



Bad news. I just found out that I'm a fictional character. You have no idea how disappointed I am. I have always believed in Santa Claus.

THE WITTE TIMES



IT WAS THE BEST OF TIMES.

VOLUME 17, DECEMBER 2014

"SWEET HOME" LANSING, MICHIGAN



INTRODUCTION

I was just reading through last year's WITTE TIMES as I deleted text and pictures to start this one. I liked the headlines so much that I'm sure I can't beat



that. Maybe I am passing the point of diminishing returns. Still, I liked my creativity with this first one. Impressive, right?

So, quickly here, we exchanged exchange students (two left, two others came) which means I have even more to write about. I'll try to get this done as quickly as possible, but please have patience. We've got a lot of ground to cover, so come on. Let's go!

COLLEGE FOR CAITLIN

Caty is now in college. Four kids in college: hard to believe, isn't it?

She had a bit of a roller-coaster ride at school this year. Early last year she decided that she was interested in enrolling in The Early College program at Lansing Community College. The program takes high school juniors and lasts three years. Instead of attending high school for their last two years the students have the opportunity to earn their high school diploma and an associate's degree in three years.

The catch is that only public school students may participate in the program. So in order to improve her odds, Caty transferred from Lansing Christian to Holt High School last spring.

That didn't work.

Holt was only able to put her on a waiting list, so this summer she transferred to Eaton Rapids, and then to Williamston, which is where she is enrolled now. Not that she ever goes there, because all of her classes are at LCC in downtown Lansing. Confused? Good.

The program is very challenging and she has a very heavy homework load. She wanted to participate on the Williamston

swim and dive team and did for a short time but the driving distance and homework just made it impossible. This is apparently common at The Early College.

Caty was an intern for the Republican Party this summer. She enjoyed the job and did very well there. You saw the results of her work this fall. Very impressive.

She has completed the first phase of driver's ed and is learning to drive a stick. She's a good driver and she looks good in the Mercedes (more about that later). She says none of her classmates drive a manual transmission car. She must keep the legacy alive.

Music continues to be a big thing for Caty. She got a new guitar for her birthday, albeit a little late (sorry, honey). She's hoping to record another CD over break, which would be a wonderful thing.

Hard to believe that my little girl is in college but there it is. We're so proud of her!

INDICATE, DON'T ILLUSTRATE

Seth is in his second year at the College for Creative Studies in their transportation design program. Every time he comes home from school he brings home fascinating drawings. It's amazing how quickly he is improving.

One of the things that they teach is to



“indicate, not illustrate.” The idea when they are sketching is to be able to get ideas on paper quickly. It’s not necessary to perfectly render a windshield wiper because we all know what that is. To encourage this and rapidly improve their skills the students are required to draw a lot.



He has also had metalworking and woodworking classes to learn to fabricate. This semester he’s building a car interior.

Last year’s classes culminated in a cable car race. Each student designed and con-

structed a cable car designed to race down a cable in the parking ramp. Seth earned an award for the sleekest design. Joy, Caty and I went to watch the races and it was a very fun day.

Seth returned to Car Shine Restorations this summer. He’s moved up from just sanding to doing quite a few other tasks. He worked on a lot of different classic cars and really enjoys working with Bob and Carlos.

Seth has found a group of great friends at CCS. When he comes home he frequently has a couple classmates in tow.



We had his friends Lucas and Kevin (affectionately known as “Dingus”) stay with us for Thanksgiving and it was wonderful to have them, along with Seth’s local friends, Aaron and Ben.

When we go to visit him it seems a little strange to be around the college area in mid-town Detroit all these years after Joy and I lived there, but he does seem to be enjoying his time in Detroit. It’s the Motor City, after all.

GLOBETROTTING WITH ALLISON

Allie had a very eventful 2014. Her year started with snowy trip to Chicago. 2013 ended with an incredible snow storm that



left us without power for ten days and left most of the Midwest buried in snow. In the middle of all of this Allie was supposed to fly out of O’Hare Airport in Chicago to travel to Liverpool for a semester in England.

The day of her departure, I-94 was closed in southwest Michigan due to conditions. Plan B was a train trip to Chicago, followed by a cab ride to the airport. What should have been a couple hour train trip turned into something like six or seven hours, but she made her flight—with half an hour to spare.

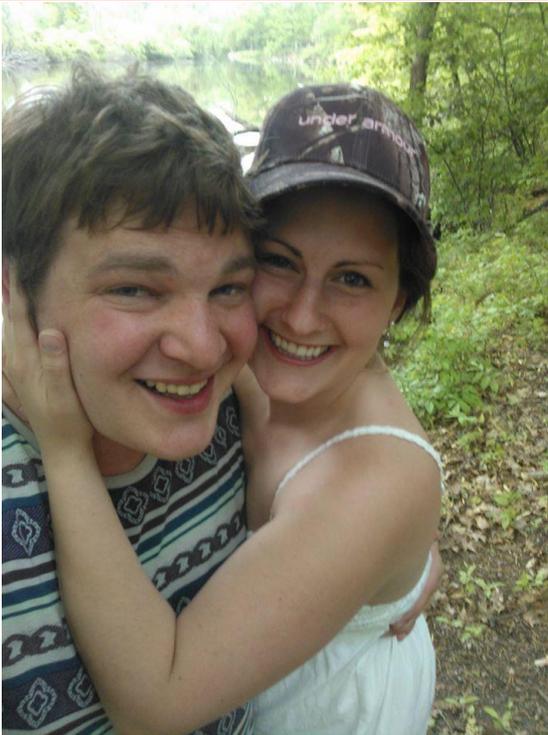
Here’s a link to my video of Michigan conditions that weekend:

<http://tinyurl.com/n3woklb>

Once she got to England, weather conditions improved. She took several classes at Liverpool Hope University and did very well. Weekends were often spent visiting castles and nearby towns.

For spring break she had the wonderful opportunity to travel to Barcelona with a friend. After that she went to Abu Dhabi and spent a week with Arlene Fontanetti, who was an exchange student with our family when I was in high school. She had a great time on both trips and spent a little time in Dublin, Ireland on her way back to England.

Joy and I celebrated our 25th anniversary by meeting up with Allie in London and



The weekend of the event (just before Thanksgiving) she goes without sleep for days on end and runs like a maniac to get her work done but she loves it.

THE PAPER CHASE

Jake completed his degree in Communications Studies at Grand Valley State University and graduated with honors. He finished college very strongly and we are proud of what he accomplished.

This summer he took the LSAT and his score earned him a full-ride three-year scholarship at Western Michigan University Cooley Law School here in Lansing. He started this fall and so far law school is going very well. With the scholarship and living at home, his only school expense is for books, so that's a pretty sweet deal.

Jake and his girlfriend Lindsey enjoyed living in the same town last year while they were both attending Grand Valley. They are back in the long-distance-relationship mode. I know it's hard on them but they make it work; they celebrated their fifth year dating anniversary this year.

Jake was an intern for the Michigan Republican Party this summer as well and did a lot of research and writing for them. He got the assist for Caitlin.



Lately he's been refinishing the furniture (wood parts) on his AK-47. He is doing a very painstaking, high quality job. I'm impressed with his patience and attention to detail.

I know it's not easy living at home when you're 23 but we are really enjoying having him here for this season of his life.

FAREWELL TO "MY FRIEND"

Guannan, our first exchange student, graduated from Lansing Christian this spring. After living with us for three years, he is probably permanently twisted and scarred. We miss him.

His parents came see him graduate and it was a real pleasure to meet them. They don't speak much English but Guannan did a faithful job of translating (we think). After they left here they spent a couple weeks exploring the western United States before returning to China.

Guannan came back to the U.S. this fall to start mechanical engineering studies at the University of Massachusetts. He's



enjoying his roommate and classes but I am sure he desperately misses us. How can he not?

JIHAD GOES SOUTH

Jihoon, a/k/a Andy, a/k/a Jihad, was our other graduating senior last year. We really enjoyed having this happy young South Korean with us. He's hilarious and was the perfect foil for Guannan's dry humor.

Jihad, er, Jihoon pitched on LCS's baseball team and looked really good doing it. He's a very good pitcher.



Jihoon spent the summer looking dashing in and around Incheon, and retaking the SAT and ACT. He went to Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Florida this fall but I think he's not going to pursue that further. His original plan was to become an air traffic controller, a lucrative career in the United States, but he found out that it's much less attractive in Korea, so he's considering other options. By Korean law, he has to start 18 months of mandatory military service right about now so he has some time to think about his options while he completes his duties.

Jihoon came back to Michigan for Thanksgiving and we were thrilled to see

him. I would like to think that he came back just to see us, but the fact that his brother lives in his old room here might have also had something to do with it. More on that in a minute....



very good-natured about being dragged along to car shows. Actually, I think he enjoys it.

Carl has started on the JV basketball team and will be eligible to play next semester (exchange students are automatically ineligible their first semester). Look for victorious basket shooting pictures in next year's newsletter.

OUT WITH THE OLD, IN WITH THE NEW

On to our new exchange students! I'll start with Jianqiao Wang, known around these parts as Carl. Carl comes to us from the city of

Korla in the far western part of China. (Factoid: China only has one time zone.)

Carl, a junior at Lansing Christian, is a very happy, pleasant young man. (He is



on the right in the picture above, with Glenn—up next—on the left.) I can only imagine how hard it is to start school in a new country in a different language. His English is steadily improving and he is

AND LAST, BUT CERTAINLY NOT LEAST

The eighth of our ever-growing brood¹ is Jinyoung Ha, Andy's younger brother, who goes by Glenn. Glenn is a freshman at LCS so we may have him with us for four years.

Glenn is a quiet boy but he has a devilish sense of humor. He is doing great in school and is quick to lend a hand around the house. Like Carl, he's been dragged to Olympic Broil for plenty of car shows and has survived the artery-clogging fried food there quite well.



Glenn is singing in choir at school and has a great bass voice, a surprise from someone so young. Or Jinyoung, in this case. (See how I did that?)

¹ Or ninth, since Jennifer Smith, Allison's former roommate, lived with us for much of the year. She's now living closer to MSU's campus, where she is attending.

I'm looking forward to standing next to him when the old farts are invited on stage to sing Messiah with the choir at the annual LCS Christmas concert. I need someone to cover my mistakes.

think I would do better if I drove the 5K. I could do that.

She continues to chair the board at Hidden Treasures thrift store



and to volunteer regularly there. The store, which supports LCS, is doing very well.

Joy handles the vast majority of our landlord tenant hearings and is an invaluable part of our firm's legal team. I greatly appreciate all the work she does.

ver (see the white cliffs?) and had a wonderful visit. This was our second trip to England (we spent our 9th anniversary there), our first with one of our kids. It was a wonderful way to celebrate a great quarter-century of marriage. I'm looking forward to the next one.

MY PART IN THE FARCE

So we all know that the part about me is usually just about cars. That's the case this year. We went to Topsail Island for spring break and I found a car in the garage of the house we rented. I also bought that car, a 1985 Mercedes 280SL which was purchased new in El Salvador by an employee of the U.S. embassy.

In the coldest part of March my friend Bruce Weeks and I took a road trip to Iowa to pick up a Corvair Bruce was buying from my other friends John and Teresa Miller. It was the coldest good time I have had in a while. A video ensued:

<http://tinyurl.com/lu36z9f>



AND NOW WE HAVE HERE MY LOVELY WIFE

Now for the news about Joy. Joy continues to be an amazing wife, mother, daughter, attorney and friend. She has been running and swimming a lot with Erin House, who lives across the street. "Run three, swim one!" Joy ran another 5K this fall and won her age bracket. I

part of our firm's legal team. I greatly appreciate all the work she does.

Somewhere in between everything else she does the chauffeur thing, driving kids everywhere they need to go.

As previously mentioned, we spent a week in June in England in celebration of our 25th anniversary (the picture with the Imperial, below, was taken before we left on the actual date we had on the actual date). We spent time in London and Do-





cruise-ins at our local Olympic Broil. For me it's not just the cars but the time as a family that makes it special. I am incredibly fortunate to have a wife that not only tolerates but encourages my hobby.



I spent a lot of time this summer working on the Mercedes and the Imperial. We also finally got the bugs ironed out of the Corvair convertible which is now running great. High points for the year

She's the best.

Jake, Caty and I made a cool video of the Mercedes, which you can see here:

<http://tinyurl.com/lxx8fce>

This fall I took the Mercedes on a road trip to Washington, DC to spend a long weekend with my good friend John Naber. We had a wonderful visit and I also got to meet the original owner of the Mercedes, Jim Trum, who is in the picture with me at the bottom right of this page.

In case you hadn't guessed, Joy got me a GoPro for Christmas last year. Here are a couple other movies if you liked the others. Snowmobiles:

<http://tinyurl.com/lopxqgm>

Tractor:

<http://tinyurl.com/k4wsqfw>

FAMILY NEWS

As previously mentioned, we went to Topsail Island again this year for spring break. Also along were my mother, Joy's parents, Joy's sister Gay Ellen, Caty's friend Anne, Guannan and Jihoon. The rest of our kids were not able to come because their college schedules unfortunately didn't coincide with the LCS school schedule.

We also made a couple of visits to the Kalamazoo Air Zoo. It's a great little museum.

Not too much earth-shattering is going on in either of our extended families.

Our house is always busy with kids and their friends. We love the bustle and though we know it won't last, these are good days. I hope your year was also good, and that you and your family have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Oh, and nine newsletter car pictures this year. I think that's a record for me.

—THE WITTES

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for me included taking various groups of us to the Detroit Auto Show, Autorama, the Woodward Dream Cruise, the Grand Rapids Metro Cruise and numerous

