January, 2014-ish

We’re baaaaaaacck!

After a one-year hiatus (Latin for “screwing around when I should’ve been writing an Annual Holiday Letter”), we’re back, and maybe it’s time, you’re thinking, to remove the word “Annual”? Agreed. And what did you miss in 2012? A quick recap: Malachy at UW-Madison as a redshirt freshman, Erin a junior at OPRF, Rory a freshman at OPRF, Kathleen still tutoring, Greg still at IMC. See? Hardly worth a whole letter, is it? So we saved you 20 minutes last January by not writing one. You’re welcome.

2013, on the other hand, was jam-packed with news, some good, some bad. It started out bad, with us saying good-bye to Kathleen’s mom. Pat/Nana had lived in Oak Park for the past 3 years, and although the Republican Party saw its Oak Park membership dwindle by a third with her passing, we miss her much more than they do.

Rory got a minor lead role in Les Mis, playing Courfeyrac, one of the students on the barricade. Our own son, in our favorite musical ever! Seeing him up there singing so passionately about revolution gave us hope that one day he will get fired up enough to get out of bed before noon on a non-school day. He also played Prince Dauntless in Once Upon a Mattress, but the biggest surprise for us this year was when he sang the opening 4 notes of “A Foggy Day in London Town” this fall with the Jazz Ensemble, about 3 octaves lower than any sound he’s ever made.

Erin’s cross country team qualified for the state meet for the first time since she has been in high school, finishing 13th. As you can see in the picture, even if Erin didn’t always tower above the competition, she definitely did tower over her teammates. After state, Erin went back to filling out college applications and avoiding people asking her questions about where she will go next year. No answers yet—wait until our next letter, in 2015 or 2016, to find out.

In last year’s letter, if I had predicted that Malachy would run for Team USA at the Cross Country Junior Worlds in Poland, or would win the Big Ten individual cross country championship, or would be an All-American as a freshman, you would’ve pointed out that I hadn’t written a letter so I don’t get credit for the prediction. Good point. But it all happened, including the story about him finishing the last 7K of the 10K regional race with only one shoe.

The more I write, the more I realize a lot did happen in 2012, like Kathleen’s new hip. Motivated, perhaps, by that intense Sheehan family competitiveness that puzzles Schrobilgens to this day, her rehab flew by much faster than her brothers’ hip rehabs, and she had mostly forgotten about the ordeal when she set off the metal detector at the airport this year. It took her three tries and a helpful suggestion from the TSA guy (“did you have knee surgery?”) before she realized her hip was causing it.

My company sent me to Sydney for three weeks in March, and another week in Sao Paulo in July. Sydney was awesome—warm, scenic, and friendly. Sao Paulo was, comparatively, the gates of Hell—dirty, unsafe, gigantic, and seemingly unaware that a tourist might want to buy a T-shirt that doesn’t say “Rio” on it. Guess which one I liked more? This summer Erin and I ran Relay Iowa for the 2nd time, covering 340 miles in 3 days with our 12-person relay team. All things considered, I prefer Iowa.

There, that didn’t hurt at all, did it? As 2013 (and 2012) fade in the rearview mirror, we turn our attention back to 2014, which is, metaphorically speaking, the road that we are driving on, and the car is kind of like our family, and all of you are in the back seat, but all five of us are driving in different directions… Even if the metaphor breaks down, we’re looking forward to the journey ahead in 2014.

Greg, Kathleen, Malachy, Erin, and Rory

P.S. I almost forgot, the new Pedriana baby is here! Well, not here, he’s in Milwaukee, with Imal and Katie and Agali and Adani. Rabah Xavier appears to be following the precedent set by his brothers, as he’s adorable and totally easy-going and already a Packers/Brewers fan.