



Dearest Everybody,

It's that time of year again when holiday cheer is in the air, snow and ice are on the ground, and the Maguire Family Christmas letter is in your hands. In what seems to be an annual tradition now, Lenny again thought he was going to write this year's letter. I couldn't find a delicate way to tell Lenny that he has neither the wit nor eloquence to author a letter deserving our family name. So I told him that he's in charge of writing our 4<sup>th</sup> of July letter next year. Be sure to watch for THAT one... Anyhow, as I think of how to sum up the Maguire's last year there really seems to be a recurring theme of travel. And by travel, I mean Lenny and I did a lot of staying home while Grandpa Maguire and Spats came to stay with us.

Mom and Dad started the year off by taking a trip to visit their friends Jim and Kathy in Washington D.C. There they got to see all of the monuments and historic places. Dad and Jim even posed with a crazy conspiracy theorist outside the White House who was running for president. Mom stuck with posing in front of monuments. They even survived a blizzard. Not a real blizzard, mind you. Just about 3 inches of snow which brought the whole D.C. area to a stand-still. Lenny and I watched lots of TV with Grandpa and chased Spats (the dog with unending energy) around the yard for a few days.

A few weeks later Dad talked Mom into celebrating one of his favorite holidays in Chicago. Grandpa came over to tell us of our Irish heritage while Mom and Dad celebrated St. Patty's Day in Chicago with their friend Steve and cousin Bill. They showed me pictures with lots of silly outfits, a parade, and a green river. I still really don't get the point of the trip, but they really seemed to enjoy it.

Let me tell you about running. Running has to be the dumbest thing ever. Apparently people run miles on end for FUN. I mean, I could see if they were chasing a ball or doing laps in the backyard, but seriously if you are going more than a few blocks, take the car. Besides, there is no way to sniff interesting things if you are traveling at any pace faster than a mosey. Nonetheless, Mom has become a 'runner'. We kinda thought this might be a fad or a phase, but it seems to have stuck. In April, Mom tried to share her sickness with Dad. He ran a half marathon with mom. They both did well and Mom began all kinds of crazy talk about running a WHOLE marathon. Dad offered to watch.

After the run, Mom and Dad got to go to Hawaii to visit Uncle Bill and Aunt Maureen. Since they were lucky enough to have the world's most hospitable relatives (and great tour guides), they got to see and do EVERYTHING there is in Maui. Mom learned to surf (Dad never got up on the board), they biked down from the top of a volcano, and they got to snorkel with giant sea-turtles. They even came within a few feet of a GIANT stingray. Crikey! On the downside, their car got broken into and dad had his wallet stolen. Worse yet, the camera with all of their pictures was taken. Seriously. Aren't cops supposed to know better? Anyhow, Uncle Bill and Aunt Maureen made sure to help get all kinds of new pictures to memorialize the trip. Grandpa and Spats came to enjoy the April showers in South Lyon with Lenny and me. We didn't take any pictures.

As the weather started to get warmer, Mom took Dad along to her annual debate-nerd conference on Mackinac Island. I am told this was incredible as they got to stay in a huge room in the Grand Hotel. They had their very own balcony overlooking the Mackinac Bridge. Spats showed Lenny and me how to hunt moles in the backyard. Grandpa got fudge.

Once summer rolled around, Mom started to get really consumed with the whole 'running' thing again. She made Dad run the Dexter-Ann Arbor half marathon with her. He survived that to run with her in a 10k sponsored by the police in Farmington Hills. Dad won his age-group and got a plaque. Mom later told me that it was only because there were, like, 5 people in Dad's age group. Dad decided to end his running career on a high note. Mom, on the other hand, committed to running a full marathon and spent nearly every waking hour of the summertime running. Sometimes she even got up at dawn to run 15 to 20 miles. Dad just laughed and cheered her on. He said that the more she ran the less time she had to come up with 'projects' for him.

While Mom and Dad planned to do lots of camping this year, they only made it out once. But they made it a heck of a trip and booked a lovely site in Muskegon. Mom led Dad on all kinds of nature hikes in the woods and sand dunes. They even expanded their camping setup to include a nice big camping stove and a screen tent. Lenny and I enjoyed the AC with Grandpa and Spats. The screen tent sounds lovely, but I am holding out until they get a camper.

The harp was dusted off and Mom got Dad to finish tiling the rest of the house to match the kitchen. Dad isn't really all that handy with 'tools' and 'home-improvements' so he suckered Grandpa and John to come show him what to do. I think Dad was mostly just their helper. Lenny and I tried our hardest to get our snouts in the grout. The outcome is an AMAZING new floor. They say that it makes the house look a million times better and is easy to clean. All I know is there is nothing better than a nice cool tile floor on the belly during the dog days of August.

Also over the summer, Lenny went with Dad to his annual K9 certification trials in Grand Rapids and Detroit. They did all right, I guess. Lenny brought home some trophies, but it's not like any of them were first place or anything. I know you don't care, but Mom said I had to mention it. The more exciting part of that weekend was that Mom and I got to visit Grandma and Grandpa Tackebury at their cottage up north. The car ride was a little long, but it was definitely worth it once we got there. What a relaxing treat for an over-worked dog such as myself. I liked it so much that we went back again in October and I even let Lenny come with.

The fall came around which means that Dad starts to find things to do around the house so he doesn't have to listen to Mom complaining about the start of a new school year. Mom is teaching debate and Honors English this year. Somehow she is once again coaching debate. Or, as I call it, "Nerd-Herding". She has started to transition her team to a new style of debate and is getting some other schools and coaches involved, too. I think she will coach debate until she retires... Or at least until the debate community crowns her "Queen Nerd".

One of Dad's favorite autumnal activities is using his riding mower to pick up the leaves. I am pretty sure it might take twice as long as raking, but I think he just likes to ride his little tractor around. Oh, I almost forgot. Lenny learned something this fall. He learned not to mess with black cats with white stripes. Yep. Ole' Leonard got skunked at work with Dad. It stunk up their car, Dad's uniform, the police station and everything. Lenny still stinks. Hilarious.

In October, all of the running paid off. Mom ran her first marathon. Mom ran the Chicago Marathon, which was amazing not only because she ran 26.2 miles for no reason, but she did it in 90 degree heat with crazy humidity. Even though they tried to kick her off the course and make her walk, she ran to the end. Aunt Greta even went to help cheer her on with cousin Bill. Ever since she hit the finish line she has been planning her next marathon. Oh... Me? Well, Lenny and I stayed home with Grandpa and got text-message updates on Mom's race. I was told that I wouldn't like the 'Big City' anyhow.

Throughout November, Dad could not help but be reminded that his days as a twenty-something were drawing near an end. The week before his birthday, Mom pulled off a nice surprise party for him. Friends came from as far as Texas and D.C. and lots of people were there to help Dad celebrate turning 30. The next day, Dad was not sure how many of these people were his friends as he said he felt like he was going to die. Nonetheless, Dad was totally surprised and got something he NEVER thought he'd get out of Mom. A new TV. Dad has pretty much been glued to it ever since he got it and Mom says that we could park cars in the backyard and show movies. I haven't figured out the remote yet. Somebody will have to teach me and Grandpa for when Mom and Dad go on their next stupid adventure without me.

Well, I could carry on with more exciting tales, but I think it's about time to guilt mom into running around the backyard with me. I really don't even like playing that much, but you should see how ridiculous she looks when SHE chases ME around the backyard. The neighbors think it's hilarious. I hope that you and yours have a wonderful Christmas and a happy New Year.

Merry Christmas,  
Beaumont, Patrick, Hattie, and Lenny