and took all the major scenic drives.

Ruth and Dave kept busy being involved with pretty much the same work and volunteer activities as the year before. Ruth picked up one new hobby, learning to play the ukelele. Despite a tighter travel budget year, Dave's travel for Fermilab increased a bit. He didn't make it to Switzerland at all in 2016, but he did go at the very beginning of 2017, after the travel budget was renewed.

Have a great year of the Rooster!

Love,



Dave, Ruth, and Sarah Dykstra

(pictures on back)



At the St. Louis City Museum



Maui



On the Maui volcano



Graduate with grandfathers



Lucy



Sarah & Aaron in California



Maddie