
JANICEK CHRISTMAS



HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM OUR HOME TO YOURS

Merry Christmas from the Janicek family. We hope this holiday season finds you and your loved ones with full hearts and, if you're in Texas, in an air conditioned structure with ample electrolytes.

Thankfully this is our year to spend Christmas with Elise's parents in Des Moines, Iowa where they experience "seasons." Unfortunately it's not looking like it's going to be a white Christmas this year, but at least the air temperature is cold and crisp and feels more like Christmas than washing cars in flip flops weather like it does back home.

It's December 23rd as I write this. Like most years, I struggle to muster up the gumption and mental fortitude to write the newsletter because it's always difficult to recount what happened in the past 12 months, and most of my memory needs to be reserved to do really important things, like remembering if I wear 1.25+ or 1.50+ magnified readers, if I scheduled my colonoscopy, and what I was setting out to do when I walked into the garage with a socket wrench and a fist full of zip ties.



I was commiserating with Maly about having to write the newsletter, and she said something like, "yeah, we didn't really do a whole lot this year." I looked at her for a minute, wondering how, at such a vibrant age, she couldn't easily recount all the joyous and memorable recent memories of her young life. And then I asked her if she needed any zip ties.



In January I started a new job. I'm now the Director of Operations for a metal roofing supply company. It was during the Christmas season last year when I'd found myself depressed and unfulfilled with my then-current job, and pretty much the previous 10 years of jobs. Now everyday when I get home from work, I feel like, as my friend Michele used to say, I'd made a fair pitcher of lemonade. I've sold hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of countless tons of steel and custom roofing trim, I've learned to drive a forklift, I now know what a bill of lading is, and I'm up-to-date on my tetanus vaccine.

In February Elise turned 50. I think that might've been what I needed the socket wrench and zip ties for. I can't speak for Elise because, if you know Elise, she speaks enough for the both of us, but I like to think that age is just a number. And I didn't want to make a huge fuss about her turning 50 because I'm wise enough now to not remind her of how significantly older she is than me.

A week after Elise's birthday I paced the 3:15 group for the Austin Marathon. That was a race that I thought was going to end my running career. It was a tough day, I came in two minutes slower than planned, and at mile 21 I'd told myself I was never running one of these "&\$#&@\$#@ing mother @%&&^!#ing &#^&y things again." So in September I signed up to run my fifth Boston Marathon.

In March we flew up to Cleveland to see Maly and the UC Golden Eagles in an early season lacrosse tournament. We all went back to Charleston, WV after the tournament and spent a little time with Maly and her friends and roommates. Maly had to go back to classes while Elise, Mara and I were on Spring Break. We drove out to Snowshoe Mountain on the eastern side of the state for some mountain lodging and snow skiing for a couple days. Then it was another road trip to the northern part of the state for another UC game against Davis & Elkins. Then we all headed back to Charleston where we were able to spend the last couple days of our spring break with Maly before we said our goodbyes and had to leave Maly at school and head back home.



In April Elise and I replaced most of the joists and decking on the backyard deck. We had a bunch of leftover 2x6's, so I built a large above-ground planter box and Elise planted peppers, squash and tomatoes. The girls had their respective birthdays. Maly turned 19 and Mara turned 14. We've learned that during the week

between the girls' birthdays is prime for dewberry harvesting, so we've made it a little tradition to go dewberry hunting. Last year we brought home over 10 pounds of dewberries and I couldn't give away cobblers fast enough. These year we intentionally brought home half that amount of berries and I made half as many cobblers. And yours truly ate most of said cobblers.

Maly came home in May after finishing her freshman year at the University of Charleston. We had her spend her first year at college sans car, and since she was home for summer, everyone who was legal to drive needed a car, so we bought Maly a car that she was able to drive back up to West Virginia when the fall semester started.



We took a week and flew up to Des Moines in Early August to spend time with Steve and Joanne. We escaped the heat of home and helped with some house chores, went to an Iowa Cubs game, the Indianola Balloon Classic, and played with baby goats at Howell's in Cumming.

The summer just sort of flew by. I have a tendency to get depressed after a summer break or the Christmas holidays when life has to get back to "normal." I was really depressed when Maly moved to college last summer, and again when the holidays were over last year and I had to go back to a job that I didn't like. So, to keep myself busy I learned how to weld. Jared (Maly's 340-pound offensive lineman boyfriend) came over one evening during the summer and sort of accidentally broke a bench that belonged to our outdoor dining set. It was an old and inherited set that needed to be replaced and Jared gifted me with the opportunity to learn how to make new deck furniture out of steel.

The girls went back to school in August. Maly started her sophomore year at the University of Charleston where she's majoring in business and plays defense for the lacrosse team. She's in Honors College and is a member of the local chapters of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and Delta Phi Delta. Mara started her 8th grade year, and last year in middle school. She plays offense for the Southwest Austin Girls lacrosse team and, if she chooses to, will play for Bowie High School next year. It's baffling to think that she'll be in high school next year. I'm always reminded of what I think is the best parenting advice I'd ever received: it doesn't get any easier and it doesn't get any harder. It just gets different. I guess if I were going to add to that parenting advice for any of you who may be new in the role: you're probably going to need a lot of zip ties.



And like most of us when we age, the Jeep's rear end went out a few weeks ago. Elise and I have owned that Jeep for decades. Because of that the time it would take to source the parts and the cost of repairs, we

decided to garage the Jeep for the time being and buy ourselves a gently-used late model truck. Merry Christmas to me, I guess.

Elise and I are doing fine and dandy, adapting as usual to our ever-evolving life together. We both work at our respective roofing companies, still not really sure how we both got into the roofing industry. Jobs, the kids, the cats and the dog keep us busy. Next year we'll celebrate our 25th anniversary. I don't think we have any plans just yet, but that's kind of how we've always rolled.

We hope this Christmas finds you happy, healthy and warm and with the ones you love.

We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

With our love,

Jack, Elise, Maly & Mara

