

Paraphrasing Maya Angelou, this year we've learned that we still have a lot to learn.

For example, we learned that the mute button is not just a convenient feature, but rather a critical tool in the struggle to control your level of online embarrassment. And speaking of technology, why isn't there a button that allows me to control the settings of other people on the Internet? I want to be able to click "educate this person."

We learned that scientific hypotheses can be tested and verified with data, and new (maybe even contradictory) hypotheses can be formed and tested when you get more data. WHAT!? You mean it's a dynamic human activity rather than a static body of knowledge? I don't believe you! I'm going to get some data and check tha... Oh I get it. Well played, Science. And thanks for the vaccines.

And we learned that, during true human crises, the most important thing is having a consistently loving community of unconditionally supportive friends and family. But in reality, we all ended up with friends and family who are human beings instead, which creates even more learning opportunities! That's why having good access to beer, wine, and streaming media are all tied for 2nd most important thing. The third most important thing is having distractions that provide a little escape, like the

2020 Lefton-Steinbart Holiday Letter

Hannah started the year in Senegal, where she was working for the Peace Corps as a Volunteer Leader. She mentored many volunteers, developed transition plans, and then rapidly learned how to coordinate a country-wide emergency evacuation on a chartered flight. After a 14-day quarantine in Decatur (one pandemic time-unit), and a few months of living at home (also one pandemic time-unit), she packed up and drove to Ann Arbor, Michigan to start her four-year joint degree program in law and social work (JD/MSW) at UM. Lew and Enid followed Hannah and Monica's car (with their permission) and drove back home with Monica, after helping Hannah scour Ann Arbor's thrift store scene. Hannah became the last person in our immediate family to get glasses, and she now has 20/20 vision (get it!?). She had a part time jobs doing get-out-the-vote efforts and is now teaching LSAT prep classes. She takes all her classes online, was elected as a representative to the UM School of Social Work student union, and spends free time doing yoga, taking walks, and practicing the ukulele.

In November, Hannah drove from Ann Arbor to Berkeley to spend Thanksgiving with Natalie. While a solo cross-country road trip during a global pandemic is impressive, the real feat was a 2010 Honda Fit (which doubled as a motel) covering thousands of miles without issue. Then in December, she and Natalie hit the road again and drove cross-country from Berkeley to Atlanta. They enjoyed a brief stop in Albuquerque to see Lew's sisters, Linda and Charna. This road trip was a great learning experience where they discovered that not all gas pumps have auto-shutoff. It was also an opportunity for them to discuss ideas for the 2020 Lefton-Steinbart Holiday Letter. Some of those ideas are incorporated here, but others (like a letter of exclusively animal puns) were not high enough koala-ty.

Natalie passed her milestone qualifying exam this year, and she is now a Chemical Engineering PhD candidate at UC Berkeley! Her work slowed down a bit during the early months of the pandemic, but she's currently on a shift schedule which allows her to continue her catalysis research in the lab. She would have preferred to work from home but her roommates vetoed plans for a propane reactor in the living room. She has enjoyed some leisure activities, too. For example, several swims in the San Francisco bay, where she has successfully avoided both the toxic metals and toxic masculinity. She has been doing a lot more biking, hiking, and day trips including a couple trips to Santa Barbara. There were some visits with Lew's sister Irene, as well. This year, she's learned to be quite a good baker, and she made homemade bagels for us over the holidays! She made it through the California wildfires and smoke season safely, and got even better at jigsaw puzzles (which we didn't think was possible).

Monica was promoted this year to an Account Executive at the PR firm FleishmanHillard. She had a pre-pandemic work trip to Kansas City, MO, but now she's 100% work-from-home. She loves the relaxed dress code and zero-carbon footprint commute but wishes there were better snacks in the break room. At the end of 2020, she moved into a new solo apartment, which is still in Atlanta, but has more indoor and outdoor space. Based on the houseplant situation, she's demonstrated a green thumb which must have come from her Mom's side. The pandemic has improved both her cooking (soup queen) and cocktail making (70% alcohol kills Corona virus). The latter is probably from her Dad's side. Monica bought a car this year (2017 hybrid), and she learned the ins and outs of the car

insurance industry. She did a camping trip with Hannah, and some getaways with some friends in her bubble. She saw Chelsea Cutler in concert twice, once pre-pandemic, and once at a drive-in concert. Chelsea Cutler never saw her. Monica, like her sisters, continues to be an avid reader, and she finished 28 books this year!

All of us made significant effort this year to support environmental and social justice causes by safely attending outdoor marches, supporting Black owned businesses, consciously eating more plant-based meals, reducing consumption, and voting in all the elections and runoffs. Lew and Enid also planted a vegetable garden in the backyard and harvested a LOT of figs from our tree. Enid's librarian sister, Sylvia, helped out by sending the cookbook *Fig Heaven*, and we learned that there's such a thing as too many figs.

We've all also been taking the pandemic quite seriously, following the science, wearing masks, keeping distant and testing regularly. Knock on wood (not scientific, but fun to do) it seems like we've all remained virus-free so far. We'll all take the vaccine when it's made available, and we feel blessed to be in this position starting 2021.

We've done many family game night Zoom calls, and the girls had a fun Mother's Day quiche bake with Enid. We also enjoyed a Passover Seder and Hanukkah candle lighting over Zoom with Lew's family.

Sorry, we accidentally hit mute on that last sentence... Our cat Bo is not really experiencing a pandemic. We think he's just wondering why the food service staff is not going home during the day as often as they used to. This year Bo learned to show up on Zoom calls at awkward times.

This year, Enid was promoted to Academic Professional Principal (the equivalent of Full Professor in her job family). Her expertise is highly valued and she's not only mentoring newer academic faculty, but also serving on key hiring committees such as the new school chair search. Like all the other Georgia Tech faculty, she made a rapid pivot to teaching online in March and has continued to work from home all year. She learned that having screens as your window to the world, and technology mediating everything in your life, sucks. She set up a private office in Monica and Natalie's old room upstairs, which helps muffle some of the screams of frustration. Enid still stays physically active, making time for outdoor bootcamp and solo runs several mornings every week. She's still participating in her book club and has added a quasi-regular Steinbart sibling Zoom call to her calendar. She's doing more cooking, and she and Lew have spent a fair amount of time trying new recipes and doing deep "quaran-cleaning" in the basement. Somehow these activities almost always involve wine.

Enid and Lew travelled a bit this year. We enjoyed a pre-pandemic January visit to New Orleans where we caught up with friends, and Lew performed at a comedy reunion show. We learned that some local grocery stores there actually sample whiskey, rum, and gin, which beats the heck out of cheese and crackers. In March, both Enid and Lew took turns to help Lew's sister Irene with her shoulder surgery recovery in the Bay Area. This was during the first pandemic spike, but we managed just fine. Lew took advantage of the opportunity to connect with Natalie, but by the time Enid was there, the California lockdown had already started so they couldn't see each other. Later in the summer and fall, Enid and Lew also took some trips to NC to just grab a cabin and do some hiking.

Lew is still working in Georgia Tech's administrative leadership as an Associate VP of Research and Assistant Dean. The work has been intense this year. He has helped support Georgia Tech's COVID rapid-response activities (e.g. PPE production, homegrown saliva based testing efforts) on top of the increased use of technology for both academic and research activity. There has also been a big strategic push on data driven decisions (a good thing) in which he is deeply involved. He continues to teach the Humor Genome Project class, and support Decatur Makers, the nonprofit makerspace he helped found. The makerspace has been doing inspiring work ranging from helping Atlanta Beats Covid (a grassroots PPE supply chain), providing free desks for students who are learning from home, and helping with a major social justice focused public art project. Lew also turned 60 in 2020 (Beddian birthday!), and Enid coordinated a brilliant surprise of "60 bottles of beer on the wall" that people could drop off remotely. He's done some online comedy and improv events this year, live from our living room, and that's been a significant learning experience. Cheaper beer but the hecklers are harsh. Especially the cat.

We look forward to seeing all of you on the other side of the vaccines. Until then, please don't hesitate to reach out online, and you can teach us something new that you've learned in 2020!

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May you and your loved ones have a new year full of happiness, health and peace.
Happy Belated Hanukkah. Merry Belated Christmas. Happy Belated New Year.