

# Heiss

## HOLIDAY

Issue XVIII  
December 2023

# Humbug

As two-thousand twenty-three comes to an end I offer my annual invitation to peek at our highs and gawk at our lows, see what's going well and what kinda blows.



Early this year **Rachel** took a short test at the Gwinnett County, Georgia DDS, and when she passed it they **gave her permission** to sit in the driver's seat, turn the ignition, pilot a vehicle. What were they thinking? Thank goodness for Grandpa, who without shrinking took her out on the road to get in some practice.

# 16



**Miriam**, meanwhile, rehearsed to exactness a number of pieces to **play at a wedding**; she played every ditty without forgetting one single note. She's cool under pressure. One concert this Christmas her music—each measure, each line on each staff—**blew away on a draught**, but Miriam kept playing on through, unabashed.



# 14



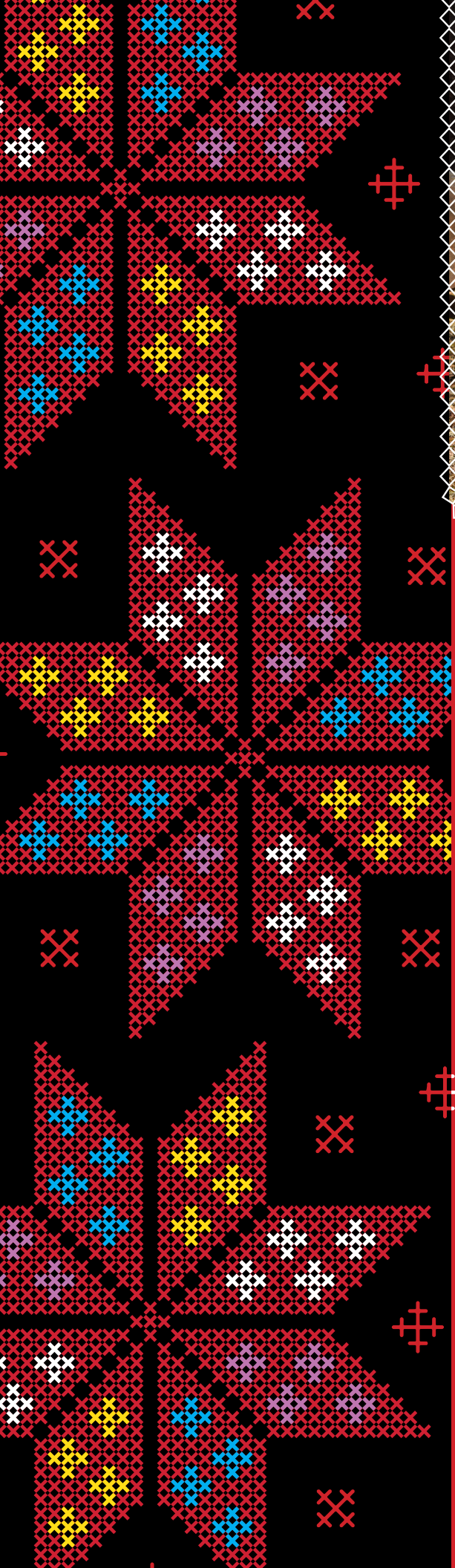
# 8



**Zoë's** enjoying **piano** and **co-op**, her social life's reaching a new kind of sweet spot. These group lesson settings help her to make friends with other children. She's kind and dependable, likes to help tend to **Phoebe**—who's growing and strives to learn all that there is to be knowing.

# 2





Entrepreneurial **Ben** had a row with *Vespula maculifrons* (ow, ow, ow!). While doing some chores in a neighbour's backyard he **stepped on a wasp's nest** and they stung him hard! They crawled up his pant legs, flew into his shirt, defended themselves—and, boy, did that hurt! (But he said he'd do it again for the cash.)

**Alex** can swim now! He'll **jump in and splash** his way to the deep end without thinking twice. He also has mastered his two-wheeler bike and likes to accompany me when I run.

Andrew's at GSU; this year he won the Andrew Young School's **award for superb teaching**. his NGO **research is published**, he's reaching colleagues in **Quebec, Chicago**, Orlando. (Conversely **my conference** kept me close to home).

We rented a beach house in May. **Florida** was sunny and perfect, but **we felt like crud**. With nine churning tummies and only two loos we had to queue up until this bug passed through each of our systems. We then saw the sights—**Matanzas, San Marcos**—and were enticed to visit the **ocean** a couple of times.

Now, I don't know who dreamed up this design... but whoever it was left just one week betwixt our beachside vacation and our **Utah trip**.

Five-thousand two-hundred and twenty-two miles is **quite a long drive**. We were grateful the Gileses hosted our fam'ly while we were out west. This trip kept us hopping, we'd no time to rest—

We saw the **French Quarter** and **ate some beignets** at Café du Monde, and then made our way to visit **the Alamo** (don't you forget it!).

Next up—New Mexico, where we elected to drop in at **Carlsbad**, stroll through the caverns, Then on to the northwest continued our pattern: took in the **Grand Canyon**, the stunning South Rim. We **camped out at Grover**—our Utah prelim—reaching the half-way-through point of our trip the day before **Zoë was baptized**. The dip in the pool was a little bit chilly, The day—and the week—though? Delightful. We really had a nice time **with our family** and friends, but like all good things this time had to end.

We packed up our stuff and headed back home, taking the scenic route through **Yellowstone**. We hiked **Devil's Tower** and **Mount Rushmore**, too, making one final stop in **old Nauvoo** before pulling the plug on our sightseeing days.

And just in time, too! I was feeling quite crazed from **writing my thesis** while still on the road. But I got the thing **finished**, submitted the whole thing in August before heading north with my second child, my sixth, and my fourth (that's Miriam, Phoebe, and Zoë, of course). **We flew to Alberta** and by all reports had a great time attending the nuptials of **Deklan and Holly** and spending a couple

days at the **farm of my uncle and aunt**. Our grand welcome home was a **flooded basement**—a huge storm'd swept through. For two solid months we were under construction. T'was awful, but once things were finished the basement looked great, aside from mementos kids thought to create—like **paint on the carpet, footprints in cement**.

Amidst all this chaos Pheeb and I spent **some time potty training**. She's now diaper-free! (Except for at night, but that's okay with me.)

**Emily and Katharine** came out in **November** We played lots of games and **took them all over Atlanta**. Next up—from Vienna—we had **Uncle Patrick**, meaning that this year we pulled off a hat trick: Andrew and I saw eight-ninths of our siblings in one twelve-month span—and that's reason for gloating (our siblings are spread across three different countries).

And that about covers all various and sundry.. Probably more info than most want to know (Wrapped up in bright trimmings, with doggerel bow), so, it's about time I close this year's back door and open up two-thousand twenty and four.



# Love from

THE  
HAPPY  
FAMILY

Andrew, Nancy, Rachel, Miriam, Benjamin, Zoë, Alexander, and Phoebe

