

## Dear Friends and Relations!



Well, here it is, that time of year again. Merry Holidays and a Wonderful Winter Solstice To You All! Welcome dear friend, fond relation, and Gentle Reader to the tenth First Annual Holiday Letter. Last year, for the first time, this letter fell into the wrong hands, and I received a response that explained that Jesus Christ was the reason for Christmas and all the holidays, and that I should be ashamed of myself. I'd like to address that right now.

Jesus Christ, I can't believe I've been writing these letters for 10 years! I'm so ashamed.

Speaking of shame, this year's letter was mailed with the Harvey Milk stamp, which the American Family Association earlier this year urged members not to accept, because he was gay. They seriously told their members, "Refuse to accept mail if it's postmarked with the Harvey Milk stamp. Write 'Return to Sender' on the envelope and tell your postman you won't accept it." Believe me, if we get any of these suckers back, the Christmas list is going to get that much shorter next year, if you know what I mean. (This should also help to ensure that **this year's** letter doesn't fall into the wrong hands!) Of course, since you're reading this you must have opened the letter, so I guess you're gay now – welcome to Club Rainbow<sup>1</sup>! Please remember to vote Democrat and for gosh sakes, change those draperies.

Now that we've got that shit behind us, let's talk about what an awesome year 2014 was! For everyone who didn't die from Ebola, it was a pretty good year. I myself was in a massive high-speed 5-car pile-up on Interstate 395 this year, which turned out to have totaled every automobile involved, including mine – but when we all got out of our cars to begin the time-honored American process of suing each other, we first shook hands and agreed it was better than Ebola.

The biggest downside to having my car totaled was having to get a new one. I called the guy who'd sold me the last one and asked him to find me a new one that looked just like it. We showed up a day later with a check from the bank, and drove off in a new pumpkin just like the old pumpkin. This lasted 2 weeks, until the dealership called Julie – when she had the new car most of the way to Chicago.

**Dealership, calling Julie:** "Hi, the bank returned your check. Can you come back and pay for the car, or should we just go ahead and report it as stolen?"

**Julie, calling Doug:** "I'm driving and WTF – just call them back, I'm not dealing with this shit."

**Doug, calling Dealership:** "Hi, I'd like you to go ahead and report the car as stolen, as long as you follow it up with, '... and we have NO leads.'"

I figured the worst that could happen was that the cops would show up here looking for this car, to which I could say "Hey, I don't know, my wife left me, it's in the wind, man." We didn't actually get around to paying for the car for 3 months – the best financing deal I've ever seen. Of course the bigger issue with the car was actually my carpool. I started carpooling with strangers once in a while, and now I'm HOV positive.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> I feel that I can say with some degree of confidence that not one of the rest of the cards and letters you receive for the holidays this year will mention buttsex. You're welcome.

<sup>2</sup> I suppose it's better than Ebola.



Anyway, the kids had a great year also. Annalise became a drummer and joined a band; their first gig was at Wolf Trap. I don't know how they convinced the US Air Force Jazz Quartet to open for them – pretty sweet all around. Their second gig was in front of a couple thousand screaming fans in Vienna; it's heavy noise but the crowd loved it.

Connor had an interesting year; he found a friend. In the middle of the summer, he mentioned that he was going to step outside for a few minutes. (This was unusual; he doesn't go outside much, willingly at least: “Dad, I went outside **last** week – sure, the graphics are amazing, but the gameplay sucks.”) So Julie wasn't surprised when he came back in 3 minutes later. She **was** surprised, though, when she heard more voices. She went to check, and he'd brought a friend inside with him. He'd organized the whole thing – he just left out the bit where he told us about it. Fast forward 2 days and we're hosting his first-ever sleepover. Fast forward another few weeks and I got this question: “So Dad, is this what friendship is like? A loss of interest and enjoyment in all the things that you used to enjoy, unless your friend is with you?”



I said yes. The more I thought about it, I told him that that might be one of the best definitions of friendship I'd ever heard. I cling to that, these days, when I talk to him about the failing grades he's bringing home in gym class. Of course, he's failing gym though no fault of his own, since he can't really be expected to participate or turn in homework. Oh, wait.

Kate has turned sweet sixteen and is loving it, except for coming down with Ebola. She was doing humanitarian work in Africa over the summer and brought the big bad bug back with her. The CDC sent her to an herbal treatment facility in Colorado, where she got to do some “medical tourism” – she chose Colorado because it was closer than Washington state. She referred to the treatment as “hanging with her buds,” which I assume means friends. She talked about her buds a lot; one of them was named Mary Jane. I guess it worked, because it cured the Ebola. She seemed pretty relaxed about the whole thing, really.

Julie had a good year as well; she's sporting a new tattoo! She's also passing kidney stones that would make the rock of Gibraltar consider Viagra, so she's trying a new cutting edge treatment – fecal transplants! This is where you swap poop with someone else, “for your own good.” When I was a kid, we called that bullying. Me, I'd worry you can get Ebola like that, but what do I know?<sup>3</sup>

The neighbors are great as always, and it's always interesting to reflect on what we borrow from each other. One neighbor borrowed my lawn mower and returned it with a case of Guinness – that's what I call compound interest! From another neighbor, I knocked on the door asking hey, do you have a single in-line SATA cable so I can fix Annalise's PC? Of course he did. We have great neighbors.

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<sup>3</sup> Can you tell that Ebola and poop jokes tested well with my focus group? Can you tell that my focus group consists of a Magic Eight Ball and three fingers of Scotch?

It was a good year for beer, too – in addition to the lawn Guinness, I posted an ad on Craigslist looking to sell a used ~~clothes-hanger~~ Nordic Track ski machine. I listed my price, and let myself be talked down when someone offered a case of Corona. Between the Guinness and the Corona, I didn't have to buy beer for nearly 3 days!

As you know by now, something always dies in these letters<sup>4</sup>. It is The Way of All Holiday Letters that **everyone's** doing **even better** than their already inflated Facebook status updates, except either grandma or the beloved family pet died. (Those are sometimes the same thing.)

This year, I would once again like to share our annual outpouring of grief and subsequent catharsis with you, dear friend, fond relation, and Gentle Reader – it was terrible. You see, before Kate was medevaced to Denver for her "herbal" Ebola treatment, she had infected me. Since I'm HOV positive, I wasn't eligible for treatment – you know, because of ObamaCare. I wasn't very symptomatic, so I broke quarantine for a Starbucks run. (You say "mass murder," I say caffeine addiction.) As you know, Ebola is so contagious that once you're in the same room with someone who has it, catching it is like Denard Span of the World Champion Washington Nationals<sup>5</sup> catching a fly ball – it's so easy, it's practically inevitable. Long story short, I infected and therefore killed 6 people in the Starbucks, and I was indicted for it. Luckily the grand jury found overwhelming evidence that I was white, and dropped all charges. I feel badly, but I feel better for having told you about it here. Besides, those baristas were asking for it.

While Julie and I feel strongly that two pages is not only less painful to read but cheaper to mail, upon careful consideration this year we decided, dear friend, fond relation, and Gentle Reader, that we just didn't feel like making the font that small. So, in accordance with the dictates of the Annual Holiday Letter, I will once again conclude by wishing everyone a wonderful 2015! May all your letters be long, all your stamps be gay, and all your grand juries go to trial!

With Lots Of Love and Holiday Convictions,

- Doug, Julie, Kate-Bryce-Harper, Connor, Annalise, Flitwick, and Albus the Gay

<http://www.dougandjulie.com/>

<http://www.inappropriategirl.com/>

<http://www.biguglymandoll.com/>

<http://www.freerangepoetry.com/>

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<sup>4</sup> The primary purpose of holiday letters is to provide updates on the only real news that matters as we get older: Finding out what or whom you've outlived. Not that there's a damn thing you can do about it.

<sup>5</sup> Sorry, still practicing typing that for next year.

Nothing to see here, folks. Move along.  
Go back to your lives, your families, your happy homes.  
Live like you stole it.