

Xmas Letter 2021

Dearest friends and family,

Despite the inconveniences of COVID, 2021 has been a fulfilling and productive year for our family. Like many of you, we have used the months in virtual isolation to enrich our spiritual, artistic, intellectual, and economic growth. And GROW we have! Ask me about Bitcoin!

Among the 4 of us we have learned 6 new languages (French, Mandarin Chinese, Korean, Hindi, and Hebrew) trained 3 emotional support dogs, each picked up a new instrument (piano for Tim, guitar for me, banjo for Jared, and tuba for Erin!) and written 2 novels. We just LOVE NaNoWriMo!!!! For those of you not in the know, NaNoWriMo stands for National Novel Writing Month, and it takes place over the entire month of November. And, let's face it, who doesn't think that they have the chops to write the vaunted Great American Novel?! Well, Tim and I think we just might have done it...!!!! We have enlisted an agent and are anxiously awaiting responses from various (major) publishing houses.

In addition to continuing in his law school studies (top of his class!), Jared has completed his certification as a yoga instructor and converted to both Buddhism and Judaism---we affectionately refer to him as a Judhist (LOL!)---hence it is he who has studied (and mastered!) the rudimentary elements of Hindi and Hebrew. His Devanagari script is just beautiful and his depictions of the aleph-bet in both cursive and block could make a rabbi weep. Although he no longer subscribes to Christianity, Jared is nonetheless willing to accept Christmas presents, though he is not comfortable giving them out.

Tim and I joined in the sourdough and banana bread craze, but it did not quite challenge us, so we enrolled in a special online Covid course run out of Le Cordon Bleu (Paris--taught in French). We have become quite adapt at the basics of French haute cuisine AND each lost about 15 lbs. (OK, Tim has lost 22!). I know! It sounds impossible but we begin each morning @ 6am with an hour and a half of Ashtanga yoga practice, led by Jared. Erin also joins us. We are so impressed that our teenage daughter is willing to rise each morning before 6am and join her parents in such an invigorating and enlightening practice. After yoga, Tim and I fold our hands, bow our heads, and exchange Namastes with our offspring before we head out—just the two of us amidst the sunrise—for our daily 20k run. Early in lockdown, we began at just 5k and are now comfortably breezing through the AM 20k---good thing, too, as the rich French dinners we prepare could easily have wreaked havoc on our waistlines!

Our sweet Erin has suffered over the year, though. As you may recall, in addition to maintaining a 4.5 GPA in her Honors and AP courses, she is inordinately social. It has been so painful for her to limit her social life to texting and Zoom gatherings. While the less vigilant parents of many of her many friends have allowed their children to

participate in ill-advised face-to-germ-infested face gatherings, we have been quite strict with Erin. Poor girl has taken to training in an online Taekwondo course to manage her grief and aggression. We are pleased to say, however, that in just a year she has advanced to the level of 1st degree black belt and become quite proficient in the Korean language. We are both sad and proud.

The summer was so fun, filled with barbeques, porch cocktails, and much anticipated weddings and pool-side parties. It was delightful to gather with so many of you! I must say we are a fabulous bunch! However, as summer cooled, Covid rose again and splintered into virulent variants, and we have all been forced to return to exercising caution. What will the winter and New Year bring, dear ones? We don't quite know, do we?

Well, as I always say, There's no time like the present and no present like time!

Merry Xmas, Happy Holidays, and Namaste to all!

With love and shanti,

The Rands

Tim, Cheryl, Jared, and Erin