

HAPPY Holidays

FROM HOLLY AND MATT

2023 – New and Improved!

With no rats or major house repairs and even some travel, 2023 was a much better year for us than 2022. Of course, there's always something — Holly's six-month-long fight with the University of Texas insurance system (ironically called "UTCare"), some bouts of low-level pain occasionally addressed by short term physical therapy, and the summer heat in Austin.

Still Cautious

We are continuing the small life of COVID concern (and haven't gotten sick!). Holly's niece has long COVID, a constant reminder that COVID is still a threat. We are getting out more but still don't do anything indoors without a mask, including eating in restaurants which curtails some socializing. Since we're introverts, this is not a huge deal. However, we have appreciated friends and family who will eat with us outside or go for walks instead, and visit via telephone or Zoom.

Matt's Exploits

Matt continues developing theorem-proving software, ACL2, which he started doing more than 30 years ago. There was a related small conference

December 2023

in Austin this November and it was great to catch up with friends and colleagues from around the country. He also continues to enjoy pickleball (and keeps trying to improve).

Holly's Diversions

Thanks to a great therapist, Holly had a lot less anxiety in 2023. She taught another semester of research online for the University of Pennsylvania. However, after that semester, she decided to stop teaching and is now supervising student dissertations, which takes less time in front of the computer and results in less back pain.

She is still making quilts for Project Linus. She made one that Matt liked so much, we decided to keep it.



Holly recently retired from a local racial justice organization in preparation for a . . .

Possible Move

We're still considering a big move after this summer's hellish weather, ever-increasing traffic, and rancid politics. We spent a month this summer checking out Olympia, Washington and visiting family and friends in the Pacific Northwest, and we will be going back in December to see if Matt can stand the cold, wet winter weather.

In the meantime, Holly is trying to get rid of 30 years of accumulated clutter in the house in preparation for a possible move (or certain death, at some point). It's a daunting process, going through the detritus of your life (Should I keep Grandmother's pickle dish? What about 50 years of photos of family Christmas trees? And the collection of ceramic pigs?). Meanwhile, Matt's new hobby is scouring Zillow for houses in Olympia.

Grateful for the Ordinary

Our ordinary pleasures include watching TV, reading on our Kindles, going for walks, eating a bit too much, and following politics (or avoiding it). This year our favorite TV shows were reruns of *Boston Legal* and dating shows like *Love is Blind* and *The Golden Bachelor*. The dating shows reinforced how much we appreciate each other! We're both loving the new C.B. Strike mystery by Robert Galbraith/JK Rowling. We continue our quest for the perfect donut. We are grateful for our health, our friends, our family, and our 401K.

Having no wisdom of our own to share from this year, we borrow from someone famous:

May your coming year be filled with magic and dreams and good madness. I hope you read some fine books and kiss someone who thinks you're wonderful, and don't forget to make some art—write or draw or build or sing as only you can. And I hope, somewhere in the next year, you surprise yourself.

Neil Gaiman



Wishing you a happy holiday and a new year full of unexpected delights!