

Herzmann Family Christmas Letter 2013

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¹ *Caretakers*, ² *Precious Baby*

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Abstract

Occurring on a date so close to the start of the New Year, it follows that the Christmas Letter summaries a year's worth of activities for our family. During the past year, we were able to increase the size of our family by 50% (33% if you include our cat) and increase the baby production rate when measured from our date of marriage (24 Jul 2010). During these activities, both caretakers were able to maintain their employment status and complete other necessary tasks for survival. At this time, the entire family is healthy and are productive members of society.

1 Introduction

Our family consists of four functioning units: Daryl [35] the loving husband, Liz [29] the caring wife, Margaret (Miss Maggie hereafter) [0] the happy baby, and Snoopy [5] the temperamental cat. The combined output of our family is presented in this article with key events summarized in Table 1.

1.1 Housing

We continue to make our residence in the fine suburb of Des Moines named Ankeny. The reader may recall Daryl and Liz living on the Iowa State University Agronomy Farm. While a nice location and free, it was not large enough to sustain family expansion plans and so we moved in May 2012 to a much larger facility in Ankeny. Our current home was built in 1996, consisting of three levels, a three car garage, and four bedrooms. Daryl vowed to the realtor that our family would never move from this location as he detests the logistics of moving. We advise that it is safe to write our mailing address in your address book with an ink pen.

During 2012, we completed a small landscaping project by erecting a retaining wall along the NW corner of the house. Even while pregnant, Liz was a great helper by carrying blocks for the project! This year, a contractor replaced a poorly constructed patio door for us.

1.2 Conveyances

Our family has three means of transportation at this time. A 2008 Pontiac Vibe, which has a manual transmission that only Daryl can drive. A 2012 Honda Fit, which gets great gas mileage and served us well for a trip to Dallas this past summer (see Section 3). We also have one bicycle with a single seat.

None of these appear to be well suited for a growing family, so consideration has been made to purchasing a minivan. At this time, Daryl, as the fiduciary, has yet to approve of the request.

1.3 Employment

Daryl continues to work for Iowa State University as a meteorological researcher. He also has a small consulting position with the National Weather Service. He considers both activities more fun than work. Daryl's employment is contingent on grant funding, so each year brings a different set of projects to work on. This year's projects include observation of green house gas fluxes of agricultural landscapes, modeling of soil displacement (erosion), prediction of bridge and pavement temperatures, and climate change modeling.

Liz returned to working with the students at Johnston Middle School for the 4th year. Her teaching duties include half time 9th grade Physical Science and half time 8th grade Advanced Science. She is looking forward to having a student teacher in the spring and getting to teach in a new way. She also helps out after school with the Science Olympiad teams which will compete in March. Last spring, she had the opportunity to coach the 8th grade girls track team, but will not be coaching this year.

Miss Maggie is unemployed at this time.

2 Miss Maggie

As the Psalmist King David writes: "Children are a heritage from the Lord" and accordingly we have been so blessed with our new addition this year. She was born on a cold Sunday morning (13 January) after a relatively easy delivery (as characterized by Daryl). Our delivery story began around 00 LST and

was completed some nine hours later. Miss Maggie has been a great baby and is probably suckering us into having another (see Section 4). Since about eight weeks old, she has slept solidly through just about each and every night. Within the past few weeks, she has acquired the skills of waving and clapping. She still wishes to have no part in crawling or walking. We are sure those days are soon to come.

Date	Event
13 January	Miss Maggie was born!
25 March	Miss Maggie first day of daycare, at Apple Tree.
21 April	Miss Maggie baptized at Our Lady's Immaculate Heart Church.
31 May	Miss Maggie's first trip to Grandma Barb's farm.
23-30 June	Family trip to Dallas, via Oklahoma City.
5 August	Miss Maggie's first trip to Liz's parents in Lincoln, NE.
7 November	Doctor confirmation of Liz being pregnant and due date established of June 2014.

Table 1: Important events of 2013.

3 Trip to Dallas

Our family packed up our small car (see Section 1.2) and made a trip down to Dallas to visit Great Grandmother White. We split the trip with a stop in Oklahoma City to visit colleagues at both the National Weather Service (NWS) and Oklahoma City Zoo! While in Dallas, we visited Cowboy's Stadium, the Dallas Arboretum, the Dallas Zoo, and the park named after great grandpa (see Figure 1)! It was very hot while we visited. Hopefully our next trip will be during a cooler time of year.

We drove the entire trip back from Dallas in one day, which was a remarkable feat considering the young infant in the back seat. Miss Maggie only got fussy the last leg of the trip, so we were thankful to make it safely home.

4 Baby Number Two

Late this year (Table 1), we discovered that Liz was pregnant. While this was not by design, we were, nonetheless, very happy for the news. The Christmas card picture included in the supplementary materials depicts how we shared the news with Daryl's side of the family. They were tasked with taking our picture as we unfurled the shown banner in front of them. Air temperatures were below 0°C at the time, so the shared moment did not last long! Also, behind Daryl

is a small tree planted by Grandma Barb to commemorate Miss Maggie's birth. The other trees in the background were planted close to Daryl's birth.

Planning is well underway to accomodate this newest child. We have not fully resolved how the sleeping arrangements will work, but we suspect Miss Maggie will remain in her crib for a while yet, while the newborn will sleep in a smaller crib. We plan to continue the use of cloth diapers with the next child and Daryl hopes for another girl for the purposes of reusing all of Miss Maggie's stuff!

The ascertaining of the upcoming baby's gender is yet an open question for debate. For Miss Maggie, Daryl was the only one informed during the ultrasound of the gender. Daryl enjoyed this position of power from unique knowledge and Liz enjoyed the surprise in the delivery room. Liz is not convinced of the efficacy of repeating this procedure!



Figure 1: From left to right: Miss Maggie, Daryl, and Liz visiting the park in Dallas named after Liz's grandfather. Many mosquitoes as well.

5 Summary

Quantitatively, this year has been the best on record for our growing family. We expect things to continue to get better with the passing years.

Acknowledgments Our family wishes to thank you for the generous support, prayers, cards, gifts, and visits you have provided us in the past year. With your continued support, this letter will be produced again next year. Please note that the format chosen for this correspondence was completely Daryl's idea and execution. Full L^AT_EX source can be found on Daryl's github page.

6 References

- Github, 2013: <https://github.com/akrherz/me> , visited 7 Dec 2013.
- King David, 700 BC: Psalm 127: 3-5 **1.**,