

Uncertainty is our new certainty. We're actually not entirely sure about that, which only makes us more convinced. Life in 2012 was full of doubt. Will Obama win re-election or not? Even Nate Silver would only give us a probability. Does the world end on 12-21-2012? Probably not, but just in case, let's make a run to Costco. And what about the fiscal cliff? Will we continue to mix metaphors by combining geography and finance? Will 2013 bring us an earnings escarpment and a glacial GDP? The media has figured out that news, weather, and sports can be replaced by fear, anxiety, and sports and the ratings only go up. Are you confused yet? If not, try watching the opening ceremonies of the London Olympics. There's really only one certain thing left and you're looking at it right now. Take a deep breath, and know that, no matter what fear, uncertainty, and doubt there may be in your world, you can always count on the late arrival of the

2012 Lefton-Steinbart Holiday Letter

Hannah, now a sophomore at UGA, had a big year. Over the summer, she worked as a counselor for a Duke TIP camp in San Antonio. Then she got a car and moved off campus, where she lives with Tristin and Jennifer and a rescue dog named Ralph. If I had to describe what he looks like I'd say he has a "great personality". Ralph's part pit bull, part dachshund, and very sweet. He's been to Decatur and gets along fine with Bo and Madison, which is good because something tells me he'll be part of our family for awhile. Hannah is still double majoring in Political Science and International Affairs. She wants to join the Peace Corps in Africa after graduation, and then come back to attend law school. In preparation for the former, she is learning French and avoiding AIDS. In preparation for the latter, she is on the UGA Mock Trial Team. Enid and Lew went up to American University in DC and saw her compete. Based not only on our unbiased opinion, but also the judges, her team won first place at that competition. How does Chief Justice Lefton sound?

Natalie is an 11th grader now, and her oboe lessons have helped her reach some significant milestones. She made District Honor Band this fall, and also spent two weeks in the summer touring Europe and playing with the Georgia Ambassadors of Music.. She also marches playing mellophone. Natalie is still an active soccer player with both club and the high school program. Her classes include lots of AP courses, and she's considering applying to colleges to major in science or maybe applied math (strange choice given her upbringing, but whatever...). She has already completed enough practical experience to minor in sarcasm regardless of where she ends up. She and Monica drive to school in our old Mazda, and they were surprised when it didn't win the worst car award.

Monica (also a junior!) plays in the award winning DHS Marching band, and this year she's been playing both piccolo and flute. Her sport is still Lacrosse which you can tell by the thudding of balls on our outside wall. She had a very busy summer that included a week in Florida with a friend, a week at a church retreat in Montreat, a trip to Albuquerque with our family, and ten days in Costa Rica on a service project trip! On top of her AP courses this fall, Monica also started writing for the high school magazine and blog 3ten.org. She's still great at improv, and along with Natalie, remains active in the church youth group and her girl scout troop. Her list of unread Agatha Christie books is getting pretty short, and her current plans for college are decidedly undecided.

During the first half of this year, we enjoyed being stand-in parents for Daniel Gartrell. For those of you who don't recall the story from last year's letter, Daniel's missionary parents were called back to Brazil, and Daniel needed a home in Decatur to finish his senior year with the class of 2012. We used to think teenagers ate a lot, but having an 18 year old boy for a few months, we are now 100% sure of it. Daniel survived Plebe summer and successfully finished his first semester at the US Naval Academy this past fall. Of course, we can't take any credit for his success, with the possible exception of his unlimited access to calculus tutoring.

Lew's sister Irene made her traditional Thanksgiving visit to Decatur, but we had also seen her earlier this year when the Leftons converged on Albuquerque last summer. On that trip, we stayed with Lew's sisters, Linda and Charna and had a great time hanging out, shopping, eating Mexican food, shopping, hitting an Albuquerque

Isotopes game with Lew's friend Don Trujillo, seeing a play, shopping. We took a couple days and headed south to Carlsbad and White Sands, with a stop at NM Tech and a visit to the Owl Bar for world famous green chili cheeseburgers. On the way back to Albuquerque, we made it to the Roswell UFO museum, which wasn't even on our bucket list. It probably doesn't need to be on yours either.

Other notable events this year included a visit to Atlanta last Spring from the students of the Fray Victor Maria Flores School in Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas Mexico. This was the second part of the Band exchange we began in 2011, and it was great fun showing off our city to our friends from Chiapas. On the Steinbart side, Dick Rortvedt visited last year. So did Emily Nemens, who was in town as part of a billboard art project that displayed her widely acclaimed work consisting of paintings all the female legislators in the 112th US Congress, arranged chromatically by color of their power suit.

Enid is still teaching, advising, and being a hero to undergradate math majors at Georgia Tech. She runs, plays Bunco (aka drinks wine-co), teaches Sunday school, and does lots of volunteering. In addition to being a core volunteer at the Arts Festival, Book Festival, Beer Festival, MLK Service Project, etc., her work on the Decatur High School PTSA is highly regarded. She's now sought out as an "expert" parent for things like the 9th grade orientation, panel discussions, etc. Enid also traveled to Pittsburgh in 2012 to visit Ellen and Dan. Stephanie and Syliva joined them and they all had some sister bonding time (not to be confused with Neal bashing). Our girls keep suggesting ways that Enid could get on one of their favorite reality TV shows, but unfortunately, Enid continues to eat and shop normally and refuses to prepare for doomsday.

Lew taught from his scientific computing textbook again this fall, but most of his job is still related to things like IT management, building private clouds, attending meetings where everyone pontificates on the impact of technology on higher education, and spending other people's money. He is still involved with improv comedy, including his project to use improv and humor to catalyze technical innovation (appliedhumor.com). The robotics program in Decatur continues to thrive and Lew helped mentor the FRC team last spring. He's also started to have discussions about opening a makerspace in Decatur. If that's a foreign concept, you may have to consult Wikipedia, but please, for the sake of your family, give yourself a time limit. Last but not least, Lew continues to serve on the board of the Decatur Education Foundation which is a great charity to consider, whether or not you hit the next powerball.

I'm not sure, but I'm pretty sure we forgot something important. But then again maybe not. However, one thing we can all agree on is that we would love to see you in 2013! You can take that to the bank, but you may just want to leave it under your mattress....

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) | leftfamily@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!