

2025 Christmas 'Howdy y'all' from the Helgrens www.helgren.com for the latest!)

December 16, 2025

Yet another missive in a long line of Christmas letters spread over the decades. A dying “art” IMHO...

When last we wrote, Debbie had just finished her radiation treatments for breast cancer. We are thankful to say that her 1 year followup this year indicated no remaining cancer. Feeling blessed as always.

The year started in a low key way and then ramped up in February with a trip to West Texas to spend some time with Holly and Jerry hiking Big Bend . **February** in West Texas is the perfect time to be there. Not too cold, not too hot.



In **March** I headed to Dallas for BSF’s all staff gathering. BSF HQ is moving to Dallas so we also got a first early look at the new location. **April** brought Easter and Jonas and Sam came to visit. Jonas from Myrtle Beach with the dogs, Sam by himself from Salt Lake. Having the boys AND dogs pushed me closer to the edge than usual so to really make sure I put my introvert predilections to rest, we also invited friends over for Easter as well. For anyone who knew my mom well; I am not her when it comes to entertaining! **April** means the heat is ON, so it was time to plan our escape from summer San Antonio heat. When **May** rolled around we rolled north, flying into SLC so I could “walk” at the UofU.



Late in May we drove to Paddy Flat (aka PF) in Idaho (Debbie's brother's cabin) via Portland (I know, it isn't exactly "on the way"). Our Portland stop was to take care of some "brother chores": assembling a greenhouse that Holly and Jeff had purchased and a few other "brother-do's" that I can never say "no" to.



We then doubled back to PF – the task was to build a new fence closer to the cabin to keep those pesky, methane-producing bovines at bay. The great part of being at PF is not just the peaceful environment but that we also have Starlink available to keep us "connected" when we need to be. **June** at PF is always a treat and got us out of the San Antonio heat. Thru Portland to PF was just the start. Next we headed to Colorado to spend time with Sam before the High Lonesome 100 ultra marathon (yeah, he did it again). At the end of June, we briefly flew back to San Antonio to make sure the house was still standing and not occupied by squatters. During that visit, I resigned from

BSF (long story, ask me about it if you have trouble sleeping, it'll put you to sleep) and we headed back to Colorado in early **July** without the fetters of full time work, and without income as well(!)...but the break from work was a gift we enjoyed by hiking the Rocky Mountains with Sam, climbing a 14-er, and meeting up with family to cheer Sam on in the ultra.



Then we headed back to San Antonio by car to check on the house and to allow Debbie to have her 1 year follow-up exams. Next? Back to Portland to handle some electrical work for Holly and Jeff and then back to good ole Paddy Flat for more fence building.



I also got some fishing time in with Sam and Jerry in a fly-in fishing/camping trip on Big Creek (in Idaho).



As **September** rolled in, we went to Portland (again!) to return the camping gear Jeff lent me and to celebrate Holly's and Debbie's birthdays. Then back to PF and eventually, back to San Antonio. For any of you who traced these travels on a map, it was 12,080 driving miles total for the summer. And yes, we even went to PF (we flew) one more time, in **October**, just because we missed it so much. In **November**, we headed to Coronado with the

whole family to christen me officially “Geezer” as I finished my 70th orbit around the sun....Many more adventures occurred that I am not including to avoid groans by the readers of this letter.....



Debbie has been well. She stepped away from her PT job to enjoy a summer of travel (she LOVES to drive...NOT!) She continues to serve in BSF and also at our church here in San Antonio. But she isn't *quite* done with PT as she will be covering for an employee who will be on maternity leave in January 2026.

Jonas continues to work for Redtouch Media, and its various business entities. We went to Myrtle Beach to help him move to....Chicago! Rumor has it that there is some gravitational pull of romance in that area (we've met Sandra and she is a peach!). So we helped pack him up and saw a bit of his temporary home while there.

Sam is still searching for better paying gig to help him support his fishing habit. I really enjoyed three days of fly fishing with him on Big Creek in Idaho. He's pretty good and was patient with his dottering father, teaching him the finer points of fly-casting. His 2nd attempt at the High Lonesome 100 ended at 50 miles this year, nursing a sprained ankle. But, he is still optimistic and will enter the lottery again. We may accompany him next summer and volunteer even if he doesn't run.

We all are navigating change: Me in my job search, Debbie in a return to work, Jonas in his relocation to Chicago, Sam as he also seeks full-time employment. But we are all under the Mercy of a God who never changes. He's always faithful. I pray that each of you experience His faithfulness and flourishing in a unique way in 2026.

May you be as blessed as we are!