

## The 2015 Waite Family Christmas Letter

Here it is mid-December, and we are just starting the annual letter. It's not that nothing has happened this year, we just didn't know where to start. Let's start in the middle and work sideways. Or maybe we'll start at the side and work middle-ways. Anyways...

Alex got his bachelor's degree in civil engineering and jumped straight into grad school. It never rains in LA, but it rained on graduation day. It was still a grand celebration and included lunch at In-N-Out Burger – we are classy! For the first time, he's living near campus. He got a house with seven strangers, all grad students from China. He has been a great help to them explaining things like Halloween, the need to wash dishes, and to put dishes away at least every few weeks. He got his USC band jacket after completing his third year with the group. He gave his parents tickets to the home football games, where they spent halftime trying to figure out which of the dozens of trombone players with sunglasses was Alex. "Is that him?" "No, that's a girl who is about 5'1" I think." They cheered for all of them.

David turned 21 this year, and Alex flew out to join him for the occasion. He left the U of Colorado band this year but joined a jazz ensemble and a couple of other bands. Heaven forbid he should have free time. Gee, where does he get that? He got a job at the disability services office at the university where he's been converting documents to Braille. We didn't know he spoke Braille. Barry & Margie visited Boulder and Seattle over the summer. David took a road trip to the Hayes clan in Oregon, Seattle and Montana. Then he sold his fancy Subaru to buy an old pickup truck to haul his art works. Who needs all-wheel drive when you live in an area where there is hardly any snow? Oh wait...

In addition to a trip to Seattle with Barry in August, Margie took another trip there with Alex this month to see her dad. He's 88 and still great to hang out with. He even allowed these two elves to decorate his apartment for Christmas. Margie's big news is she was promoted to "VP of Accounting and Controller." Ain't she something? Meanwhile, she's had some weird thing going on with her ears being plugged for the last year. She had tubes put in like a little kid gets. Now she has a good reason why she never hears what the rest of us say, right?

After enduring a couple of years of true bedlam at the office, Barry is taking an extended leave and burning off some of the months he has accrued in 28 years with the city. With over 200% management turnover, he cringed every day as he opened the newspaper to see the latest Carson story. He was only named in a few of them and is not in any of the YouTube videos about the city (feel free to see those on line). Anyone looking for a consultant? He's spent vast amounts of time singing with barbershop, church choir, his little theater group, and anyone else who will tolerate him.

On the home front – we had the house tented to get rid of our termite collection and we built 73 feet of fence to try to keep Hagrid in the yard. So far, so good on that. The whole family participated in the project at various points. We used a chainsaw and not one but two reciprocating saws. And here's the amazing part – no one got hurt! Okay, we got a little hurt, but we didn't need bandages. Okay, we needed a few, but we didn't have to call the paramedics even once!

For the coming year, we plan to fix stuff around the house, eat good food, take the dogs for a walk, plant some stuff in the garden that may or may not survive, and finally clean up the garage. Most importantly, we will ignore any and everything related to next year's election. We were saturated before it even started. Weren't you? Our vote is for a happy and healthy year for all our friends and family!



Graduation day for Alex with his proud mom. The rain did not dampen our enthusiasm.



Celebrating Barry's Birthday Bratwurst Bash with some appropriate attire. We are classy!



The daffodil beds around the cabin are amazing. We take dozens of pictures every year and then can't decide which to share. We finally picked one – photo that is. Flower pickers get a nasty note from the homeowner association. As they should.



On a walk near David's house in Boulder, this deer came striding by. Oh deer.