

Herzmann Family Christmas Letter 2025

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Abstract

The requisite interval has elapsed, obligating this status letter update. While AI/LLM technologies have significantly progressed, they are still unable to comprehend the three-dimensional chess that is executed within this annual screed. Please enjoy the last bastion of human creativity. Lorem ipsum...

1 Materials and Methods

Our primary family unit consists of Daryl “Daryl” (47), Elizabeth “Liz” ($\sqrt{1681}$), Margaret “Maggie Moo” (12), Robert “Bob-bert” (11), and Charlotte “Flying Squirrel” (8).

1.1 Housing and Domestics

Our two guinea pigs (*Cavia porcellus*) named “Pebbles” and “Tessa” are alive as of this writing. We were only half as successful with the gerbils (*Meriones unguiculatus*) as “Sirius” left “Hermione” irreversibly this year. A replacement was procured, but the substitute exhibited an irredeemably disagreeable temperament and was summarily repatriated.

1.2 Rapidly Depreciating Asset

A trip back from Thanksgiving began with excitement as Liz’s van crossed a fun milestone (Figure 1). The trip ended abruptly during a snowstorm south of Marshalltown, IA with a family friend taking us to our final destination and a salvage yard tow truck taking Liz’s van, sans working transmission, to its final destination.

A few days later, we took quick possession of a new 2026 Chrysler Pacifica. Those who contributed to the Ford F-150 Lightning Fund (Herzmann et al, 2021) are likely disappointed now. Disbursements are not possible, sorry.

1.3 The Primogenitors

Our 15th wedding anniversary came without much fanfare during July. The anniversary commemoration manifested as two extra days appended to the summer family vacation, very romantic.¹

Daryl survived a horrific challenging year at Iowa

State University with nonstop US government and federal research lab drama. He is very thankful for colleagues that have worked hard to navigate these difficult times. Work and chauffeuring children fill up most of his time. The family analytics department computed the evening time allocation for parents depicted in Figure 2.

Venn Diagram of Parental Unit Evening Time Allocation

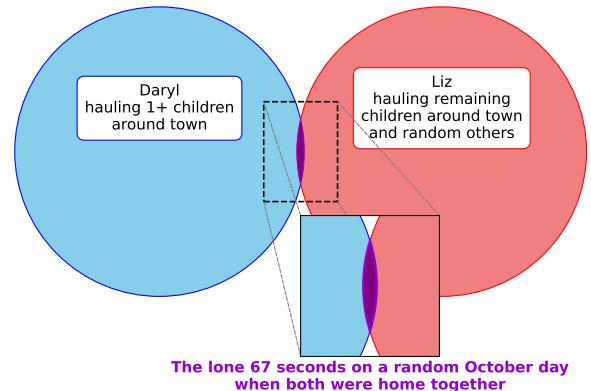


Figure 2: Proverbial ships passing in the night.

Liz remains gainfully employed at Southview Middle School here in Ankeny, attempting to elevate the science abilities of 8th grade youth. She, too, laments Figure 2 and awaits autonomous vehicles or licensable offspring.

2 Miss Charlotte

Charlotte is in 3rd grade. She plays soccer year-round, loves science at school, and remains undersized. She makes up for her lack of stature with a fiery spirit and fearless nature. She expertly won an NCAA men’s basketball bracket challenge via the sophisticated methodology of consistently selecting the superior seed. Her soccer team finished second

¹Citation needed.

at a tournament in Kansas City. Her NFL fantasy football team has a near-perfect losing record for the season. She dressed up as a “Flying Squirrel™” for Halloween (Figure 3) and continues to wear the costume most days since.



Figure 3: Charlotte awaiting glide take-off clearance from FAA.

3 Mr Robert

6th grader Robert joined *Scouting America* (*a.k.a.* Boy Scouts) this year. He enjoyed his many camping trips with the troop, arriving home with 0 articles of dry clothing each time. He is currently working on another winless season for his parks-and-rec basketball team. He joined a robotics club at school and enjoyed a recent competition. He also enjoyed an extended weekend helping Grandma’s neighbor harvest corn (Figure 4).



Figure 4: Robert with something approximating a smile.

4 Miss Maggie

Maggie is a 7th grader and mere days away from being an official teenager! She continues to love school, especially math and science. She just completed the first of two band concerts this year. She was also nominated by her band teacher to perform in an honor band. She continues to dance and just performed in her fourth rendition of Tchaikovsky’s *Nutcracker*. She was Clara this year and loved every second of it. She is also helping out with a kindergarten and 1st grade dance class.

5 Family Vacation

Our summer family trip was to Rocky Mountain National Park (~ Denver, CO). We first spent a few days in Colorado Springs and drove up Pikes Peak (4302 m), nearly driving off the side of the mountain six or seven times (Figure 5). Daryl suffered a bout of *hypoxic syncope* after racing Robert up a small hill. Daryl also got a strange headache after eating an innocuous brownie from a kindly street vendor in Boulder, CO. Liz enjoyed seeing every possible waterfall. The kids enjoyed our stay at the *Yogi Bear Campground*.



Figure 5: Enjoying the view whilst fearing for our lives—nightmare fuel.

Acknowledgments Our family wishes to thank you for the generous support, prayers, cards, gifts, and visits you have provided us in the past year. Additional photos were included this year to self-justify the outrageous color page charges. Full L^AT_EX source of this letter can be found on Daryl’s GitHub page.

6 References

Herzmann et al. 2021 Christmas Letter.
GitHub. <https://github.com/akrherz/akrherz>, last viewed on 12 Dec 2025.