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# JANICEK CHRISTMAS

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**Good tidings, figgy pudding, gay apparel, and Omicron!**



If there's one thing that the Coronavirus has given us, it's the Coronavirus. Elise and I have been feeling a bit under the weather this week so we both took a take-home COVID test the morning of December 22nd. We both tested positive. Thankfully we don't feel awful. Just a bit under the weather. This really puts a damper on our plans for Christmas though. Plans for Steve and Joanne to drive down to Austin from Des Moines will change. Elise was supposed to go spend a couple weeks with my mom later this month to help with mom's recovery from knee replacement surgery.

The mood around here has flipped onto its head. But, if there's one thing we've learned from our time here on this spinning rock, it's that when life gives you lemons, you turn them into limes, slice them, and squeeze them into your Corona.

Speaking of cold & refreshing drinks, it's supposed to be 85-degrees on Christmas Day. That's the second hottest that's ever been recorded in Austin on Christmas Day. I think I'd rather have another "snowpocalypse" like we had here in February when Texas lost power and water for days. Flushing toilets with melted snow is a bit more adventurous than having to mow the yard the week of the Winter Solstice.

This year has been a real hootenanny. The holidays were amazing, as usual. In mid-December, my employer (Under Armour) divested a subsidiary of the company, of which I was a part, to a private equity firm. Fast forward to early February and said private equity firm made the decision to get out of the media and advertising sales business, so my team was laid off. Thankfully I was paid a generous retainer for my tenure during the divestiture, and again a severance for the layoff, so we were okay financially. However, yours truly was still unemployed.

And then Snowpocalypse came. It was beautiful as it blanketed us in 6 inches of stark white snow. But it shut most of Texas down. That made for a chaotic couple weeks of finding water for drinking, cleaning and bathing. And it made for some work in cleaning up dead trees and bushes around the yard.

In true Texas form, warmer months were soon among us and life kept keeping on. School for the girls was in full swing and I found myself interviewing and quickly landed a new job.

In April, Maly turned 15 and Mara turned 9. Both girls continue to amaze us and make us proud. Both are doing great in school and lacrosse. Mara's in 4th grade and is at that point where she's having to figure out how to balance her time in learning the important things that'll carry over into the years ahead of her, and navigate social constructs. She's still our very sensitive, loving, and empathic child. I still get a bit nervous that soon she's going to get struck by a bolt of independence and grow out of her admirable benevolence.

Maly is a sophomore in high school. She's doing really well in her classes and has settled in with her social circles and in lacrosse as her pastime of choice. She plays on the school's varsity team and on a traveling club team. I don't want to jinx it, but we think she's very high up there on the list of candidates for team captain next year.

We're both so very proud of our girls. It's baffling and heartbreaking how quickly they've grown. I've acknowledged it, admitted it, and even written about how fast life happens. It's so vivid when you witness the lives of growing children. And I guess that's a big part of what life's all about. You do the best you can in living your own life while doing your damndest to help the next generation do the same.







Elise and I are doing swell. We celebrated our 20th anniversary this past September. Man, talk about time flying. I guess that's a sign that we're making a good go at this life together. We take its ups and downs and trudge along, hand-in-hand. And between one or both of us, we'll invariably find a way to laugh about something on this long, strange trip called life. And I guess that's another big part of what life's all about... Try to find the humor in whatever situation you find yourself in. There's not a whole lot in this life that has to be taken *too* seriously. I firmly believe that's what has helped us grow together. And I know for damn sure it's what has helped Elise put up with me for these 20 years.

Elise has been staying busy with her job as Studio Manager for Jetter Photo, president of the Bowie High School Girls' Lacrosse board of directors, homeroom mom coordinator and volunteer at Mara's school, full-time mom, and the always-loving and beautiful wife of yours truly.

As for me, well, I still run a lot. I'll probably run until my legs just won't let me do it anymore. Running gives me the chance to get out into nature, get some alone time, get into my own

head, and push all sorts of boundaries. The family and I humped it up to Massachusetts this past October so I could run the 125th Boston Marathon. I had a great race and was fortunate to come in at a 3:04:10. My time qualified me for the 126th Boston Marathon, which will take place on its usual 3rd Monday this upcoming April.

This should be an interesting Christmas and one for us to always remember. It'll probably be very low-key with a lot of fluids and huddling on the couch to watch Christmas movies. We'll endure a COVID Christmas, but at least we'll be together. We won't be able to see our friends and family, but they'll be in our hearts, just like they always are. Know that we love you all and hope that you have a heart-felt and very Merry Christmas! And don't forget to tell or show the ones you love that you love them!

With our love and all that other mushy crap,

Jack, Elise, Maly & Mara