

Dearest Everyone,

It's that time of year again. The days are shorter, the hustle and bustle is in full swing, and I have decided to grace you with my annual Christmas letter again. I must admit I am less inspired to write this year as life in the Maguire household is starting to involve a lot less cool stuff, and a lot more "Charlie this" or "Charlie that". If Lenny had any kind of grasp on the English language, I would have let him write this letter. Luckily, his ignorance means you get to enjoy my witty prose. I will try to rally for your sake.

This year started off great. It was cold and snowy outside-- perfect for a beautiful alpine dog like myself. Things were nice and quiet, until young Charles became more and more mobile. He was crawling everywhere and by the time March got here everybody was celebrating his first birthday AND the fact that he was walking. I learned that when you have a one year old walking human in your house, NOBODY is safe. The lad is very curious and likes to inspect, play with, or yank on anything or anybody who may be within reach. Especially if they have a tail and big floppy ears. I started spending more and more time upstairs until he figured those out, too.

By May, we were all tired of running away from The Monster, I mean, Young Charles, and Mom and Dad decided it was time to start thinking about a house with more space. There was a really cool house down the road that they had their hearts set on. After finally putting a for sale sign in front of OUR house, the dream house sold. So now we are apparently still trying to sell, but we don't have a place to move to. I am already planning to move in with Grandpa Maguire. There's a guy who knows how to treat a dog.

As spring turned to summer, Mom and Dad ran the Dexter-Ann Arbor half-marathon, but this time, they ran separately. Usually, Dad runs with Mom and his cheerful, "I'm not tired" chatter makes Mom really angry by the end of the race. Dad ran very fast and tired himself right out. He says he has retired from running since he ran his fastest time ever (not saying much). He could barely walk for a week after. Mom, on the other hand, used the race as another training run for her second marathon. In September, Mom and Dad went to Toronto where Mom ran the Lakeshore Marathon. We were all really proud of her and she did a great job. Or at least, so I am told. Apparently you need a passport to go to Canada now.

Besides running, Mom, Dad and Charlie did a lot of camping this summer, too. They went to Wilderness State Park where they took Charlie for a 20 mile round trip bike ride from the campground to town and back. Charlie enjoyed the first 15 miles of the trip, and then voiced his displeasure (very loudly) until he got out of his bike seat. They also went to Tawas State Park where they camped with Grandma and Grandpa Tackebury. I am pretty sure that Grandma and Grandpa T. are obsessed with Charlie. I think Charlie could burn their house down and they would be amazed at how he was a genius for harnessing the power of fire. Needless to say this camping trip was a success. In August, they took the camper to Harrisville on Lake Huron where they camped with the rest of the Maguire clan. Grandpa and Grandma M. got to use their kayaks. Dad and Uncle John took the jet-skis out until Dad broke one. Aunt Bridget, Maria and Claudia were all smart enough to stick to dry land. Of course I didn't get to enjoy any camping since Mom and Dad have such a tiny camper... and one without air conditioning. I stayed home with Lenny, Grandpa M's dog Spats, and our new friend Cooper. It was delightful.

At the end of the summer, Dad and Lenny took a couple trips away for K9 certifications. Lenny brought home some more trophies and I sent off a nice letter suggesting they look into his use of performance-enhancing

drugs. I have not received any reply as of yet, but I am sure it is coming. Perhaps one of these days they will send someone to do a surprise drug test. I can hardly wait.

September rolled around and brought all kinds of changes for everybody. Mom took on a new 6 period day at work which means she has twice as many students as last year. While she complains about all of the papers she has to grade, I think she likes the challenge. Dad went to working 12 hour shifts. When he works, he is gone half the day, but he gets a ton more days off. Upside is that he gets to spend a lot more time at home with Charlie and me during the week. The downside is he still brings Lenny home with him. Oh, and with all the changes in work schedules, Charlie even switched things up. He is in a new daycare now. It's called the Learning Tree and everybody seems to like the switch. Charlie seems to have gotten comfortable there as he has begun to talk like crazy and – get this – even bit a kid there. I don't think I need to tell you what happens to me if I try to bite somebody. Total double standard.

Charlie celebrated Halloween twice between the party at school and his actual Trick-or-Treating adventures—once as a pirate and once as a St. Bernard. I think it is beyond obvious which outfit was better. Unfortunately, the poor kid still doesn't really get the whole Halloween thing. He only hit up a few houses before he got bored. No biggie. Mom and Dad were going to eat all of his candy anyhow. Speaking of holidays, Christmas is another one that poor kid doesn't understand. He knows who Santa is and loves to say his name and say, "Ho Ho Ho"; however, whenever Mom and Dad take him to see Santa, Charlie gets all scared and shy. Nonetheless, I am sure that kid is going to get all kinds of stuff he doesn't even deserve when Christmas Day rolls around.

As another year draws to an end, I must tell you things are changing quickly at the Maguire home. Charlie is starting to bust out actual sentences. Well, at least Mom and Dad think so. I swear you need a code-talker to translate that boy's jibberish to English. He has moved on to running non-stop and napping less everyday. Nobody in our home is safe. I think the days of Dad getting his afternoon nap are coming to an end. Mom takes Charlie on all kinds of awesome adventures every weekend so that Dad can sleep. I don't want to call him a Mama's Boy, but that kid seems pretty partial to his mom. They have a lot of fun together. Lenny and I have finally found a common ground in the lack of attention we receive these days. We are planning a revenge that I cannot speak of in this letter. It may rival the turkey eating incident of which some of you may be aware.

As much as I would love to complain even more, I am running out of letter. That and it really has been a pretty great year. We all hope this letter finds you and your family well!

Merry Christmas!

Beaumont, Hattie, Patrick, Charlie

...and Lenny.