

Merry Christmas dear friends and family!

2019 saw the two of us closing the chapter on our Michigan adventure and starting up a new one in North Carolina. We will dearly miss the community we made during our brief time in the great north, but we hope that the mild winters of NC (and amazing company) will be alluring to them during the deep chill of a Michigan winter. Restarting in North Carolina has been very enjoyable so far (loving the hills out here, mild temperatures and many hiking opportunities), though the hardest question is quickly becoming “where are you from?”. As silly as it may seem, I feel like the more we have explored and come to appreciate this vast country the harder it is to claim just one place.

In very exciting news, Lauren finished 22th grade (aka grad school) and then after cleaning up some loose ends she successfully defended her thesis the first week of August! We’ve got a Doctor in the house! “Proud” only begins to describe my feelings. Lauren worked her butt off not only through all four years but also during a crazy period which lasted from January to early March which saw her teaching, working on her dissertation, applying to universities and subsequently traveling to Oregon, Virginia, California, North Carolina for on-campus interviews. North Carolina’s Elon University ended up winning out, and Lauren started as an Assistant Professor the week after her defense. Suffice it to say, she is happy that the semester has finished up and she gets a much deserved opportunity to breathe and collect herself after what has felt like a non-stop year.

This year also saw Lauren bravely saying goodbye to her trusty Camry, Jack (who saw his share of adventure transporting her from her undergrad at Pepperdine across many state lines to the end of her doctorate at MSU). We are so grateful that former coworker and dear friend (Jeremy) agreed to welcome Jack into his family, even when it feels like we left a piece of ourselves behind.

I am excited to share that I was able to convince another company in a new industry that I was worth being given a shot. In October I joined Cone Health’s Enterprise Analytics team as a Data Analytics Consultant where I have the opportunity to work with leaders throughout Cone, helping them to discover data driven solutions to their vexing problems. Though, unsurprisingly, I have a ton to learn, I feel lucky to have a very welcoming team and I am already loving the highly local nature of this work (we serve Guilford county and roughly a county in each direction). I am also continuing to play Ultimate frisbee and I am happy to report that this amazing/weird/goofy community continues to be welcoming even to strangers from Michigan.

Sandwiched among the new jobs and moving, Lauren and I had the opportunity this year to revisit some of the cities we have grown to love: Louisville, NOLA, Portland. Each of them filled with great food, drink and outdoor adventures (we got to do a kayaking bayou tour during this trip to NOLA!). We also had the opportunity to celebrate the wedding of dear friends in Richmond, Filmore and Sanger (in spirit). Witnessing the commitment of two people to each other is an absolute joy and we are grateful to call each of you our friends. Congrats to Alex + Elaine, Justin + KP, and Karl + Alyssa!

Though it wouldn’t be a Christmas letter without it, let me first say I think Lauren is bummed she didn’t get to read as much as she wanted this year (it like she was spending all of her time working on dissertation, classes, etc). Honestly though, take that with a grain of salt because she still finished 37 books this year. And when pressed the two that stuck out were Becoming by Michelle Obama and Katrina by Gary Rivlin. Michelle (is book form) was so kind to keep Lauren company as she criss-crossed across the US during her interviews (Thanks Michelle!) and “Katrina” provided wonderful insight to the ever vibrant city and people of New Orleans. It was a treat to hear stories of the neighborhoods as we explored and celebrated a Saints win. This year I went on a Micheal Lewis kick, reading four of his books in quick succession. While I’ve really enjoyed them, the last part of the year has brought a podcast (Dolly Parton’s America) and a book (What You Are Getting Wrong About Appalachia), which have paired together with our move have challenged me to have a nuanced and complex view of our new home (a region which admittedly I knew only the stereotypes). It’s a treat to be shaken from a lazy preconception and be given the opportunity to see our neighbors in new light.

Our year was filled with the challenges which seed personal growth and the community who give us the love and support to flourish, and our hope is the same for you. Come on over, share a libation and a story; we can’t wait to see you in 2020!

Much Love,
Phil and Lauren

David And Laura
2425 Sunrise Place, Santa Rosa, Ca 95409

Mom And Dad Walker
26625 Bonita Way, Carmel, Ca 93923

Oma
551 Gibson Ave Apt #329 Sw, Pacific Grove, Ca 93950

Momma And Pappa Denman
5019 Hackamore Dr N, Colorado Springs, Co 80918-2634

Trent And Jennifer
2160 Rusty Hinge Dr, Colorado Springs, Co 80920-3822

Ryan And Tracey
345 Smith Circle, Erie, Co 80516

Rachel And Eli
1501 Wiltsey Rd Se Apt 101, Salem, Or 97306-9650

Matt And Katherine
19600 Redberry Dr, Los Gatos, Ca 95030-2944

Peter
1350 Broadstone Pkwy Apt 4022, Folsom, Ca 95630

Michael
2436 Cottle Ave, San Jose, Ca 95125

Christine
154 Ethel Wingate Dr Unit 701, Pensacola, Fl 32507-8189

Thea And Amanda
1140 E 22nd St Apt 4, Oakland, Ca 94606

Josh Schlosser
831 Eaton Dr, Mason, Mi 48854

Pat And Hannah
1150 Williamson St #203, Madison, Wi 53703

Jeremy Rayla
4108 Holt Rd, Holt, Mi, 48842

Laura Wallace
2696 E Lake Lansing Rd, East Lansing, Mi 48823

Phil And Laura
15 Bixby St, North Andover, Ma 01845

Alex And Elaine
2700 Q St NW, Washington Dc 20007

Kim Wong
1726 S Bentley Ave #104, Los Angeles, Ca 90025

Cass
726 Lacy Oak Dr, Chesapeake, Va 23320

Kaleena
1110a S Boyle Ave, St Louis Mo 63110

Jordan Tait
2328 Huntington Place, Rapid City, Sd 57702

Dylan And Sarah
1125 San Andres St Santa Barbara, Ca 93101

Justin And Kp
5144 Shenandoah St, Ventura, Ca 93003

Karl And Alyssa
Apt 204 1337 N 9th St, Fresno Ca 93703

Andrei And Amy
2988 Grassina St Unit 327, San Jose, Ca 95136-4861

Pat And Colleen
432 Ferndale Dr, Santa Maria 93455

Eric And The Martins

Jd
960 W Southern Ave Apt B141, Mesa, Az, 85210

Chris Umphlett