

HAPPY NEW YEAR

with love, the MacKinnons



The Mack's have made a big move after 24 plus years of being in Colorado. We moved to Clemson, South Carolina. We are giving lake life a try! We have moved into our interim house while our house on Lake Hartwell is being built. We will continue our jobs in Denver as we have an apartment with Katie in the Tech Center. One good thing about COVID is we can work remote.

Katie just got back from being in Italy for three months with an amazing opportunity, she had a great time. She plans to get back into the telecom industry.

Halle is a junior at Clemson, studying structural engineering and has another soccer season to go. Go Tigers!

We will miss Colorado as we loved all the mountain towns and the out door activities but we will especially miss the great friendships we made!

Please come visit, our new address:

201 Payne Lane
Clemson, SC 29631

Oakley more interested in the water than the picture. He is four and keeps up busy everyday!

May 2023 be a fabulous year!
Love, Mike, Annie, Katie and Halle

THE MACKIEWICZ FAMILY
201 PAYNE LANE
CLEMSON, SC 29631



Greetings from Westminster, Colorado!

The Christmas season has officially come and gone - so HAPPY NEW YEAR! As we pen this Christmas letter, it is time to reflect on the year that was. Normally it's difficult to recall the start of the year, but that was not the case in 2022. I can honestly say this year started on fire. We received an evacuation notice via text on December 30, 2021; not an ideal message when you are in Scottsdale with an aging kitty still lingering at home. The fire reached close by, but fortunately, our home is still standing. The fire was immediately followed by a snow storm, which we returned to, making the trip home from the airport a bit harrowing. We did have a home to return to; some friends of ours were not so lucky (more than 1,000 homes were lost). There was already a housing shortage and that situation was exacerbated by the fire. The investigation has not been officially released but, since we live in an age of speculation, I might as well join in and say the fire was caused by an underground coal mine fire that's been burning for 150 years.

On a much smaller scale, our beloved and dismal professional football team could be described as a dumpster fire. We got rid of most of the coaches and were put up for sale. My efforts to raise money to buy the team resulted in about \$8 from my golf bag. I couldn't find anyone to invest the rest of the over \$4 billion needed for the winning offer. I'm still working, so maybe I can save up enough company stock to purchase the team the next time around (let me know if you're interested). Based on the trajectory the team is on, it shouldn't be long before the Broncos are affordable.

Speaking of work, this has been quite an eventful year. My team started out about half staffed, grew, got a new boss, shrank, and restructured. I've been on the same team with the same boss until this year (my 10th anniversary). About the only person that has put up with me more over that time is my wife. Hopefully, we can all keep going a few more years (wife included).

No Spring Break this year, but the St. Patrick's Day Parade resumed, bringing new friends to join in on the fun with us. Post-Covid meant we had to look for a new observation point along the parade route. Our traditional spot on 17th Street ceased operation during the pandemic. We ended up at the Tap 14 rooftop bar on Blake Street and the weather cooperated. The bar serves only Colorado beers; while there are a lot of great beers made in Colorado, "McGuinness" is not one of them. Next time, I'll try a sample before ordering 1 or 2 or 6... Definitely looking for an alternative in 2023.

We attended a Nuggets basketball game this spring, our first in more than 15 years! The seats were close enough to appreciate just how big the players were, including the Joker. He's the reigning league MVP and the only way to watch him locally is to go to the games. I don't just say that because of the experience, but also because there has been an ongoing dispute with the TV company and the team, so there hasn't been any coverage. Hopefully, that will get resolved before the Joker retires, but it doesn't look promising. Once upon a time, I used to play basketball. Now watching it makes me lose my breath. Maybe this will be the year to start doing something aerobic again. For starters, I think I can still jump high enough to clear a jump rope.

Our vacations still need to coincide with school, as Amy continues her teaching career in Kindergarten, and our end of school year plans included not one, but two trips; a graduation party in Virginia, and a road trip to Yellowstone. Our niece, Margaret (the child formerly known as Maggie), has grown up and graduated from Virginia Tech. We enjoyed a pool party hosted by her parents that included lots of friends and relatives and ... frogs. Frogs seemed to frequently find their way into the pool to join the fun. On a personal note, I also got to operate the riding lawn mower. It was a reminder of my youth when we got to ride the mower over, around, and through everything on our grandparents' farm. I'm a slightly better driver now, as I only ran over a few minor obstacles, and managed to keep the mower out of the pool completely.

After the party we spent the week in Williamsburg with Lisa, Bob, and Camille. We enjoyed the colonial experience from Jamestown to Yorktown. Navigating, however, was a different story. Although a Colonial Parkway exists, we never could seem to find the entrance; it was always the turn in the rear view mirror. The GPS doesn't really capture all the trees and vegetation that obscure the view. Hopefully, I didn't scare the passengers too badly. We also spent a lovely day at the beach with Kevin's family.


We arrived home from Virginia and promptly packed the car for a drive to Cody, Wyoming, and made it to Casper at sunset. As we drove the rest of the way, I was reminded how solitary the roads are in Wyoming. Thought there would at least be a few deer in the headlights... Instead, the deer were lying in wait for us in Cody. In the morning we woke to deer practically peeping through the back window. I didn't realize the continental breakfast included wildlife.

We spent the rest of the week with Mom, Carl, Lamont, Justi, and the rest of the Muchmore/Huffman clan in a log cabin half way between Cody and Yellowstone (everything is far apart). We made several trips into the park and observed buffalo, elk, deer, and bears. The first park visit was to Old Faithful. It was Amy's first time in Yellowstone and there's an expectation to see this dramatic plume of water shooting high into the air. The sky was overcast and it had been raining off and on. When the geyser leapt from the ground you heard the noise. However, the background camouflaged the water so well that we had to look closely to convince ourselves something was actually happening. Right after the geyser finished, the rain came pouring down so we didn't get a second chance. Next time we'll make sure to order clear skies on the day we visit. We saw many sights including the Roosevelt Lodge Cabins (and many people doing dumb things near gigantic buffalo), Yellowstone Falls, the Petrified Tree, the Mud Volcano, and just about every bathroom along the way. I think that means we are officially old now. Fortunately, for us, the heavy rain came the week after we departed. The rain melted the snow pack causing the river to flood, which washed out portions of the road and caused the park to close for a few weeks.

In July, we spent a weekend in Pueblo for the annual Kindergarten rocket launch with Ball Aerospace and ULA. Although it's been hot in the past, this year was triple digits warm. There were several delays before the first of three rockets launched. This made for some cranky little people (and a few big people, as well). During the delays, there were still many hobby rockets being launched. Amy's class payload was inserted into rocket 2, and unfortunately, this rocket was also delayed and eventually, the launch window closed. So, for the first time in 10 years, the launches of rockets 2 and 3 were scrubbed (aka canceled). On the bright side, most of Amy's class attended the event and no one passed out from the heat. Also, there was no issue with payload recovery. We'll give it a go again next year.

The very next weekend, we journeyed to Las Vegas where we expected the weather to also be in triple digits. Deplaning, we were surprised to be greeted with overcast skies AND humidity. In past years, we've attended several graduations that were incredibly hot. Maybe they should hold graduation in July for the out-of-towners? Anyway, we got a chance to spend time with my sister, Toni, and her family. This included our niece, Devynne, and her triplets. The triplets don't yet have day jobs where they sit behind a desk. They move around and make a lot more noise in a few hours than I'm used to seeing in days. Our nephew, Dakota, and his family, also made an appearance. They added a couple more young ones into the mix. One of the nice things about being on vacation is getting out of the normal day-to-day routine. On the other hand, this probably felt calm compared to Amy's day-to-day routine. Actually, this was our second time seeing everyone, as they joined us in Yellowstone, but that was outdoors, so the effect wasn't the same.

While in Vegas, we did some gambling at South Point and Silverton casinos. The Silverton has an aquarium large enough for a diver to feed the stingrays, so that caught our attention. We saw Shin Lim's awesome magic show at the Mirage. Upon entry we



were given some playing cards for participation. However, there were directions involved. I'm not always interested in following directions (especially when the voice is a familiar one), so the magic of the card trick was lost on me. After the show, we found ourselves waiting in the lobby for a torrential downpour to subside. It rained several times like that while we were there. We later discovered there was a Covid spike during our time in Las Vegas. In another speculation of mine, I believe the rain caused Covid. It couldn't have been all the people huddled together to get out of the rain. We "may" or "may not" have caught Covid while traveling, I wouldn't know, as it gives me plausible deniability at work if I don't take the test.

From Vegas we flew to Seattle. We stayed down the street from Pike Market at the State Hotel. With our timeshare, we've gotten used to a bit more space than a hotel room, so it was an adjustment to figure out where to put everything. We visited the fish market, took the ferry to Bainbridge Island, saw the amazing Chihuly museum at the base of the Space Needle, and watched boats go through Ballard Locks. We took an awesome underground tour, which gives a colorful perspective of the city's history. Had we foreseen the fate of our football team, we also would have returned their quarterback. While there, we also got the chance to spend time with cousin Joe and reconnect with an old friend from Cheyenne, Andrew. It turns out Andrew and his wife, Mary, share a common interest with us; they enjoy the taste of wine and there were quite a few places in the area to choose from. We chose Mark Ryan and a few other places north of Redmond. We look forward to doing that again. By the way, in case you are wondering, it was sunny in Seattle.

We were fortunate to use our time share points not once or twice, but three times, to travel to the closest destination to us - Estes Park. We booked weekends in August to see the meteor shower, September to see the leaves turning, and October just to have some fun. It is about 40 minutes from my job, so it makes for a great weekend getaway. We hope to do that again this year. Perhaps it won't be cold and rainy during the meteor shower in 2023.

We celebrated Amy's birthday in September with a small lawn party over Labor Day weekend. Someday, we will have a front patio for such occasions. Until then, we make do with a shade tent on the lawn and move to the garage when the mosquitos get hungry. We may have waited a little too long to move this year. I observed the person next to me had several large bites, but it didn't immediately occur to me that I may also be getting bitten. In my defense, there were (many, many) Margaritas involved, so logic may have been a bit askew.

I volunteered for 2 days of the Great American Beer Festival this Fall. Although there were fewer brewers than in past years, it would take at least a week (and a strong liver) to sample all the beers.

For some Halloween fun, we went to a fabulous haunted house in Bennett this year. Our friend, Christie, has invited us in the past, but this was the first year we made it. Her family decorates their house with different themes each year - this year was spiders, skeletons, and an enormous pirate ship hull. The fun continues into a garage full of costumed teenagers lurking around every corner just waiting to scare you. Amy still has a loud voice, even when she's a little under the weather.

Amy's big news this year, she was nominated by Ball Aerospace and received her very first teaching award! She was recognized as the 2022 K-12 Teacher of the Year through AIAA, the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics, Rocky Mountain Division. There was a wonderful ceremony in Lone Tree, during a fast moving snowstorm - not such a fun driving experience! Unfortunately, she had laryngitis and was only able to squeak out a few comments. She sorely regrets not actually thanking the Academy... she forgot to say thank you to Ball! So if you know anyone there - let them know that she truly feels honored to have been selected.

We flew to one of our favorite places over Thanksgiving, Avila Beach in California. Despite some initial travel issues, we

made it (no, we were not flying Southwest, that time). We spent the first night in Morro Bay, just north of Avila. The next morning, we took a fabulous walk along the bay past the sea otters. Later in the week, we kayaked in the bay where, in addition to sea otters, we saw seals, who looked a bit peculiar. They were lying on their backs in shallow water with their heads and fins sticking out of the water. Apparently Pilates has caught on with them, too.

We made a trip to Santa Barbara to meet our niece, Claire, and her boyfriend, Jeremy. We enjoyed the visit and the location immensely. However, we did not enjoy the gas prices on the way back to Avila. In November, gas was around \$6/gallon. Maybe if they switched to selling it by the quart/liter, the price wouldn't seem so bad. Back in Avila we made several trips to our favorite wine tasting room, Alapay. Thankfully, we can walk there, so no gas is required. We also ventured out to Paso Robles to try some wine at the vineyards. We appreciated the ambiance at the vineyards; however, the wine was still better at Alapay.

We made a few discoveries this trip. The GPS is no longer a necessary item, we can get by on actually reading the signs. Fall is the best time to visit, as apparently summers are busy, foggy, windy, and colder than you would expect. So we are looking forward to going back next year, in the fall. Sadly, Amy just informed me that she has not made a reservation yet and our timeshare is hard to come by at this location, so I guess I need to keep my flippers crossed.

Amy's brother, Kevin, and family arrived the week before Christmas. We got to spend time with them including a trip to Camp Christmas at Belmar Park in Lakewood. The venue is mostly outdoors and the time of day was in the evening. We happened to pick the evening that the temperature dropped to below freezing and the snow fell, so that was a bit of a challenge. Afterwards, we enjoyed a delicious Mexican meal. Unfortunately, no Casa Bonita this year, but hopefully next year they will be open again.

Thank you cousin Nicole for the many postcards throughout the year. We purchased a stack of postcards to send back, but only managed to send one. Hopefully, we can whittle down the pile next year. We are not always timely with our correspondence (as this letter demonstrates).

Rhett and Tori had a baby girl named Emery. Braxton, Rhett, and Margaret graduated from high school/college. Tanner returned to college from his Mission in Oregon (somehow I thought he was in Washington the whole time). Morgan and Tyler moved to Buffalo and were covered in snow. Hattie and Reid are expecting baby number two in the spring, just about the time we may see Morgan and Tyler emerge from their "igloo".

We had a trip planned to Scottsdale during the Southwest debacle over Christmas. We were one of the many thousands of people whose plans were thwarted. Amy's biggest fear is going to jail (not sure where that comes from) and let's just say, the police were called because we were in the wrong line at DIA... Good news, we made it out of the airport with bags in tow, only 5 hours of our lives wasted standing in line and on the phone, and no criminal records. We decided to cancel our trip, stay home for a staycation, and yet, still didn't finish the Christmas letter on time...

Say a prayer for our Moms as they are facing health challenges, as well as numerous family members and friends who are struggling during this holiday time. And a prayer for Amy's Uncle Joe who passed away before the holidays.

We wish you all the best in 2023. Here is to good health, time with family and friends, fulfilling new resolutions (already attempted exercise twice in this New Year), and many wonderful memories.

Much Love,

Royce & Amy

Mr. Royce Muchmore
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happy new year