

I just finished putting up my 8,000<sup>th</sup> Christmas light and was handed the initial draft of the Christmas Letter... So I'll take a stab at taking the list (provided by Catherine), check it twice (so I can exaggerate as necessary) and send you all the naughty and nice tidbits from the Matos world... So without further ado, after a 2 year break, the Matos family newsletter returns...

Travels: We spent a lot of time in the Wagon Queen Family Truckster™. Early this summer the family's biggest Star Wars fan (no not Dave... Marc) heard that R2D2 and his crew would be making an appearance at the Space and Rocket Center in Huntsville. So we packed up and went off to that wretched hive of scum and villainy to meet them. We spent a day at Mallard Point enjoying the wave pool and gigantic waterslides. On the way back we had to make a roadtrip to the Unclaimed Baggage Depot (where Marc bought his own DS) and a side trip to Cathedral Caverns in the mountains of Alabama. The entire family highly recommends the Caverns... Marc heartily endorses the Baggage Depot. We spent Catherine's birthday on a romantic 12-hour family drive to Pittsburgh for lots of sight-seeing, a wedding and a trip to Kennywood (Marc absolutely loved the coasters!). On the way back we surprised the boys with a stop at the Great Wolf Lodge where they slept in a 'cave' and had some indoor waterpark fun. In September the boys took a trip to Florida with Grandma and Pop Matos – after a few days of relaxing, Catherine and Dave joined them at Hogwarts at Universal Islands of Adventure... Boy I'm tired just from writing this.

Marc: Managed to finish up a successful year of Kindergarten (only had the principal call us 1 time). His love of being read to and his steel trap memory led to him win the Accelerated Reader award for his class. First grade is going pretty well, though the homework battles have intensified and on a couple occasions he's managed to convince his teacher, the nurse and his parents that he is sick just long enough to get home. He is reading well, which we're not sure we like. ☺ He is having fun playing soccer [spring - U6 Thrashers and fall - U7 Flames, oddly both Atlanta hockey team names ;) ], both seasons were coached by the greatest U6/7 coach ever, his dad. His 6<sup>th</sup> birthday was based on one of his favorite things, Phineas and Ferb, but who doesn't love P&F? It went over well until Dr. Doofenschmirtz stole all the lawn gnomes in the area and since Agent P was encased in paper mache, the kids had to search all over for them. Whether it be Lego or the real thing, the other thing he simply can't live without is Star Wars (I have no idea where that comes from). We're surprised he isn't quoting lines from the Star Wars movies all the time yet. During the trip to Universal IofA he rode the "worst ride ever" (the ride through Hogwarts), and then promptly tried to knock out his front tooth getting on a kiddie coaster. The tooth lasted another day before coming out- thankfully it was loose already. His 5<sup>th</sup> tooth fell out all on its own just this week. He is still obsessed with Lego (his cat and the toy). Over the summer he went on his first sleepover at a non-relative's with his friend from Kindergarten. He enjoyed his second round of swimming lessons, but he still has a tendency to sink like a rock due to a complete lack of body fat (wish we all had that problem).

Sean: Our new human addition since the last issue of the newsletter, finds (thanks to his big brother) enormous amounts of humor in "Knock-knock-who's there-Fart!" jokes (but who doesn't?) and P&F. He's progressed from one word sentences (Mo! and Peas! (for please)) to talking our ears off. Unlike his brother, Sean did not like the blizzard of snow we got in February. He actually eats his vegetables, generally straight out of a can. He's a complete Momma's Boy, and loves to stroke her hair. Late spring strawberry picking led to him eating as many as he picked. He loves to paint, color and swim. Loves putt-putt, and congratulates everyone with "Nice shot!" but is convinced he wins every time he sinks the ball. He went trick-or-treating as Darth Vader to Marc's Anakin. Loves to take a shower every chance he can get. He had a low-key 2<sup>nd</sup> birthday party with a few friends at the zoo, but he loved it. Sean was a real joy to be around until a couple weeks ago when the full blown terrible two's kicked in, now everything (and I mean everything) is "me do it!" and "No!". He is amazingly good at giving you the Stinkeye, too.

Catherine: Started the year off well, receiving news that she would receive tenure and a promotion to Associate Professor, which immediately lifted a huge weight off her shoulders. Work is as busy as ever, though, with coordinating a growing Dual Degree program with Georgia Tech and acting as course coordinator for Intro Stats. She was also shang-hai'd into serving as the State Director for the Mathematical Association of America. She is thankful that her job allows her the flexibility to spend most of the summer with the boys, so they can go to puppet shows, the park, the zoo, etc. In her never-ending quest to make things easier on herself, she taught DiffEqs for the first time in several years. She continues with online and hybrid stats classes.

Dave: Still getting his job done with too few employees. Decided against hockey tickets this season (figures they're in first in the SE Division). Coaching Marc's soccer team. Ran the Peachtree Roadrace 10K for the 9th time (finished in an hour), came in 2<sup>nd</sup> in his age group in the Lake Spivey 5k. Added a home-built 18 foot wide by 10 foot high Santa's Workshop to his Christmas light extravaganza this year (now just have to figure out where to store it). Spent a good chunk of his free time in the fall tiling the kitchen backsplash with an ambitious hopscotch design, which turned out fabulous.

Cats: Tyr (8) is doing well as the eldest cat in the household, he had to have bladder stone surgery earlier this year but is doing fine. Lego (almost 2) is 100% Marc's cat, and sleeps with him at night and wakes him up in the morning. Both Calli (3 ½) and Lego enjoy sleeping on whoever is available. Lego has taken up the sport of Christmas Tree climbing, but has only managed to tip a tree over once.

I am not entirely sure what all the screaming is downstairs... probably lightsaber fighting over the last of the figgy pudding, I better check it out. With that I will wish you a Merry Christmas and our best wishes for a Happy, Healthy and Prosperous New Year.  
Love, Dave, Catherine, Marc, Sean, Tyr, Calli and Lego