

January, 2018

Dear family and friends,

Ruth said we should have an occasion to write a letter. This should hopefully reach you near the beginning of February, so let's call this our Groundhog Day letter. That also happens to my (Dave's) father's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday, so it's a good day for celebration. Here's the past year's news from our family.

Sarah is now a junior at Dordt College, majoring in Graphic Design. She was hoping to come home this summer but instead found a job near Dordt, taking photos of farm equipment parts and editing them for upload to a company's website. She kept doing the job part time in the fall while simultaneously keeping her on-campus job (making and showing the powerpoint slides for chapel and worship services), plus she took a full course load. Despite the heavy load she got her best grades ever that semester. This spring she's doing the Chicago Semester, taking a couple of classes and doing an (unpaid) internship for the Edgewater (a neighborhood in Chicago) Chamber of Commerce and living in an apartment in the Gold Coast neighborhood. She is still dating Aaron Hooyer, who graduated from Dordt in the spring. Aaron again came to our house for Thanksgiving and Sarah spent New Year's with his family again in California.

Mark is living in Des Moines in an apartment with friends. He didn't find employment in his field of Computer Science, but he's been working most of the year as a night-time security guard. He doesn't mind the odd hours and enjoys the fact that most of the time on the job he can do what he wants on his laptop. He has made quite a bit of progress on a rather ambitious programming project, making a clone of a game called "Hannah and the Pirate Caves" that he enjoyed playing when he was young. It is on his web site [droidfreak36.com](http://droidfreak36.com).

Sadly, our old cat Jenny passed away in September. Not long after that we adopted two kittens from two different shelters. They are both very friendly to us but other than that they are very different from each other. Perry is a big male who loves to hang around everyone including Maddie the dog and tolerates being carried by anyone. Fiona is a very petite female that is shy of people she doesn't know. They get into lots of trouble together and like to bring Maddie things to chew on.

Ruth's business "When Not Gardening" has been going well, gaining steadily in sales. Her art pieces, mostly made out of felted wool, have a price point attractive to many people. She brought 78 of her items to a 10-day Christmas sale at our local fine arts center, and all but one of them sold. After that she was encouraged to apply to sell her items through the arts center's year-round gift shop, and was accepted.

I finished my 3 year term as Elder at our church and am grateful to have a break from that task. Ruth & I just started leading another Crown Financial Bible study together in addition to the other Bible studies that we each lead.

I traveled to China and twice to Switzerland twice for work. I also had a business trip to San Diego that happened to be during Sarah's spring break, so Ruth & Sarah came along. Later that spring Ruth and I went on the Aurora Christian School "Mission Impossible" trip to Tennessee. In the summer Ruth, Mark, & I enjoyed going to a family reunion with my siblings near Colorado Springs, Colorado. The only vacation that Ruth & I had on our own was a few days in St. Louis, but we have now planned a trip to Aruba & Curacao next month and are very much looking forward to doing a lot of snorkeling around those islands.

Happy Groundhog Day, and we wish you God's blessings for 2018!

Love,



Dave & Ruth Dykstra



Mark & Dave on Pike's Peak



Sarah with her cousin's kids and Aaron



Ruth with Fiona



Ruth with Perry



Maddie outstanding in her field



"Are you going to let them take over my crate?"