

*Happy.... New Year!*

The letter is late. I know. I wanted to start it early last year, but then last year kept happening. The funny letter that I usually write kept getting piled upon by unfunny things. The pandemic...the politics...the little things...the bigger things...and I lost my father...

How do I dig through all that and get to the annual silliness that we try to put out every December? How do I find humor in a year without Dad? Just wait, I guess and hope that time heals the rest enough to allow laughing again. In other words, and as my Dad used to say, "This too shall pass."



So, it hasn't passed, but I want to get this letter out. I want to tell you about the good things that happened to our crazy little family. I want to laugh with you about the ridiculous things from 2020. I want to look through the prisms of hyperbole and sarcasm as prisms and show you the people that kept me going. So here goes.



Let's start in the middle with Lily, who is 14 years old now. If Lily could increase the size of her eyes to saucer levels and have a "quirk," she'd be the happiest teen. A "quirk," by the way, is how you say "power" in Anime-speak. Saying Lily is into Anime is like saying Midas was into gold. There is no conversation or experience not mirrored in some Anime world. Here's an example:

**Glenn:** \*cooks dinner\*

**Lily:** OHMAHGAWD, Dad, in My Hero Academia there's a character named Naruto, and his quirk is cooking dad dinners, and you so much remind me of him. He's in a 'ship with Bakugo who is, low key, not here for it but has the best 'fits and..." (this

goes on until dinner burns or I feign death.)

We have had to schedule time on a nightly basis for Lily to explain how something we did or said is Anime-related. I watch "Attack on Titan" with her. There aren't enough narcotics in the free world to alter my brain and make sense of it. *Synopsis:* Naked giants (titans) that have no genitalia terrorize a walled-in human populace that use gas-powered grappling hooks to fly above the giants and slice the nape of their necks, which is their only weak spot. Except, one of



the humans can become a titan and fight the other titans and now there's a female titan and...\*cuts own nape and collapses.\*

Lily still plays soccer (which is like Shōyō Hinata, from Haiku!! an anime about Volleyball. No, I am not making this up) and her quirk is "joking out players." The league adapted enough to play a few games. She started high school this year (just like Cromartie High School!), virtually, which is "lamer than Shou Tucker, who turned his wife into a chimera *for no good reason.*" A good reason for turning your wife into a chimera is left as an

exercise for the reader.

We leave the world of Anime, going in One Direction, to the land of Harry Styles fandom. Becca has the mother of all preteen crushes on Harry Styles. If you don't know who Harry Styles is, I encourage you to look at Becca's TikTok and watch some or all of the 12,423 videos she has made about him. If you want to send Becca on a Lily-on-Anime style diatribe, disparage Harry's music or choice of dresses.

Becca: OHMAHGAWD DAAAD...did you mention the dress again? It's no big deal and he's *Harry Styles* so he can wear what he wants \*it's about here that she starts compulsively angry dancing at me\* he is "*golden, golden, golden.*"

She dance-walks up the stairs while staring me down. This all eventually ends up on TikTok.



When Becca is not tiktoking about

Harry, she is at the skate park (presumably tik-shredding about Harry. She sometimes falls on purpose so she can sing "Falling"). Becca enjoys tumbling (in a mask) and hip-hop dance (in a mask), as well. Finally, Becca started middle school this year, virtually, which is a *Sign of the Times...*

Our journey leaves Harry in TikTokland and moves to pizza, drumming, and video games. 2020 made Logan look like a genius. Before the pandemic started, he took a job delivering pizza for Dominos. Logan selected this job to "be on my phone and listen to The Dead while making tips," which, if you squint, is a life plan. He continued to be into drumming and had a band called The Long Distance Runners. LDR played two socially distanced and outdoor concerts this year that

were critical successes. The band accelerated from live shows to band drama in an admirably short time, so future shows are in jeopardy.



With the tour canceled, Logan has lost himself in the virtual worlds of Pokemon and Grand Theft Auto. As such, he's either catching cute, lovable little critters or indiscriminately running over innocent bystanders in a stolen car with most of some city's police force chasing him because he has stolen the illicit drugs from the station and

is transporting them to the crime lord. We are so proud.

Logan continues to attend The University of North Carolina at Asheville and has switched his major from "Listening to the Dead" to Accounting, albeit with a minor in the former.

The last stop on the whirlwind children tour is our resident Tarheel, Emma, who had a monster 2020. She graduated from high school without a prom, Senior Spring Break, in-person graduation, etc, etc., etc. She joined the club with millions of other high school Seniors around the world. Sigh. Emma attends The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She turned 18 (in college) shortly after getting booted out of her dorm because who could've guessed that 18-24 year old kids that had everything taken away from their high school experience would ignore all protocols and party like Carnival, Mardi Gras, St. Patrick's Day, and New Years Eve combined to form the Megazord of party environments. Emma did what any reasonable person would do with no on-campus housing and moved into a hotel room with a boy. It sounds like a pitch for a sitcom, doesn't it?



*Here's the deal, there's a girl starting college during a pandemic and the school shuts down her dorm, so she moves into a hotel with a church friend who is a boy.*

Personally, I'd make the boy an alien from another dimension or a talking dog, but I think it's binge-worthy either way.

Emma, never one to let infectious diseases get in the way of being social, joined the Alpha Delta Pi sorority. It's important that you know ADPi was the first ("first and finest!") sorority and its colors are the same as UNC's and Emma's roommate is one too and OHMAHGAWD we have so much fun and \*cuts own nape and collapses.\*

When Emma isn't ordering room service or going to \*cough\* virtual \*cough\* sorority functions, she's studying Pre-med Psychology. There is little doubt her family directly influenced this choice of major.



Jill still works for Wing Haven, the non-profit and public garden, directing education and such. Despite the conflagration that was 2020, she still thinks the world worth saving. So much so that she worries about a vaccine because it "kills a living thing." [Editor's Note: Jill is not actually afraid of the vaccine.] A positive for Jill this past year was finding an effective [sic] chiropractor to address her chronic neck and back pain. I am not sure if this stuff works, but the apparatus and exercises she does, both in and out of the office, are worth the price of admission. Every morning Jill looks like she's fallen into an elaborate trap of pads and rope while making a young children's TV show. At any moment, I expect Super Grover to crash in and try to save her.

As for me, I still work at Skookum, directing nerds and representing the elderly. I waited so late to write this letter that I turned 50. Yes, FIFTY. While I would love to churn bits of wisdom based on solid life experience, all I know is that I now use a TON of Q-tips. Seriously, the Q-tip people have someone that drops off a daily batch to me. I scurry out, collect my precious like Gollum, opening them before I get inside in a swabbing frenzy. I am not sure I can explain *what*, exactly, I am swabbing so feverishly, but those Q-tips are gone at the end of the day. My birthday gifts are probably a leading indicator of who I am at this age:

- A puzzle
- A book on the psychology of Wolverine
- A karaoke machine
- A Q-tip carryall

Draw your own conclusions.

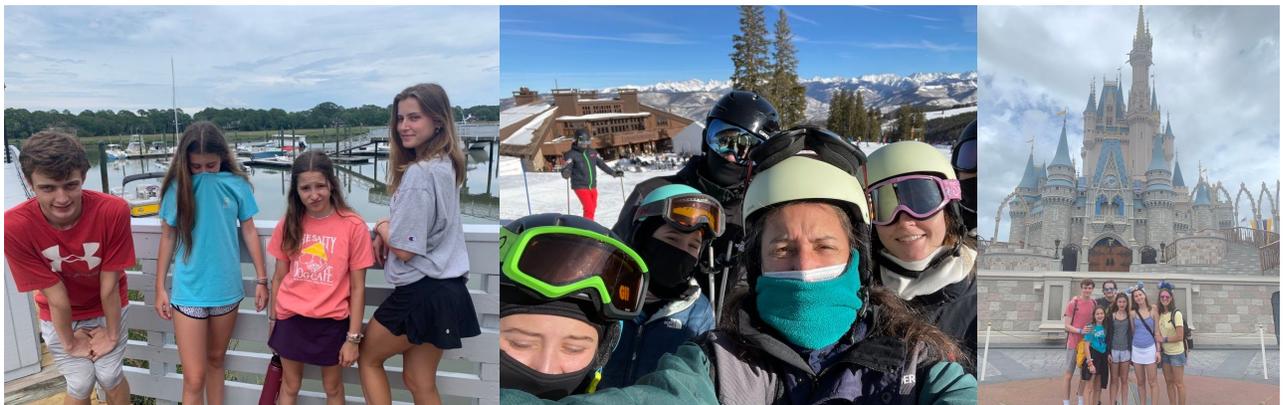




Lastly, we come to the Goodrich pets: the dogs (Archie and Josie) and cat (Callie). We're pretty sure Callie has some level of vision loss because, in a very un-catlike manner, she runs smack into things all the time. Callie also will watch someone shower, like a cat pervert (catvert?), and then walk into the shower and lick up the water as it drains. This act may have something to do with her chronic blindness.

Josie, on the other hand, runs into stuff because she is very stupid. It's like she forgets what things she can pass through (air) and what she can not (walls). 2020 really did a number on Archie's anxiety, which makes sense. Everyone and everything puts him on edge. He's part pit bull, so it's like we have a small truck tire, covered in fur, that shakes and growls all the time.

While travel was taboo for most of 2020, the Goodrichs cheated a bit to celebrate life events or end the crushing monotony of being in the house. Just as the pandemic hit (March), we found ourselves in Disney/Universal (motto: "The petri dish of the planet"). [Editor's note: Disney/Universal closed the day we left - nice of them to stay open long enough for us to enjoy six parks in five days!]. We had a great time seeing Galaxy's Edge and encouraging Becca not to lick the handrails while standing in line. The family also made short trips to Charleston and Hilton Head to see the ocean and wave to masked friends from 6 feet away. Grammie (Jill's mom) hit the big 75, so we surprised her with a quick visit while wearing full-body condoms coated in Lysol. Jill and Glenn hit 25 years (FYI: If you had < 25 years on the "There's No Way She Stays with Him" pool, in your face.) and celebrated with a trip to Willamette Valley wine country in Oregon. The rationale being that wine has alcohol in it, and alcohol kills germs. Finally, the family spent Christmas skiing in Vail, Colorado, because we were sure the world would end along with 2020.



Well, that's it. 2020 is gone, thankfully. I hope you got a chuckle or two out of our madness. I will miss getting my father's annual take on the letter that usually went like this:

Me: Did you read the letter?

Dad: What letter?

Me: The Christmas letter, Dad. From us.

Dad: Oh...(pause)...yes.

Me: Did you like it?

Dad: Sure.

Me: Which part was your favorite?

Dad: Here's your mother (hands phone to Mom).

I miss you, Dad.

As always, we hope you're all doing well. Here's to 2021 being somewhat less of a motivation to cut our napes and collapse.

The Goodrichs

