

Dear Family & Friends,

The astute reader may observe an anomaly in the following pattern: 2005, 2006, __, 2008. Yes, it's true, we didn't manage to send a Christmas letter out last year. Katy has put the blame squarely on Ryan, which is sadly true. It was not so much a problem of "forgot" but rather "procrastinated" until the point where it would be "ridiculous." Ryan then thought it would be funny to send out of a Fourth of July letter -- as it would have given the document the undivided attention it deserves without all the distraction of those *other* Christmas cards -- but again the procrastination monster reared its ugly head and a Pearl Harbor day letter didn't have the same funny effect, so here we sit.

In truth, it has been a very big two years for us with most of those really big changes happening in 2007. Last year Katy and I* picked up shop and moved back to Minnesota. While it was sad to leave all the friends we had made in Illinois, it has been great to be reunited with family and friends back in Minnesota.

Upon moving back Katy was hired by Land O'Lakes as a food technologist in their industrial cheese division. "Industrial cheese" is really more of a term that I've made up rather than the company. It's the cheese group at Land O Lakes that sells queso dip to restaurants, so it's not the stuff you'd buy in the grocery store. In my world, if the product is packaged in large enough quantities to kill a man by falling on him, it's industrial, no matter what the company calls it. Regardless, Katy has since been promoted to the butter group where she is currently working. It's not actually a promotion, but retail butter is a cash cow product** for Land O'Lakes so working there adds a bit of extra security to your position.

One might think that working in a large corporation would rein in some of Katy's antics that she started when working at Kim Labs.



But sadly, no. She is still the spice of life to her coworkers.

Since our return, I have been working for a seven person software company in Bloomington. I frequently get asked what our company does, so here we go: EmergingSoft is a leading provider of resource scheduling software integrated into the Microsoft messaging platform built on .NET technologies. There? Confused yet? Simply put, we build software that helps big companies let their employees reserve conference rooms. Turns out that when you have thousands of people, figuring out who has Conference Room B from 3 to 5 is a big problem. The second logical question is what I do there. While my official title is Senior Software Engineer, my day-to-day work falls somewhere between software engineer, business analyst, IT specialist and gimpy circus clown. Small company. I wear many hats.

* Notice what I did there? I just changed to the first person part way through the document. That's totally bad (and reveals that it's actually Ryan writing this letter), but I'm betting that you're not going to call me out on it. Are you really going to be "that guy"?

** The dairy jokes practically write themselves.

In addition to moving back to Minnesota, we have also purchased a house in Inver Grove Heights. By purchasing a house, we of course mean a bank purchased the house from another bank, and now the new bank lets us live in it in exchange for sending them money periodically and washing their president's car twice a month. We thought that last part was a little bit weird too, but we weren't really reading carefully when signing the mountain of paperwork and now we're stuck with it. We're first-time home buyers. What can we say? You'll notice that previous statement doesn't read "the US taxpayers purchased a house" for which we are thankful. Fingers crossed.

In recent months Katy has developed a multitude of hobbies. She attends a cheese tasting class once a week, joined a ballet class, and participates in a gymnastics class twice a week. Needless to say, she's keeping very busy, and I'd have some sort of sarcastic remark here, except she looks so gosh-darn good in a tutu.

My only hobby outside of anything in front of a computer is hockey. I play in a league of adult men that has a spectrum of divisions spanning all skill levels so that you can find one close to your own personal aptitude. Needless to say, I'm near the bottom. Last year we barely won any games, but this year we're over .500, so that is fun. What's more fun is watching a bunch of grown men fall on their butts in about the same way you'd expect to see from 5-year olds.

Well, that about wraps it up. The above rambling is probably too verbose for the youngsters, so to get everyone involved, here is the Morlok Christmas Letter Word-Find! Now the whole family can play!

Christmas Letter Word Search		
Z	Z	A
P	H	A
W	R	D
Z	H	O
A	T	O
S	A	I
A	A	S
K	U	M
I	X	X
Q	V	W
W	D	E
E	S	U
K	F	R
W	L	V
I	C	M
B	B	N
P	L	B
G	U	G
A	A	X
G	T	L
T	A	R
E	N	E
O	Y	H
R	T	E
E	A	E
R	Q	K
N	S	M
C	H	A
S	A	N
R	S	B
A	A	T
C	P	D
E	I	X
F	Z	C
E	E	B
Z	I	S
X	Z	S
C	B	S
B	S	S

BALLET	BUTTER	CHEESE
CHRISTMAS	EMERGINGSOFT	HOUSE
HOCKEY	GYMNASTICS	KATY
LANDOLAKES	MINNESOTA	MORLOK
PROCRASTINATE	RYAN	

Be sure to wait by your mailboxes for next year's letter with the solutions!

We hope this letter finds everyone in the best of health and that you all have a truly happy holiday season.

In Christ,

Ryan & Katy Morlok