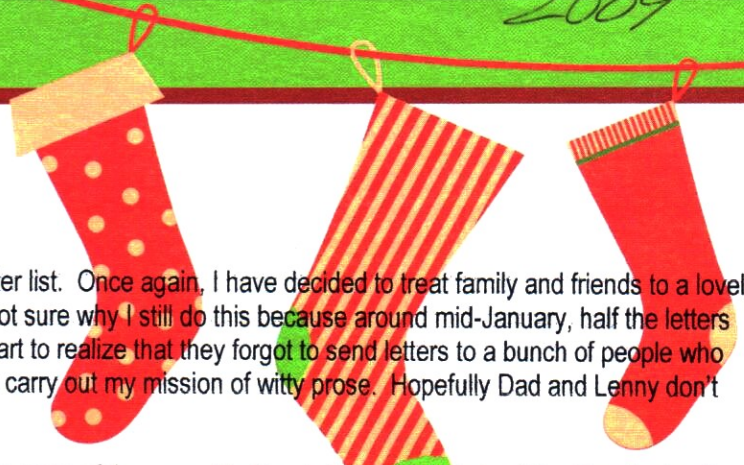


2009



Dearest Everyone,

Congratulations! You made the Maguire Christmas letter list. Once again, I have decided to treat family and friends to a lovely walk down memory lane to recap the last year. I am not sure why I still do this because around mid-January, half the letters are returned with bad addresses and Mom and Dad start to realize that they forgot to send letters to a bunch of people who should have been on the list. Yet, I will forge ahead to carry out my mission of witty prose. Hopefully Dad and Lenny don't screw up the mailing process this year.

By now, you have no doubt heard about the big exciting news of the year. On March 11th, Charlie joined the Maguire family. Since then, it has been quite an adventure around here. And by 'adventure' I mean that nobody ever sleeps, there is baby stuff all over the house, Lenny and I have been rudely banned from half the house, and 'walks' seem to be more of a special occasion than the routine activity they SHOULD be. Anyhow, more about the kid... Despite usurping all of the loving attention which used to be doted over yours truly, he isn't ALL that bad. At least he has good timing for a Maguire. He was born at 7:33p.m. I mean he waited till just after Wheel of Fortune was over to be born. How cool is that?

Perhaps most surprising to everybody is that Dad has taken a keen liking to young Charles. Dad has been working later in the afternoons and nights lately, so he spends a lot of the days with Charlie. They plan frequent 'Man-Missions' to places like Home Depot. They shop together at Babies 'R Us. And occasionally, Dad loads Charlie up in this ridiculous backpack or sling and takes Lenny and me for a stroll. Sure, I like to finally get out and stretch my legs, but you have no idea how embarrassing it is to be seen with Dad when he looks like such a dorky dad now.

Don't get me wrong, Dad isn't doing all the work. Mom helps, too. She does the fun stuff like middle-of-the night feedings, making his food, and taking him to the vet or doctor or wherever he goes. She even gave up her cutesy little sports car for a more practical Jeep. They call it the "Chuck Wagon".

On a side note, you may wonder why this year's letter doesn't follow my normal chronological style of recapping the year. Mostly that's because since we have 'The Baby' we don't do all the crazy stuff we used to. Everything seems to center around 'The Baby'. For example in April pretty much the only thing we did was NOT sleep. Dad took a few weeks off and took turns with Mom staying up all night with Charlie. I guarded the door to the nursery whenever Mom and Dad were in there.

In May, Charlie started going to church and got baptized. Given his parents, he could probably use all the divine intervention he can get. They also decided to drive over to Holland, MI and take in the Tulip Festival parade. Normally, I would be disappointed to have been left out of yet another family activity. But seriously... Who thinks it is a good idea to put an 8 week old baby in a car, drive 3 hours, watch a parade, and then drive 3 hours home? Needless to say, I was GLAD to miss that car full of tears.

Once summer hit, Mom and Dad tried to keep up with their ridiculous pastimes. As if it weren't weird enough to leave the house and sleep in a little camper, they decided to throw in a sleepless baby. In June they went to Lakeport State Park in Port Huron for a night. Allegedly, Charles was so well-behaved that the people around them never even knew Mom and Dad had a baby with them. A few weeks later, they all went to Tawas State Park, this time for two whole nights. Charles wasn't quite so quiet on this trip from what I hear. It looks like Charlie is going to be a pretty good camper over all. Mom and Dad dunked him in two Great Lakes and he loved Lake Huron but hated Lake Michigan (there's no accounting for good taste in this family). Charlie saw his first lighthouse and Mom thought it was a good idea to climb all the way to the top, baby in tow. Their biggest camping trip was in Muskegon where they stayed for three nights with Uncle John, Aunt Sue, Tommy, Maria, and Claudia. I was jealous that their dog, Jagger, got to go on the camping trip. But then I found out that it rained a lot. No thanks.

By this time you may have noticed a common thread missing in most Maguire Family events: the beautiful dog (and Lenny). Not to cry my own river, but I must say that I have NOT been receiving the adoration which I deserve and have become accustomed to. It seems as though I have become a second rate citizen in my own home. I get left out of pretty much all the big events and trips these days. They are treating me like... like... well like Lenny would deserve. Well, the upshot is that

Grandma and Grandpa Maguire come to stay with me a lot now. THOSE are some people who know how to spoil...er...treat a dog right. Grandpa M might have occasionally snuck me some ice cream.

By around August Dad got excited because they promised him and Lenny a new police car at work. It got to be a family joke because there was a new excuse every week and the car would never show up. Lenny got to ride in some real jalopies while he waited for his new ride. It was hilarious. As it was the new car would not come until mid-October... and it would be broken already within a few weeks. Anyways Lenny would not stop bragging about his stupid new car for the longest time. Dad has some crazy button on his belt that lets Lenny out of the car automatically if Dad needs him (why this would happen, I don't know). I asked for a special button so I could open the back gate and let Lenny run away for good. I haven't gotten a response to this request yet.

Also in August, Charlie learned a new trick: sleeping. Everybody was all excited when he slept through his first full night without wreaking havoc on the household. Dad took Charles and Mom for a celebratory breakfast at Big Boy the following morning. (I told him he shouldn't have gone all-out on such a lavish meal so early on in the game.) The whole 'sleeping-through-the-night' thing only lasted a few weeks before Charles started getting teeth. He got his first two teeth on the bottom and this apparently was not fun for him.

In September we finally turned the page into fall and started to put that dreadful warm weather behind us. My normally joyous and charming demeanor brightened even more as the nights grew cooler and I could finally go outside and enjoy myself again. Mom and Dad took off for a long weekend in New Mexico. I'm not sure why they think they are too good for the old Mexico, but Lenny and I stayed home with Grandma and Grandpa Tackebury. This was a little exciting for EVERYBODY. Mom seemed all nervous about being away from Charles for a couple days (um, hello you don't hesitate to leave ME behind... besides, he can't even walk. Not like that kid's going anywhere soon...). Grandma and Grandpa Tackebury were a little unfamiliar with hanging out with Lenny and me. It worked out pretty well. Everybody survived and a lot of us even had a real good time. I tried telling Grandpa T that we leave Lenny locked in the garage, but he didn't buy it. He might have snuck me some treats.

The weather continued to become delightful. I was enjoying more and more time outdoors while Dad came up with more and more excuses for not picking up the leaves. Charlie dressed as a Turkey for Halloween (not to name names but somebody was a little too chunky for his costume) and even got to be in his very first parade. South Lyon has an annual Pumpkin-Fest parade each year. Charlie's daycare had a float in the parade and all the kids were walking in the parade. Mom and Dad pushed Charlie in his cart thing, but bailed out halfway through the parade 'cause it was pouring. Sir Charles started getting more teeth. This apparently means less sleeping at night for some reason. He also started to army crawl which was a disappointment. I had come to appreciate Charlie as I would a bonfire, fine artwork, or carnies; they are fine to look at, but there is no reason to get within arm's reach. So now Charlie keeps finding it necessary to crawl up to me and try to touch me. Unnecessary. Lenny seems to like it though. He keeps licking Charlie - which is hilarious because then Mom yells at Lenny.

I know this letter was woefully short, but I must start to wrap it up. Charlie has recently gone from his 'army crawl' to crawling up on his knees and standing up with whatever he can find to pull himself up. On one hand it is funny to watch Mom and Dad have to chase him all over the house. That kid is getting into EVERYTHING. On the other hand, I have to watch my back or he'll sneak right up on me. Chuck - Mom hates when I call him that - seems to think floppy dog ears are toys. I am off to find a new hiding spot. I hope this letter finds you well and that you have a Merry Christmas and a Joyous New Year.

Regards,

Beaumont and The Maguires

(and Lenny)

P.S. If you would like to hear me read my letter dramatically and see more pictures of the family, check out my movie on the family blog: www.hattiepatrickcharlie.blogspot.com