

Herzmann Family Christmas Letter 2024

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Robert Herzmann³, AND Charlotte Herzmann³

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Abstract

Get excited! It is time again for the annual *quasi*-objective assessment of the Herzmann family progress and tribulations. Overall, things are pretty, pretty, ... pretty good (David 2024).

1 Materials and Methods

Our family still comprises Daryl “Daryl” (46), Elizabeth “Liz” (number evenly divisible by 10), Margaret “Maggie Moo” (11), Robert “Rooobert” (10), and Charlotte “Friend” (7).

1.1 Housing and Domestics

This year featured the addition of four woodland creatures, such that our house now resembles something from Marty Stouffer’s *Wild America*. The girls have two domestic guinea pigs (*Cavia porcellus*) named “Pebbles” and “Tessa”. The boy has two biting gerbils (*Meriones unguiculatus*) named “Hermione” and “Sirius”. The pigs have figured out how to politely ask for lettuce via incessant squeaking. Mom does a disproportionate amount of the feeding and cleaning of the cages.

1.2 Conveyances

Daryl’s *Honda Pilot* has fallen in love with frequent visits to the mechanic for transmission issues. Its life of tree stump pulling and hauling fattened cattle to market has taken a toll. Liz’s minivan continues to clunk along and just crossed 100,000 miles (161 000 000 m). We continue to boggle which pile of junk will be first gifted to Maggie.

1.3 The Begetters

The life-long commitment of marriage seems apace. Our 15th wedding anniversary is expected this coming July and we are planning a trip somewhere nicer than *Culver’s*, perhaps *Arby’s*.

Daryl was hoping to use this section to bemoan the magnitude of car driving to facilitate all the children’s activities below, but after preparing the data to support this hyperbole, Figure 1 tells a different

story with daily mileage still below pre-COVID19 levels. Continued hopes of marathon running and general fitness remain fleeting. Work has become rather interesting as ludomaniacs have discovered wagering on airport weather station reports and his website is an excellent source of data.

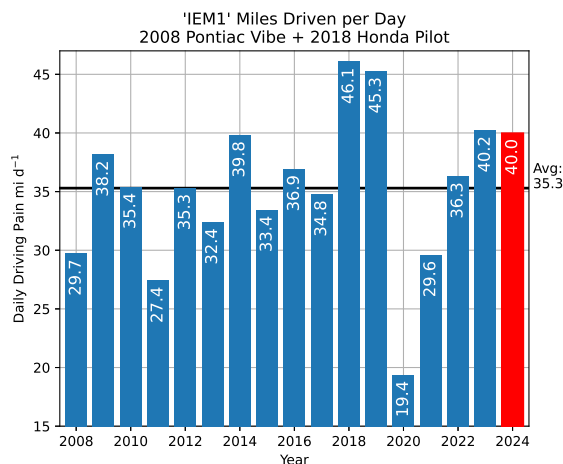


Figure 1: Average miles driven per day.

Liz again opines that nothing is new with her and she continues the indoctrination of youth at Southview Middle School here in Ankeny. She is excited to get a student teacher this spring and all the ~~tedium~~ educational experiences to offload on them.

2 Miss Charlotte

Charlotte is in 2nd grade and loves science time. She loves dada and momma as well. She went to her first soccer tournament in Kansas City this year and loved it so much. She started basketball and what she lacks in stature she makes up for in enthusiasm, says the coach. Our vacation trip to Chicago was great fun for her and she enjoyed doing a cartwheel from the Willis Tower Skydeck (Figure 2). She has her first communion this spring.



Figure 2: Charlotte tempting fate by testing strength of glass at 412m AGL.

3 Mr Robert

5th grader Robert remains a contrarian’s contrarian. He loves to read, unleashes his inner *Beethoven* on the piano, and is now playing somewhat organized basketball. He started band this year and is playing percussion, but thankfully it only involves the xylophone and not the drum set. He is on the yearbook club to limit the number of photos of him in the yearbook. He enjoys volunteering with his grandfather at the food pantry. He still enjoys playing computer games when he is not supposed to.

4 Miss Maggie



Figure 3: Maggie with her 2024 birthday donation haul and associated product placement hoping for future sponsorship.

Maggie is in her first year of middle school as a 6th grader. She is loving all of her new teachers and has her favorite classes of math and science first thing in the morning. She is working hard in all of her classes and is doing great. She is playing volleyball again this year and is joining a national team (the highest level) at Ankeny Volleyball Academy (AVBA). She continues to do dance and is now starting to learn dances for her spring recital. She is also in band and just performed in her first concert. This year she got the opportunity to do choir and enjoys it. She continues to show her creativity by making the family Christmas card this year. She is also showing her leadership skills and is a great role model for her younger siblings (*editorial: her words, not mine*). She is once again giving up her birthday presents to get toiletry items for the food pantry.

5 Family Trips

We made two family trips over the summer break. First was an urban adventure to Chicago during the hottest week of the year. We stayed at a hotel downtown and were able to walk to the standard tourist attractions. Maggie was thrilled to see Lake Michigan native dolphins for the first time at *Shedd Aquarium*. Charlotte was impressed by the buildings slightly taller than those in Ankeny. Daryl was impressed by the amount of noise the 3 AM street racers make. We also visited Wrigley Field and caught a winning Cubs game whilst there.

The second, albeit shorter, trip was to Kansas City for the hottest days of its year as well. The Chicago Cubs were conveniently playing there as well. The Cubs won again, so we plan on attending all Cubs games next year to ensure a **162-0** record.

Acknowledgments Our family wishes to thank you for the generous support, prayers, cards, gifts, and visits you have provided us in the past year. Color page charges continue to be the bane of my existence. Satiating Reviewer Number 2 needlessly delayed publication. Full L^AT_EX source of this letter can be found on Daryl’s GitHub page.

6 References

David, Larry. Personal communication, 30 Feb 2024. GitHub. <https://github.com/akrherz/akrherz>, last viewed on 7 Dec 2024.