

February, 2020

Dear family and friends,

Greetings! Here's what happened in our family this past year.

2019 was the year of weddings. The most significant one for us of course was the wedding of Sarah to Aaron Hooyer, but in addition to that three of Sarah's first cousins also got married. Sarah graduated from Dordt College in May and got married the next month, on June 22. Sarah and Aaron's wedding was in Hawarden, Iowa, and was officiated by the first relative (besides us) that met Sarah, Ruth's cousin Mark Klompier, who celebrated Christmas 1997 with us in China before we brought Sarah home. The reception was in nearby Orange City, Iowa, and everybody had a great time. Sarah and Aaron have an apartment near Minneapolis, Minnesota, where Aaron works as a construction manager. Sarah was unemployed for quite a while but recently got a job she loves in her field, graphic design. They joined Calvary Christian Reformed Church and Aaron has already been recruited to help with running their sound system.

Mark also had a big transition this year. His relationship with his roommates in Des Moines became strained and he decided to move back to the Chicago area. He moved home and looked for a new job. It took a while but he found one at Business IT Source where he configures and otherwise prepares computers and mobile devices before they are delivered to companies that purchase them. For the first few months he worked through a temp agency but he has now become a permanent employee and will be getting medical benefits soon, just in time before his 26th birthday would have forced him off his parents' insurance plan. The company is in Buffalo Grove which is an hour commute from home when traffic is light, so he works late hours to avoid rush hour. He hopes to find a place to rent closer to work soon.

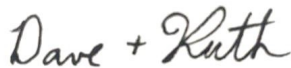
There weren't any changes to the regular activities that we parents were involved in. Ruth moved her crafting supplies and operations to Sarah's old room. Both of us like listening to audiobooks. Ruth keeps track of all the books she reads or listens to, and her yearly total was 116, mostly audiobooks.

Dave had work trips to San Diego, Virginia and Switzerland. Ruth didn't go along on any of those trips this year, but in October we two went to Hawaii, the big island. It was just a coincidence that it was the same island that Sarah & Aaron had gone to for their honeymoon; we love snorkeling and it was the next place on our list of tropical islands to visit. Soon after that Dave was just a little short of airline miles to keep the Silver level so we took a weekend trip to visit our good friends near Baltimore. We usually play a game with them by Skype once a month so it was fun to play in person for a change.

Last year in our letter we introduced a new pet, a crested gecko named Jasper. Unfortunately Jasper didn't last very long and he's no longer with us. The cats and the dog are still doing well, thankfully. Maddie loves patrolling the yard, trying to keep it free of varmints as much as she can. This year she had a couple of encounters with possums and came out unscathed. The possums on the other hand were a little worse for wear.

We hope you are all doing well and wish you God's blessings in 2020.

Love,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dave + Ruth". The ink is dark and the style is fluid and personal.

Dave and Ruth Dykstra



Sarah and Aaron with Sarah's grandfathers



The bride and her big brother



Dave with an exotic Hawaiian drink



Mark did a lot of yard work while unemployed



Ruth in a Hawaiian garden



The pets enjoying the outdoor breeze