



# Happy Holidays



Frohe Weihnachten! That's Austrian-German for "Merry Christmas". Have you heard of "Krampus", the horned goat-man who is Santa's companion in Austria's Christmas tradition? My kids have and they love him. Austrian folklore tells us that while Santa Claus visits on Christmas to leave presents for good children, Krampus visits to snatch naughty children up in his wicker basket and drag them down to hell. Pretty harsh! Celebrating Krampus folklore is great if you haven't gotten quite enough Halloween, or if you've grown tired of that uppity "Elf on the Shelf".

Big News: Leiha and I saw a celebrity at Ishnala Supper Club in Lake Delton. While ordering an Old Fashioned at the bar, Leiha looked to her right told a gentleman that he "looked like that guy from that show". He mumbled a "yeah, yeah" and wandered away. Turns out he was that guy from that show, Topher Grace from "That 70s Show" (also the bad guy in "Spiderman 3" for you nerds). He later confirmed his identity with our group then kayaked away with his family down Mirror Lake.

Leiha and I also made a trip to Ireland this year. We had a wonderful time and unusually great weather per the locals. I confirmed that they do not have Lucky Charms, Irish Spring soap, or corned beef and cabbage in Ireland, however I find an abundance of Guinness beer and the occasional older man who looks and dresses like the Boston Celtics logo. If you ever go be sure to check out Dick Macks in Dingle, Newgrange in County Meath, and of course kiss the Blarney stone. Literature fans should also take a tour of Dublin, we saw Jonathan Swift's house and the hotel where Bram Stroker stole Oscar Wilde's fiancé (do you think he even minded?).



Lilah is now in the fourth grade and is now doing swim team all year round. She's gotten quite good at the backstroke and has gotten very proficient at flip turns. Leiha and I know how to swim, but we aren't "swimmers". It's been fun watching Lilah practice and learning more about the sport. It's easy to tell she loves it since she has her swimming cap on before we even get in the car to drive to practice. The school district with the best pool? Must be Verona. That place is a swimming cathedral.

Mila is in the second grade and has moved up to the "Silver" level on her gymnastics team. We've gotten her a bar, mat, and balance beam for home practice. Mila lets me use her mat too, but she says my cartwheels need some work. Mila and Lilah are both cross-training with dance and competition cheerleading as well. It's a busy schedule but they both have a lot of fun.



Lastly, we've adopted a new puppy named Lilly. She's a Boston Terrier/French Bulldog mix (A Montreal Terrier, if you will). As of right now she's housebroken and can heel, however we are currently working on teaching her how to not gnaw on the furniture.

That's some of the news from our household for 2024. Another eventful year and I'm happy I'm not receiving election texts anymore. Have a Merry Christmas, a Happy Hanukkah, a Righteous Kwanza, a Tip Top Tet, a Festive Diwali, a Spicy Las Posadas, a Bountiful Voodoo Day, a Somber Yule, and a Productive Festivus.

Love,

The Lutz Family