

We thought we could completely avoid writing our holiday letter this year, by simply overexposing our personal lives and having them covered in the mainstream media. Then, you'd be able to hear all about our family just by tuning in your TV/radio, reading a newspaper, or visiting the blogosphere! That seemed to be working well for the Palins and Salahis, so why not us? You may or may not have heard about us this year when.....

- Monica (Jeanne) Lefton caused a stir when her advanced language arts essay entitled MJ is alive! was picked up by search engines the day after Michael Jackson died.
- Natalie eluded the Secret Service by wearing a beautiful red dress into the White House, but it was later discovered that the rest of her personal life was spent following all the rules rather than stealing, scheming, and lying, so the wire services dropped the story.
- Hannah was almost thrown out of high school for having an affair with Tiger Woods, but then it was discovered she simply joined a Facebook Group called "If a million people say *I Slept With Tiger Woods* my Mom will buy me an iPhone."
- Enid auditioned for the *Real Housewives of Atlanta*, but they didn't believe her when she listed all the things she was involved with, so they dropped her from the show. Fortunately, she is a finalist for the purely imaginary new show called the *Complex Housewives of Atlanta*.
- Lew disappeared from work and claimed to have been "Hiking the Appalachian Trail" but he was soon found at home, just trying to get in a quiet nap and a moment of peace to write the holiday letter.
- Even our pets got into the spirit when Madison launched an unmanned weather balloon and claimed that our cat was in it. Hours later, the cat came yawning up from the basement and it briefly sparked the scandal known as **Balloon Bo**.

In case you missed all these stories of 2009, you can still catch up with us now in the

## **The 2009 Lefton-Steinbart Holiday Letter**

When you last checked in with us (which probably would've been the 2008 Lefton-Steinbart Holiday letter, that likely arrived in early 2009) we were just an ordinary family with a dog, a cat, three teenage girls, and two sleep deprived mathematicians, living in a house that never seems to be "done". At that level, we're still the same.

Last year we moved our 20 year old stereo system, TV, etc. into the basement and got a flat screen TV and home theater stuff for the den. This was accompanied by the addition of satellite TV (so we now get more than 5 channels) and Netflix. Our kids showed their appreciation by leaving socks and dirty dishes everywhere and ignoring us. We think that's teenager for "I love you".

With Hannah in her Junior year in high school, we have very few family vacation opportunities left, so this summer we decided to take a cruise to Alaska. After setting the dates, Lew's sisters Linda, Charna, and Irene were able to join us. Thus, Lew had an opportunity to spend an entire week in close quarters with the seven women who drive him crazy. Actually, it was a great trip and we all enjoyed it. Fantastic scenery, exciting excursions (zip lines, dog sleds, glacier hikes, dry suit snorkeling, etc.), delicious food, and great company. Before we embarked, we got a chance to visit Enid's sister Ellen in Seattle and see cousin Jessie, too. We also took a train and spent a night in Vancouver. As a bonus, we collected many good Scrabble words like "ulu".

Other family connections this year included our traditional Thanksgiving visit from Irene. We also traveled to Washington D.C. at the end of December. There we got to visit with Enid's sisters Sylvia and Stephanie, along with

Dick, Sofi, Victor, Helen, and Janet. The kids loved the 20 inches of snow and we had a nice time exploring museums on the Mall.

Hannah is working hard at Decatur High School taking several AP courses. She took AP calculus at the same time Enid was teaching freshman calculus at GT, so our house became a popular AP calculus study spot. She is still playing saxophone in the world-traveling DHS band (this year they spent a week in Bratislava, Slovakia) and she will start harp lessons soon. Hannah likes the sciences (Chemistry and Biology) and has really enjoyed her lawyer role on the Mock Trial team. Her final year at TIP was in a Game Theory class.

Monica and Natalie are both doing well as 8th graders in their last year at Renfroe Middle School. They got cell phones last January, and they bought more electronics over the summer (an iTouch and a netbook) after saving up several months worth of chore money. As a result we have gotten a chance to see a lot more of the tops of their heads. They continue to participate in Girl Scouts, and they have both tried out for the competitive "Math Counts" team. This is a clear demonstration that mathematical talent is definitely tied to either nature or nurture.

Natalie the athlete is participating in a recreational swim team over the summer, and playing soccer at school. Her middle school soccer team boasted the best record of all the DHS sports teams last year! She also plays oboe and is considering adding flute, since apparently oboes aren't allowed in marching band (no joke).

Monica still takes flute lessons using the Suzuki method, and has had several beautiful recitals. She is looking into Lacrosse as a sport this spring, and she also joined an after-school yoga club. Monica is again part of a Lego Robotics Team this year, taking a big leadership role. Her team won a research trophy is advancing to the next level.

Enid sometimes gets frustrated with the increasing amount of administrative work that she has to do, however she still enjoys teaching and working with the math majors at Georgia Tech. The undergraduate program at GT has almost doubled in size since we arrived here. In her nonexistent free time, Enid plays Bunco, is involved at the church, and volunteers at multiple school and community events. She barely has time to maintain her superhero alter-ego anymore, and that's the reason (not the weak economy) that you may have noticed a slight uptick in crime.

Lew is still doing comedy, and he took a trip back to Champaign-Urbana this fall to perform stand up at the Alley Cat reunion show. It was great to catch up with old friends and tell jokes next to a moving train! Work at Georgia Tech is still interesting, and he is still playing the role of the alpha geek at Dean's meetings. Both Lew and Enid are furloughed (along with all university employees) for four days this year and more days to come in 2010. Lew continues to be involved in community activities, including the DHS School Leadership Team (a local charter school system board), DUCK which is the teen improv comedy group he directs (both Hannah and Monica participate), and STEMCELL, the after school geek club that does Lego Robotics, and other cool science/technology projects.

If you're ever in the area, please stop by! You should be able to easily find our house by following the paparazzi, but in case that doesn't work, here are our coordinates:

141 Shadowmoor Dr Decatur GA 30030 | 404-377-5631 (H) | 404-290-4891 (E. cell) | 404-290-4609 (L. cell)  
404-354-1967 (H. cell) | 404-291-3333 (M. cell) | 404-291-2852 (N. cell) | leftonfamily@gmail.com

*May you and your loved ones year have a new year full of health and joy.*

*Happy Hanukkah!*

*Merry Christmas!*

*Happy New Year!*