

Hello Dear Friends,

Hey there! Hi there! Ho there! (those three phrases should be read in rapid succession, so if you did not read them in that manner, please restart reading this correspondence.) As we have established in previous years: me here; you there (wherever there may be). At this most festive time of the year, I wish I could be together with each of you, sitting in front of a roaring fire, taking in the beauty of the Christmas tree (now I hope your tree has solid multi-color lights as those are truly the more festive; clear lights don't let my imagination wander...and I know you want my imagination to wander) and once again sipping our own individual cups of hot chocolate with mini-marshmallows (we need our separate cups as we have learned in the past few years of the dangers of infectious diseases and invasive species). Since we can't be together, I'm glad I could bring this executive memo into your homes and hearts. Please make sure to read it aloud with family and friends (utilization of hand gestures and various voice tones during the presentation of this memo is acceptable and encouraged).

To say that I have been anxiously awaiting writing this executive memo to you since at least June is an incredible understatement. It is such an honor and privilege to bring you my thoughts and feelings from the past year. So please sit back, grab your cup of hot cocoa (with the required mini-marshmallows) and prepare to be dazzled.

In considering my holiday communication to all of you this year, I considered the standard letter that I have sent you in the past but felt that utilizing some of my engineering computational paper would put a more formal bow on these festivities. And with all of this excitement, I hope I remember to address your interoffice envelopes correctly. We all know how Peter reacts when he's told he didn't put a cover page on his TPS report so I can't imagine how he would respond if he receives someone else's memo instead of his own.

I primarily work from home, so most of my interoffice memos sent and penalty flags thrown (more on penalty flags later in this memo) are in the direction of the gremlin in my home, a/k/a my daughter. I have shared with you in the past how I would go into my cabinets and items would be out of place with labels not facing outward. This year the gremlin has stepped up her game, adding googly eyes to the spices. While this is very disturbing enough, the gremlin also leaves notes now implying that the granulated garlic powder is the superior spice (especially over the oregano). This is pure insanity as we all know the garlic salt is the dominant spice. Oh, the naïveté of youth.

Since the gremlin has become more active and more devious with her profuse laughing when she tries to pull pranks on the management in this establishment, it has been determined by the powers that be that the gremlin should be classified as an invasive species. As we all know, an invasive species adversely habitats and could cause enviromental and/or economic damage. Some of the enviromental damage that my gremlin has caused during the past year includes acting as a tornado, leaving things all over the place; blocking the bean

bag chair from being used; multiple hazardous spills of water; and the remnants of meals of the past found on the floor or in the couch.

Each year, I hear from the recipients of this letter how much they love when we look back at my personal statistics for this year\*. While I tried my hardest, my results demonstrate a mixed bag when reviewed year-over-year. I guess maybe I have lost a step this year as my gremlin continues to call me "Oldie" and laugh when I can't remember a word or bring up aches and pains or general consequences of aging.

- Completed, on average, 74.7% of the activities I have listed on my weekly to-do lists; this is down from 78.6% in 2022 and 81.2% in 2021
- Read 9.25 books and 37 magazines (A number of those magazines are the ones published by AARP. As many of you are aware, I gambled "all-in" around three years ago by investing in the five-year membership in AARP and so far my risk taking is paying off. Jackpot! While I'm on the subject of gambling, isn't the Sphere in Las Vegas adorable when it does its face emojis, especially the new ones with the holiday sweater?)
- Washed 74 loads of laundry, up from 68 in 2022 and down from 75 loads in 2021; some of the loads were from me getting more ketchup from my hot dogs on my clothes. As we established in last year's letter, hot dogs are not not not a sandwich. Also, to reiterate from last year, I am not a monster because I like ketchup (not catsup) on my hot dogs. I will not waver from this stance and nothing except a \$2.4 billion Powerball win will make me edit any chapter of my story so far.
- Scanned over 80,000 photographic slides.

:)

In addition to all of these mixed result accomplishments (for final year updates and an infographic on my final 2023 statistics, please feel free to visit me at @stealthduck13 on Twitter in January), As of the writing of this letter, I am sorry to say that my goal of finding \$20 in bills and coins lying helplessly on the ground this year will most likely not happen. As of December 15, I have found \$12.52 in coins (the bills have been hiding from me). That's over \$0.03 per day! (What are people thinking leaving all of this money out in the open?). Now you need to take a moment, close your eyes, and think about what wild adventures you could do with \$0.03. Be sure to let me know what you would do with this wonderful bounty of riches!

Now I know in previous years you all had fun trying to figure out how many of each denomination of monies I found and are squirming in your seat right now (hopefully not in a hard wooden chair where you might slide off and injure yourself) for me to share with you the break down. Since the year is not over yet, I don't think it's fair for me to share the denominations yet but will let you know that as of now, I have found a Canadian quarter and nickel and a Russian coin (none of these coins will not be included in the grand totals for the year due to the variations and uncertainties of the monetary exchange system). All of these coins and bills fill up 2/3 of the coin jar that the gremlin...I mean my daughter...made for me a couple years back. As I have previously mentioned, the jar is adorned with a gem on top and wrapped in glittery green paper. As with last

year, I am sure that you, your family and friends sitting around the dinner table can easily figure out the mix of coins that make up my finds for the year. I will also post the totals on Twitter after the turn of the new year to share with you the final 2023 numbers. This is so exciting! (and profitable!) You never know, I might even make a few charts and graphs to share.

As I discussed last year with you, I do not buy into the commercialization of Christmas as many do. That's why I like to spend time looking at what people are giving away on free telephone applications (charges may apply on rotary telephones) like "Freebie Alert". There have been some great things available during this past year:

- Free Box of Plastic Medallions with the Likeness of the Pope for Whatever You Can Imagine = First of all, who are these people to be giving something away and asking me to imagine what to do with it. That's really just not fair. But if I am having to imagine what to do with plastic pope medallions, the sky's the limit with what they could be used for.
- Penn Tennis Ball = Similar to the tweezers that were also being advertised by the same person, the cost of gas alone would not be worth the 48.3 mile trip to get them...or would the trip be an adventure I could share with generations to come?
- Attention: Funky Soil Lovers = I don't even want to know who these funky soil lovers are, why they are funky soil lovers and the usage of the funky soil.
- Wasp Nest = Full with wasps, easily transportable.
- Dead Plant = Probably just needed some funky soil.

It's now time for me to bring up a couple of the most concerning topics of the past year...things that might have an effect of our nation for years to come and I need you to have a debate with your family at Christmas dinner, come to a consensus and report back. I will maintain your responses in my spreadsheets:

- A recent Spirit airlines flight found a man sitting near the back climbing over the seat backs in order to get off of the plane quicker than many other people. While we know Spirit Air can drive people to new levels of crazy (Exhibit 1: Almost any of the comedy duo Frangela's "Idiot of the Week" podcast), please debate whether this man climbing over seatbacks was being creative or in severe breach of airplane departure protocol.
- Two spotless giraffe were born during 2023. One was in a zoo in Tennessee and the other in the wild in Namibia. First of all, ponder the incredible unlikelyhood of one spotless giraffe, much less two being born in one year. Your item for debate: Are spotted giraffe the wave of the future and will this create a desire for more designer giraffe in the future?
- Back in April, a hot shot seventh grader in Michigan took control of a school bus when the driver fainted. Now it's admirable that the child took over to keep all on the bus (and those in the surrounding community) safe but did he go too far. In a poor display of journalism, there was no mention if the child was given a ticket for having no license or registration. We can't have seventh graders driving all over the place. It's of great concern to me and has been causing me to only take

hour long naps instead of 75 minute naps. And I can't imagine that this child did not watch season 2, episode 14 of the great show "CHiPs" and not want to emulate it and have Officer Jon Baker save them. Please debate what sort of response should be given to this child for his actions.

- Finally, and I know it will be a contentious debate and can cause rifts in your family in the years to come but I need everyone to convince their families that hot dogs are a sandwich and that ketchup is allowable on a hot dog. And if you really want to ramp up the chance for violence at the table, bring up that only New England top split hot dog rolls should be used for their hot dogs.

Now it is time that I'm sure many of you are very excited about...my list of favorite Christmas books. While Santa's suit may be well red, these fun books are philosophical and funny and can help get anyone into the Christmas spirit. So, without any further ado, here are my top Christmas books (not listed in any particular order):

- Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Sleigh (Mo Willems) – The pigeon turns 20 this year and yet he still does not realize that he won't get to drive the bus or the sleigh, get a cookie or stay up late.
- Minnie and Moo: The Night Before Christmas (Denys Cazet) – Minnie and Moo look to spread Christmas cheer by delivering presents. The farmer remains confused and mistakes them for the neighbors.
- The Star in the Christmas Play (Lynne Marie) – Raffi the giraffe is disappointed that his neck is too long to play any of the key roles in the savannah Christmas pageant. It's a stretch but he makes the most of the situation.
- Amelia Bedelia Wraps It Up (Herman Parish) – Amelia Bedelia confuses things once again but does have an intriguing design for a homemade snow globe at the end of the book.
- Clifford's Christmas (Norman Bridwell) – A monstrously huge red dog walks around during Christmas time and no one seems to worry about being trampled..
- Elmore the Christmas Moose (Dev Petty) – When an opening for a reindeer opens up on Santa's sleigh team, Elmore knows he needs to fill it, even if he can't fly. A story of a moose who would not take "no" for an answer.
- Snowmen at Night (Caralyn Buehner) – Are they snowmen or zombies or something else who haunt the neighborhood at night.
- I Spy Christmas: A Book of Picture Riddles (Jean Marzollo) – It's not "Where's Waldo" but it gives hours of holiday cheer. Who needs a cell phone or wifi?
- Snowflake Bentley (Jacqueline Briggs Martin) – A visionary for taking pictures of snowflakes. Or was he insane trying to find two snowflakes that match.
- Skipping Christmas (John Grisham) – A man defies the neighborhood cheer and fights the power. Will he give in to peer pressure?

My plans for the upcoming year (otherwise known as Coronavirus: Here to Stay):

- Watching the gremlin in my house mess with my organization. (Last year I noted that she's luckily in bed at midnight so no need to worry about her eating after that time. Things have changed this year and she is now usually up this late.)
- Spreadsheets! Spreadsheets! Spreadsheets!
- Having fun providing you with updates on my year on Twitter.
- Meet my goal of finding \$20 in abandoned currency in the next year. If this year is any indicator, I will need to hone my skills even more to meet that goal. But like the Rolling Stones sang "You can't always get what you want but if you try sometime, you get what you need."
- Throwing more penalty flags on the gremlin as they violate protocols.
- Writing another great letter to you all next year!

Before I close out this letter, I want to share with you a returning feature for this year's memo, an accompanying video about Christmas trees. In this video, Santa Griff-Griff (a/k/a Griffin the Giraffe) takes you on a tour of people's homes in the 50s, 60s and 70s. Use your telephone (again rotary phone charge may apply) to search on YouTube for "Santa Griff Griff and His 2nd Annual Christmas Tree Show".

Wishing you love and happiness in 2004 and beyond!

The Stealth Duck



@stealthduck13



[stealthduck13@aol.com](mailto:stealthduck13@aol.com)

\* = These statistics come from the tracking spreadsheets I maintain on my personal Google Sheets account. I certify that all of the data and information contained on my personal Google Sheets accounts is, to the best of my ability and knowledge, accurate as data is loaded to the spreadsheets on a daily basis.

Additional Legal Note: The gremlin proofread this letter to ensure that all references to spores, mold, fungus and invasive species are accurately represented; no bacteria or viruses were harmed in the making of this letter.