

YAWN! Here we are at the bitter end of the holiday season and I'm still racking my brains trying to come with some sort of theme for our Holiday Letter this year. I've just been so **occupied** that I feel like **99%** of my time has been stolen by someone **anonymous**. At first I thought I'd do some topical or political joke, but there really aren't any **entertaining tweets** or other funny things happening with our elected officials or potential candidates. Plus we've so busy it's like we're trapped in a **tsunami** moving **faster than light**. Then I thought I could do something on international events, but sure enough, I **captured** no news there. I looked online thinking I could get some entertainment news, but even Hollywood has lost it's **sheen**. I guess I'll just have to skip straight to the boring family news. What a dull year. Hopefully you won't fall asleep reading the boring

## The 2011 Lefton-Steinbart Holiday Letter

Hannah graduated with Decatur High School's class of "oh-lehm" (which is hipster for "11") and Enid hardly cried at all. That is until she saw Toy Story 3. Pixar should put some kind of emotional warning label on that movie. It was nice to have Lew's sister Linda visit and help celebrate the big event. Hannah earned a full tuition scholarship and got into the honors program at UGA. She started this fall as a Chemistry major living in the dorms. She ended this fall as an International Affairs major and has already been scouting off campus apartments. Her roommate Tristin is great and although she hasn't yet developed full Lefton-Steinbart immunity, she is able to spend hours on end with our family without nausea. Hannah is still thinking seriously about Law school and she won "Outstanding Attorney" when the DHS mock trial team competed at State. Linda and Charna treated Hannah to a graduation trip to New York last summer and she went back there to visit a friend over fall break. As a result her hipster cred is legit.

Monica and Natalie did not immediately expand into Hannah's room, although the extra bed across the hall has occasionally provided a good place for one person to cool off after an invigorating round of 16-year-old-twin-girl-screaming-match. The drama in our house is nothing unusual, but it seems to be flaring up a bit more this fall as Natalie and Monica have *every single class together*. The competition sundae is topped off with a creamy, whipped additional work load of several AP courses and a sprinkling of parallel parking stress that comes with driver's licenses. But don't think that Monica and Natalie are always at each other's throats. In fact, they hang out as close friends, along with a great group of other kids, including two other sets of twin girls in their grade! They both are active participants in the church youth group and they're doing some excellent work on their Girl Scouts Gold Award (I'm told this is like an Eagle Scout for Boy Scouts, but cooler, since they're girls).

Monica continues to play flute in both concert and marching band. She's also sticking with Lacrosse as a sport. She travelled to Orlando this summer with a friend and her family and she's grown into an excellent improviser, as one of the senior members of the Decatur yoUth Comedy Krewe (D.U.C.K.). She's also knitting now and has begun a project to read every Agatha Christie book. Monica got a Nikon camera this year and has been so busy taking pictures she barely has time to upload them to Facebook. She may actually have an alter ego as a superhero, which we think she gets from her Mom's side.

Natalie still plays soccer and Enid and I had the pleasure of seeing her score at one of the competitive club games. She has spent many afternoons practicing and conditioning and I'm pretty sure she's the one who put the women's world cup games on our DVR. Natalie plays oboe in concert band and mellophone in marching band. She's passed on to All State band and she plans to tour and perform in Europe next summer with the Georgia Ambassadors of Music. Natalie relaxes with Sudoku and enjoys sewing, too. She may actually have an alter ego as a supervillian (Monica's nemesis), which is likely a Lefton trait.

Starting in January, we are taking in an 18 year old boy for a few months. (Note to those of you who still remember the fake news in our 1996 letter about getting a boa constrictor: THIS IS NOT A JOKE.) His name is Daniel Gartrell and we are friends with his family via the church that Enid and the girls belong to. Daniel's parents are missionaries and they are being called back to Brazil, but their family really wants to have Daniel finish his senior year at Decatur. They needed a residence in the school district, we had a empty bedroom, so that's the story. Daniel is a great kid who will be going on a scholarship to the Naval Academy next fall. The girls and he are friends from youth and they're all being really good sports about this. When Hannah comes home for breaks, we can accommodate someone in the basement and the whole deal will just be through mid-

summer. We figured that if survived our demon cat Bo, this will be a piece of cake. And if Daniel survives Bo, he'll have what it takes to succeed in Annapolis!

Our kitchen remodel was completed in 2011 and we love it, of course. Now when the kids re-enact the Food network TV show *Chopped*, they have ample counter space to figure out how to combine avocado and Cheetos. Irene made her traditional visit for Thanksgiving and we also took a long weekend at St. Simons island on the Georgia coast. But the big trip this year was over Spring Break, where Enid and Lew chaperoned all 3 girls and dozens of other kids as the World Travelling Decatur High School Band ventured to Chiapas Mexico. We stayed with host families from the Fray Victor Maria Flores School and the Friendship Force in Tuxtla Gutiérrez. It was great to see the kids perform at several venues, including live on TV, to explore Mayan ruins, to eat fantastic food, and to make friends with many warm hospitable people. And this coming spring, many of those families will be coming to Decatur to be hosted by us.

Enid took over the reins as a co-organizer for her Bunco group this year. Yet somehow, she still never hit the big money; she really needs to learn to cheat better. Her work as the Undergraduate Advisor for Math at Georgia Tech continues to provide her with equal doses of satisfaction and frustration, depending on whether or not degree petitions are due. Enid hit a milestone birthday this year, which was nifty. She celebrated by going to Hilton Head with her college buddies Sue, Lynn, and Karin. Lew wasn't there, but he's pretty sure there was a lot of drinking and adjusting of the thermostat. Enid is still an avid runner, which is good for her bones. And she's active in the church, which is good for her soul. She's also gotten on a bread making kick, which is good for breakfast. And finally, here's some news for those Steinbart fans out there (and lets face it, we're all Steinbart fans...), Ellen has moved to Pittsburgh and remarried a lucky guy named Dan Possumato. This should probably be on the list of the top ten best things to happen in Pennsylvania this year.

It should not come as a surprise to you that Lew likes a good April Fool's joke. He typically sends out an email to the School of Math every year with some silly idea that sounds kind of plausible but not really. You can see past ones at <http://people.math.gatech.edu/~llefton/aprilfool/>. This year, he fabricated an Institute Committee on Social Media, which stated that faculty were required to use Twitter and Facebook and that their postings would be used for tenure and promotion decisions. Apparently it was picked up as a real story by a local news site and then it went viral causing the campus Communications and Marketing to take the site down, but not before it made the MSNBC and the Chronicle of Higher Education April Fool roundups. In case there was any doubt, this officially means Lew's jokes have now been circulated and read far more widely than any theorem he has proved. Sigh. Lew's job at Georgia Tech is still heavy on the IT and he is still enjoying the challenge. He continues to work on his project that explores the use of improvisational comedy to enhance technical innovation and of course, he still travels around telling math jokes, including a nice visit to Portland last year. Lew is finishing out his term as the DHS Band president and he is also now on the board of the Decatur Education Foundation (donate at [decatureducationfoundation.org](http://decatureducationfoundation.org)).

Zzzzzzz. Huh? I'm up! I'm up! I'm up! I must have fallen asleep writing this boring letter. So tired.... Come and visit us and we'll **say goodbye to Jobs** and show you around ATL. We promise to not nod off in mid-sent.....zzzzzzZZZ

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May you and your loved ones year have a new year full of health and joy.  
Happy Hanukkah! Merry Christmas! Happy New Year!