

Marler Christmas Newsletter(s)



EDITOR'S NOTE: First, Jeff would like to apologize about being SO LATE with our 2021 Christmas Greeting. Actually, a whole year late. In 2021 we received your cards, emails and social media posts. We're so glad to hear from you all and reading about your adventures.

Last year in December, besides having COVID, Jeff was working on an immensely special woodworking project. Truthfully, once he missed his own publication deadline and Christmas (2021) passed, the procrastinator in him felt less pressure to prioritize this. Jeff was laser focused on completing the project in hopes of finishing it for Christmas. As you will read later, Jeff missed that deadline and completed the project just shy of Valentine's Day. Before Jeff knew it January had slipped away, and he accepted the fact that he was not going to get the newsletter done. Several of you reached out to us to make sure everything was okay. We were.

So here is our first ever 2-year Christmas Newsletter. Twice the years but half the paper.

Snowmageddon arrived. The Texas power grid (natural gas, wind, solar, etc.) aren't winterized. Why spend all that money to keep something from freezing when that almost never happens. Except when an 100-year cold front drops temperatures so low that the power grid failed. Prior to the storm's arrival, Jeff's work moved him into a hotel to make it safer and easier to commute to work. Over the next 7 days Jeff would train his clients during the day and drive home at 10 MPH on the icy roads to make sure Kristy and the kids hadn't turned into ice sculptures at night. Jeff then slowly returned to the hotel. The storm was brutally cold and quite deadly, but luckily our new house came through without any frozen pipes. I can't say the same for our shrubs and trees. Looks like we would have a major, landscaping projects come Spring.

March/April 2021: Our sweet Keegan celebrated her 22nd birthday. She enjoyed the attention and the "family only" dinner followed by an enormous Chocolate chip cookie. Life is still very sheltered for us. Jaycee, a pre-nursing student, at the University of Texas-Arlington started coming over to have family time with us as life as a college student was quite bleak during the pandemic. Her visits soon turned in regular Saturday adult sitting which allowed Kristy and Jeff time together as a couple. Unfortunately, the new way of life, meant we had to be creative with our outings and it always required a facial mask. Braden and Keegan love Jaycee so that gave all 5 of us peace and comfort. This new found freedom also allowed Jeff to take Kristy out for her 55th birthday.

May 2021: We got to really assess the freeze damage which gave Kristy an opportunity to make all the changes she wanted in front and side of the house's landscaping. This project took a couple of months and plenty of sweat. She had to hand pull and/or dig up 20+ shrubs, bushes, small trees and variegated grass borders. She also removed much of the existing mulch to realize many of the irrigation tubing and electric landscaping lines had been damaged. Jeff handled all that while Kristy did her due diligence in researching hardy, local, drought tolerable and low maintenance varieties of plants to add back in the yard.

June/July 2021: As summer was in full swing and the temperatures were in the triple digits the landscaping project slowed down bit. In early July, Jeff had wrist surgery to remove a benign cyst which put him out of commission, happily. So, Kristy pushed through and took an abundance of water breaks to not become dehydrated. She planted over 20 new plants, added all new mulch and river rock, 3 large granite boulders, a gigantic, planting pot and landscaping lights. It really added to the curb appeal.

Once Jeff was fully recovered from his surgery, we headed to Colorado to visit Kristy's family. We chose not to fly to avoid COVID so we drove two days there and two days back which means our visit was short but sweet. We spent quality time together with a family BBQ, celebrated our nephew, Connor's, high school graduation, Braden's 24th birthday as well as taking some family photos.



After saying our sad goodbyes, we made a special stop in Colorado Springs to see our longtime friends, Tina & Brian Akonom. Kristy visited them every time she was in Colorado as they were best friends in their teens. Brian was recovering from a recent health crisis but was COVID fragile so the visit was socially distant. It was hard not being able to hug Brian but just hearing him laugh and seeing his smile comforted us. We also needed to see that Tina was doing well considering what they had just been through. In hindsight, this visit was a blessing in disguise.

We then traveled on to Pueblo where we were giving Braden his birthday gift. We scheduled a trip on the Royal Gorge steam engine in Canyon City. Our Sister-in-law, Kayla, arranged to upgrade Braden's tickets to enable him to enjoy the VIP treatment. This was an above and beyond gift. This allowed Braden to ride in the engine and assist the engineer. He absolutely loved ringing to bell, wearing his conductor's hat and all the goodies Kayla arranged for him. This was a once in a lifetime experience that Braden will talk about for the rest of his life.

December 2020: After being socially distanced for so long we were happy to get out and went shopping to prepare for Christmas. Since we fell in love with Christmas Markets while living in Germany, we tried to replicate the experience locally. Never as magical as the German festivals, but we will take what we can get. Near us is a sweet town named Grapevine. It is also known as the Christmas Capital of Texas. The main street is aligned with small boutiques, specialty stores, historic landmarks, wineries, restaurants and even a "Polar Express" train station. Everything is covered in holiday decorations and lights. It's spectacular!



Like many of you, we planned a nice, simple Christmas at home. As we closed out 2020, we hoped that 2021 would be a kinder, gentler year. Well, we know how that turned out don't we?

January/February 2021: The New Year slowly started to return to the new normal. Mid February brought both joy and stress. Jennifer Feutz and daughter, Jaycee joined us for a Valentine dinner. Jaycee had moved to Arlington from San Antonio to attend college. Jennifer came up to visit her daughter and kindly made time to see us. As always, Kristy and Jennifer had a great time with loads of laughter. Within days





That evening we joined Kelly (Jeff's middle brother), his wife Kayla, Brooklyn, Kyrin and Kysyn for dinner along the Riverwalk while going over all the details from the days train ride.

Kristy and Jeff celebrated their 33rd wedding anniversary at the end of the month while Jaycee sat with the kids.

August 2021: Jeff found out he was selected for an honor at work. Every year FlightSafety selects the top instructors from each Learning Center to nominate for an award called "The Best of the Best". This year, Jeff's boss decided he should be nominated, and his award nomination package was selected. Because of COVID, the awards ceremony was postponed until large gatherings were more appropriate.

September/October 2021: Kristy kept busy creating Homecoming mums for customers. If you are not familiar with this tradition, Google it, you will see how extravagant they are. Kristy also decorated the house for fall/Halloween. We just love Halloween!

In October we headed up to Norman, Oklahoma to enjoy the Sooner vibe, attend a huge craft fair in Oklahoma City and visit Jeff's younger brother, Randy and wife Andrea. We also love visiting Norman. It reminds us of the carefree times in our young married life. We returned home just in time to watch Jeff blow out his 55 candles.

November 2021: The tradition in our home...remove fall/Halloween decor and insert all things Christmas. Yes, it is early but the Marlers love the warm and cozy vibes of the twinkling lights and many Christmas trees. Yes, we said many! We had a small Thanksgiving meal at home followed by naps and pie.

December 2021: Like you read at the beginning Jeff caught COVID. Luckily, he only had 2 days of body aches and recovered without major side effects. Jeff quarantined in the house and fortunately nobody else was affected. We spent a quiet Christmas at home, counting our blessings and celebrated the end of another interesting year.

January 2022: Jeff was able to convince Kristy to leave the Christmas decorations up through New Years. Mid-month Kristy planned a trip to San Antonio to visit her girlfriends (AKA: Wild Women of Waldmohr...Texas chapter). Unfortunately, the trip was cancelled due to COVID among the group's kids. Kristy was so disappointed! She really missed her girlfriends. Jeff was nearing the end of those special woodworking projects while Kristy finalized the remaining details. In the end, this project was a team effort created with love and gratitude.

February 2022: Valentine's weekend, Kristy flew to Colorado to hand deliver the special woodworking gifts to her parent's, Jim and Mary. She stayed at her sister, Kerri, brother-in-law, Jonathan and nephew, Connor's home. Although, snow caused some traveling delays, she managed to enjoy a late, family dinner together that night with a special surprise visit from her nephew, Christian and his girlfriend Hannah. While in Colorado she attended a ballet recital, family dinners, lovely Sister time and irreplaceable moments with her beloved parents.

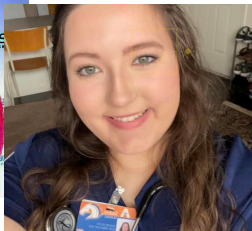
March 2022: As the house became encapsulated in St. Patrick's Day décor we celebrated our sweet Lassie's 23rd birthday. Keegan had a spa day which she absolutely loves.

She and Kristy also started a new tradition, Mommy & Daughters Day, on Sundays. Keegan loves the quality time with her mom and of course the shopping.

April 2022: Another trip around the sun for



Kristy and so we celebrated with dinner for just us two while Jaycee hung out with Braden and Keegan at home. After two scheduled, then cancelled dates, FlightSafety finally held their annual Awards Ceremony here in Dallas. Best of the Best winners from across the planet were flown in for event. Luckily for us it was just a 30 minute drive. At the end of the dinner, all of the winners were presented with their memento: a 5 pound, glass sculpture.



May/June 2022: Jeff took on a new woodworking build for the house (it only took 6 months to complete). LOL It is not all his fault as he really has little time to work on his project between his very busy work schedule and Saturday date days with Kristy. Did we mention how much we love our Date days? We enjoy antiquing for vintage holiday items and books. Don't ask! We also like checking out new restaurants and events around the DFW area. This is only made possible because our Jaycee. We have known Jaycee since she was 10 years old so we love having her around for our kids and hearing all about her nursing school experiences. She graduates in August which is bittersweet. We are so proud of her and look forward to hearing all about what's to come.

July 2022: Quite a busy month...Jeff began learning a new helicopter at work (Airbus EC-135 P2+) which would take several months to finish qualification. Braden turned 25 this year. It doesn't seem possible that our "little" boy is that old. Kristy was finally able to reschedule her girl's trip to San Antonio. Kristy, Jennifer and Denise drove to Port Aransas for a Gulf of Mexico beach vacation. They rented a condo with a private entrance to the beach. The ladies enjoyed playing "tourist", the cool water to combat the terrible heat, seafood, shopping but mostly the evening girl time in the condo with bottles of wine and plenty of laughter. They also commented on how they need to get together more often as friendship soothes the soul.



Kristy was able to spend a little extra time with Jennifer and her family while Jaycee was with our kids back at the home when Jeff was at work. Jeff & Kristy finished the month out with an amazing dinner out at a lovely restaurant celebrating 34 years of marriage.



August 2022: We had our first family visit to our new house when Kristy's mom and sister came to Texas. Over the next 10 days Kristy showed them many famous Texas sites. A highlight of the trip was a girl's weekend getaway to Waco, Texas for a MAGNOLIA experience. If you know, you know. They stayed in one of Chip & JoAnna Gaines' remodeled properties from their popular TV show and visited Magnolia Farms and all it has to offer



During Grandma and Auntie's visit Braden went bowling and that sparked a long lost love for it again. (FYI: Someone will be receiving his own balls, shoes and bag for Christmas so he can fully enjoy alley time in comfort & style). Jeff advanced to Senior Instructor at work and continued to stay busy with clients.

Near the end of the month Kristy received devastating news from her dear friend Tina. Her beloved Brian had passed away. We were utterly shocked and grief stricken. Kristy hurts so deeply for her sweet friend as she realized there is nothing she can do to ease the pain Tina and her kids are carrying. This is why we know our brief visit in July of 2021 was a blessing. Brian is deeply missed! We love you Tina, Ty, Cat & Lexie. You remain in our prayers.

September 2022: With Jaycee helping watch the kids, Jeff and Kristy were able to join the local Sooner Alumni Club so they could enjoy the watch parties with fellow OU family at a bar & grill in Frisco, Texas. Unfortunately, this season hasn't been the best for OU, but it was fun to watch them anyway. BOOMER!!



October 2022: Although we didn't go to the actual football game on October 8th, we were very disappointed that OU go clobbered by Texas. Oh well there is always next year. We still had a great time at the Texas State Fair the day after Jeff's 56th birthday. You can see Big Tex in the background (see below).

November 2022: Jeff took a 2-week vacation to relax and work on unfinished projects. Jeff's vacation lined up with the OU/OSU football weekend so we decided to spend that weekend in Norman. Luckily OU won that football game so it was a great weekend. SOONER!! We also enjoyed another visit with Randy & Andrea.

We returned home just in time for Thanksgiving. We had a brief visit with Denise, who was visiting her family. She and Kristy enjoyed a breakfast out and got caught up since their August excursion.

December 2022: Now that Christmas is right around the corner, we are finally finishing up this 2-year Newsletter (which is late and will arrive after Christmas). We will do better next year, HOPEFULLY. We find ourselves all prepared for Santa's visit and the ringing in of the New Year. We pray that 2023 is good to us all. May GOD bless you and keep you healthy and safe! Merry Christmas and Happy New Years!

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