

## One word. *PLASTICS*.

~~Mr. McGuire to Benjamin Braddock in the Graduate—1967~~

Our daughters' discussing their sustainability concerns with us - 2019

*This past year, we have found ourselves trying to live more sustainably. It turns out that, while our kids have little interest in inheriting the family china, they do care very much about the family planet. Enid and I were pretty sure we had another planet somewhere, maybe in the garage? But we can't find it, so we're all on board to initiate Mission Compostable in 5, 4, 3, 2, ... wait isn't that self-destructing envelope just adding to atmospheric carbon?*

*It's not like we were that bad to start off the year. We (regrettably) weren't mining bitcoin 24/7 on some gaming PC, right? No! We drove electric and hybrid cars, shopped locally, maintained (usually) sensible thermostat settings, and ate more plants and fewer animals (you're welcome Bo). Instead of throwing away orange and lemon peels we made more cocktails. We were trying to be OK boomers! But we could do better. No more straws or lids on take-away sodas. Only natural organic products when cleaning up the spilled Diet Coke in the car. Avoid single-use plastics and always have your own water bottle on hand. We even considered making our holiday letter out of memes instead of words, since a picture is still worth 823 words (adjusted for inflation). Lucky for you, we've shelved that concept for now. But you can still help! Please don't print out the*

## 2019 Lefton-Steinbart Holiday Letter

Hannah took the opportunity to extend her stay in Senegal for a third year, and she moved from her rural village in Matam to an apartment in a sizable city called Thiès (pronounced Chess). She now enjoys electricity, indoor plumbing, and spotty Wi-Fi just like you! Her work is focused on training new and existing cohorts of volunteers about Senegalese culture, language, and technical skills. She is picking up more Wolof while trying to maintain her Pulaar. That's a sentence about languages, not exercise. However she is doing yoga and enjoying the walkability of her new city. This year Hannah maintained the lowest carbon footprint of anyone in the family, until she returned to the US for the first time during her service. Those plane flights are carbon costly, but she did get a chance to hug many friends and family in California, Colorado, and Georgia (including Athens). Her extended stint as a Volunteer ends later this year, and she has been accepted into a four-year joint degree program in law and social work (JD/MSW) at the University of Michigan. Going from the sub-Saharan desert to Ann Arbor should be a real climate change experience for her.

Natalie is in her second year at UC Berkeley, pursuing her PhD in Chemical Engineering. In the fall she TA'd for "Introduction to Mass and Energy Balances" if you need some help with that. Her research is exploring fundamental chemical processes which are used to convert propane to propene. This is not at all related to plastics or planetary sustainability, except that it is totally related to plastics and planetary sustainability. She spends a significant amount of time in the lab working with zeolites, which are best described as really nice sand. Her work has taken her to Brookhaven National Lab in New York, and she is really enjoying life. We don't trust her carbon footprint calculations since she may actually understand them. This year Natalie moved out of her 1 bedroom apartment into a house with three awesome roommates and a trampoline. She's still living the car-free life but that hasn't slowed her travel plans. She regularly gets out to nearby parks for hiking, and has trekked to Santa Barbara, LA, Tahoe, Atlanta, and Vancouver to connect with friends and family. She's seen Hamilton at least twice and has scoured local thrift stores for the best jigsaw puzzles. The Bay Area has been a great place to be, attracting visits from Hannah and Monica, and also Lew's sisters Linda and Charna. Natalie also gets to enjoy some quality time with Lew's sister Irene who also lives in the Bay Area.

Monica is still working full time at the PR firm FleishmanHillard, and she was awarded "2019 Team Player Award" for the Atlanta office. Her responsibilities have grown and she is developing an impressive portfolio of stories, mostly through client support in the health care practice. She started a Sustainability Committee for her office and is really focused on making the world a better place. She's still living in a Midtown apartment and struggled with standard first-apartment issues including an infestation of carpenter bees, a ceiling leak, and an air conditioning failure in July. Monica may be one of the most green in her local practices, shopping at a local farmer's market, living almost exclusively vegetarian, and making a lot of soups. She even bought everyone

carbon offsets for our flights to Portugal! That's a good thing, since she also traveled the most in 2019. She went to Florida with friends, visited Natalie in San Francisco, enjoyed a trip to Albuquerque generously sponsored by Linda and Charna that included a hot air balloon ride, hit New York during the July heatwave, and also crossed the Atlantic to visit Enid in Barcelona in the fall. Her lifestyle still includes a big dose of music and comedy with highlights this year including shows featuring Lizzo, Chelsea Cutler, and Phoebe Robinson.

Madison died this year, which was sad, but not unexpected. Bo has a solid alibi and is no longer a suspect. It was a nice coincidence that Hannah and Monica were visiting Natalie then, so they could all be together and do a proper FaceTime farewell. We sustainably spread her ashes in our backyard pet cemetery, where her cremains join goldfish, gerbils, and lizards. Bo has mellowed, and appears to be making an effort to reduce his animal-based diet. The dead rodent count has decreased, but he's still not impressed by dairy substitutes.

Family travels this year included a Steinbart Family reunion in Maine (Lew, Enid, Natalie, Monica) and a fun holiday trip to Portugal (Lew, Enid, Hannah, Natalie, Monica). Spending the better part of two weeks with just the five of us, hopping between AirBnB's, was a great experience. We took a drive through the Douro Valley and visited several Port wine caves. Everyday was "leg day" as we hiked cliffs in the Algarve and steep stairs in Lisbon. The art, food, and culture were really nice. And, while we were not only reminded how much we love each other, we also had an opportunity to check if all the emotional buttons and triggers related to familial anxiety and stress still work. They do.

Enid returned to Barcelona for the third time in the fall where she taught multivariable calculus and failed to learn Catalan. She worked hard participating in a record number of student orientations, but she also played hard with visits to Arkansas for a Jones Family Reunion and a 40<sup>th</sup> Central High School reunion in Omaha where she caught up with Lynn Simpson and Julie Higgins. Enid's work as the Director of Advising and Assessment for the School of Math continues to be the main part of her job, and she's now mentoring other academic professionals in the school, too. In her "spare" time she reads a lot (book clubs and otherwise), socializes a lot (Bunko, Ladies night out, card nights), and exercises a lot: bootcamp, gym, and first place (age/gender category) in a 5K sponsored by a local brewery. That last one may have been helped by the promise of 9 AM beer and BBQ! Enid has also been volunteering at the Global Village Project, tutoring refugee girls. Enid's environmental consciousness is most evident when she brings her own washable doggy bag containers to restaurants, avoiding styrofoam. Total Mom move, but super sustainable!

Enid and Lew fully embraced the empty nest this year by selling all our vinyl albums, redoing our floors and getting standing desks for the office. We also updated the fireplace and screened porch, which, in retrospect, means we're more prepared for climate change extremes.

This year, Lew was promoted to Academic Professional Principal (the equivalent of Full Professor in our job family). He also shifted to a 50% appointment as Associate Vice President for Research Computing at Georgia Tech. He still maintains a 50% appointment as an Assistant Dean of Sciences. That probably sounds like two jobs, but it's definitely not. It's more like 2.5 right now. That's in no small part due to the Georgia Tech leadership vacancies and other external mandates which created a lot more administrative work. Fortunately, the situation is getting better now, with new leadership on board, so things should improve soon. Lew continues to teach the Humor Genome Project class where students use computational techniques to study humor. He gave a workshop at the Applied Improvisation Network meeting at the Alan Alda Center for Science Communication in Stony Brook New York, and he even got a chance to see Mr. Alda himself! The nonprofit makerspace that Lew helped found, Decatur Makers, continues to thrive, and they are looking at expansion options now since the 370+ members are straining the current facility. Good problems to have, though. Lew's still doing comedy and improv events around Atlanta, and is sustainably recycling over 50% of his jokes.

We would love to see you in 2020! Atlanta is easy to get to and you always have a place to stay. Please bring some plastic bags since we have foolishly recycled all of ours.

141 Shadowmoor Dr Decatur GA 30030 | Enid: 404-290-4891 | Lew: 404-290-4609  
Hannah: +1 404-354-1967 (*WhatsApp only*) | Monica: 404-291-3333 | Natalie: 404-291-2852

May you and your loved ones have a new year full of happiness, health and peace.  
Happy Belated Hanukkah                      Merry Belated Christmas                      Happy Belated New Year