

Dear Friends and Family,

It's hard to believe it's only been a year since our last newsletter, as our **January** preparations for Issac's arrival seem impossibly remote. Our punctual little buddy clocked into the world at



2:06 A.M. on **February** 2nd, weighing 7 pounds 8 ounces and measuring 19.5" long. Befitting a year of dizzying highs and lows, Isaac confused his up and down, as

during hour 25 of labor he was discovered to be breech. This required an emergency c-section, from which both Erica and Isaac emerged healthy but exhausted. As you might imagine, we haven't completely caught up on sleep since then, either.

In **March**, we celebrated Isaac's baptism, and despite no actual highpointing in 2017, Erica was pictured and Ryan was interviewed in a front-page article in the Wall Street Journal on state highpointing. Isaac worked on his sleep and rolling over skills in **April**, and in **May** enjoyed his first airplane ride as we visited friends and family in Baltimore. This was a working vacation, as Erica was a bridesmaid and Ryan made his debut as a wedding officiant for friends Elaine and Matt.

Erica's positively European five months of paid maternity leave from Florida State University came to an end in **June**, and now Isaac enjoys spending time with his Mom-mom and Grandpa Staehling on weekdays. In **July**, Ryan notched his 8th consecutive win in Gulf Winds Track Club's summer track series, somehow, while the



heretofore average-sized Isaac began what can only be described as an unrelenting growth spurt to the uppermost percentiles of height and weight. We wrapped up our summer in South Carolina in

August, viewing the total solar eclipse.

Weather turned stormy in **September**, as nightmarish Hurricane Irma threatened Florida. The silver lining is the eventual impacts in Tallahassee were minimal and our WeatherTiger

forecasts were distributed across the entire USA Today Network in the peak of Irma madness. That national exposure, four cover stories in the Tallahassee Democrat, a new piece for the Washington Post, and a busy but rewarding agricultural season helped our business grow dramatically in 2017.

We were shocked in **October** by the sudden loss of our dear friend, Drew Swope, a former groomsman, true confidant, and sometimes literal partner-in-crime of Ryan's since high school. While nothing could prepare us for this staggering loss, attending his funeral in Atlanta offered an opportunity to grieve with old friends and celebrate his remarkable but all-too-short life.

November brought time with friends and family in central Florida for Thanksgiving, and we also managed to sneak another fun acronym through peer review (Integrated Storm Activity over the American Continent) in a research article we co-authored about U.S. hurricane landfall droughts. We are looking forward to closing out the year at the wedding of friends Hannah and Michael at the end of **December** in Jacksonville Beach, where Erica will also be a bridesmaid.

As you can see, between growing a business, trying to keep up with friends and family, and helping an adorable but incompetent small human learn to eat, sleep, and triple in size, it's been a long year. (Isaac, as of press time, weighs over 25.5 pounds and is about 31" tall, solidly 98th percentile in each category.) We savored the highs and rolled with the punches in 2017, surviving and, when possible, advancing. What more can be said—onward to 2018.

Merry Christmas
and
Happy New Year!

Ryan & Erica

P.S. Chloe is fine, in case you were wondering.

