

Dear Family and Friends,



Well, it took five Christmas letters to be able to say this, but Erica and Ryan are proud to announce you can finally call them Dr. Staehling *and* Dr. Truchelut! After Erica's successful defense **last December**, we

celebrated by taking a mid-winter's trip to Iceland, which we realize probably sounds insane but can assure you was actually amazing. We were treated to a beautiful aurora display, fascinating Nordic culture and geology, and plentiful salmon that cost less per-pound than lettuce. AAA+++++ country, would visit again!



After a raucous combined birthday and graduation party for Erica in **February**, and a trip to Asheville, NC to celebrate friend Christine's 30th, it was time for the real fun to begin, as Ryan spent the next several months deep in dissertation bunker mentality, mining the depths of Atlantic hurricane climatology for hidden gems of



structure, meaning, and occasional wisdom. Tiring of this focus on the Atlantic Ocean, Erica found time to have some Pacific adventures with friends Melisa, Al, and baby Violet in **May**. She spent a week exploring Hawaii and catching up, as well as acquiring a crippling and expensive macadamia nut addiction. Meanwhile on the mainland, Ryan continued furiously writing, occasionally finding time to sleep and eat.

Summer was very busy, as PhD work raced to a conclusion, but time was somehow found to enjoy primo seats at a Rolling Stones concert in Orlando with Ryan's parents, and even for Ryan to successfully defend his summer track series title. Erica's parents moved from Baltimore to an east Tallahassee home in



June, finding no state income tax for excessive humidity an acceptable trade. Ryan defended his dissertation in **July**, bringing his 25 years of school to a rousing conclusion and earning the Westcott fountain jump traditional for Florida State graduates.



Finally both liberated from the confines of grad school, Erica and Ryan made up for lost high-pointing time with a Northeast mega-trip in **August**. Along with Erica's dad, we climbed the formidable summits of both New York (Mt. Marcy)



and Maine (Katahdin) to bring our high point total to 21 of 50, as well as visiting friends and consuming many, many lobsters along the way.

As the calendar turned to fall, Ryan was dismayed to note in **October** that the inexorable march of time carried him out of his 20s into whatever lies beyond. However, he was consoled by the spectacle of Shrimptober VII (Tagline: Make Seafood Great Again), with special guests John and Steve, as well as both sets of parents.



We also found time to attend the beautiful Nadd-Cantwell nuptials in scenic West Point in **November**, which also allowed us to visit friends Dan and Sarah, before enjoying a quiet Thanksgiving in Tallahassee.

And so it came to pass that 2015 was the year in which our great doctoral quests reached their ends. As we look ahead to an exciting and refreshingly dissertation-free 2016, we wish you and yours a very **Merry Christmas** and **Happy New Year!**

Ryan & Erica

