

Dear Family and Friends,

Christmas 2016

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you! As the snow begins to cover the mountains here in Northern Nevada, we turn our thoughts to those close to our hearts. This year has been one of amazing changes for our family. So grab a cup of hot cider and a cozy chair for a tour of our God-blessed year.

This year Bob has really been getting "his wheels under him" as he expands his role with the Governor's Office of Economic Development now that we live in Nevada's State Capital. He has become a requested public speaker across Nevada and even nationally. He makes frequent trips within the state, but has also traveled to Chicago, Minneapolis, Coeur d'Alene, and Washington D.C. to make presentations, moderate panels, and to teach classes. Over the past year Bob has given, on average, one presentation a week. He often speaks to local groups concerning the Governor's new initiative on



Our Family at Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve

education and workforce development. Regularly he updates the Governor and other state leaders on economic development activity and growth in areas ranging from mining to unmanned autonomous systems (drones). His research and data analysis is sought by businesses and leaders from all over the state and country. Recently our family joined him at one of these Advisory Board meetings where, at the end of the meeting, the Governor recognized our family, explained how kids like ours is why economic development matters, and then shook all our hands! On another occasion we accompanied Bob to a speaking engagement at the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR). Afterward we went on a interesting tour of UNR's robotics/drone lab. It was exciting to be hands-on with robots and even run the controls to make them move. Bob finds it rewarding that the work he is doing is helping the children of Nevadans (including ours) have better jobs in the future!



Lisa with Bob after he finished one of his presentations in Las Vegas

school life - dances, pep rallies and studying with friends. She also enjoys getting involved with student government, ran for sophomore class secretary, and won! Academically she enjoys getting to know her teachers in this small, private school setting of only 170 students. Outside of school she still enjoys crafty pursuits of painting, wood burning, reading and PBS episodes of "Call the Midwife". Recently, she went to the "Sadie Hawkins" dance at the school as "Thor" - crafting her own awesome looking helmet from paint and cardboard. Hannah still also loves reading and is often found with a book in hand. Her love of learning and academic knowledge landed her a spot on this year's high school Academic Olympics team. The team did so well they won the championship trophy in the state meet in Eureka, Nevada!

While Bob is working hard to improve the educational future of Nevada's children, our own children are performing remarkably well in their new schools. Hannah is now a high school sophomore at Sierra Lutheran High School. She is enjoying high



Academic Olympics State Champion

Our son Caleb is growing into a tall (he just passed Lisa in height) and conscientious teenager. Caleb always strives to do his best, and school is no exception. Caleb is attending Bethlehem Lutheran School this year as a seventh grader. God has graciously worked out transportation as Bob's office is only five minutes from the school, and we have great neighbors, the Summers, who also have a son in Caleb's class. Bob drops "the boys" off in the morning and the Summers pick them up in the afternoon. It has been an ideal arrangement and we are so grateful! Caleb has courageously faced the challenge of adjusting to a new school and, through diligent effort, has made straight A's. We are very proud of him! He has been in numerous class skits and has ramped up his videography skills to include new lighting techniques and professional microphones (Thanks Dad!). His interest in producing videos has led him to serve in the audio visual ministry in our church. Once a month Caleb can be found manning the AV booth for the church's Sunday services, and just a couple of weeks ago he handled the lighting for our local community choir Christmas production. During his spare time Caleb likes to work on film projects, ride his mountain bike, hunt for geocaches, hang out with Hannah, and snuggle with our dog, Christy.



In his spare time Bob has really enjoyed working around our beautiful home here in Northern Nevada. This year we've been busy with home renovation projects. Our house is **Caleb's First Day in the 7th Grade**

now a beautiful and functional place to live after many hours of sweat equity. When we bought our house a year and a half ago it was in good condition, but lacked those extra touches that make a house a home. The backyard was mostly a dirt lot full of weeds with a number of unfinished projects. Bob led the team effort of laying a stone patio, building garden boxes, putting in a sprinkler



Our Backyard Renovation in Process

system, laying sod, pouring concrete, and building patio furniture. We also added a cover to the patio and had solar panels installed.



Our Finished Backyard

We made many improvements inside the house as well. From

ceiling fans to drawer pulls the kids had a grand time learning the ins and outs of construction from an expert, their Dad! Thanks Bob for all your efforts!



Christy Helping Pick Out Flowers

Lisa has had a year of challenges and change as well. Last summer she was hired by Hannah's high school to teach two algebra classes, and a study hall. When not keeping up with the activities of jet-set Bob and two growing teenagers, she can be found planning classes and doing plenty of math problems. She enjoys the mental challenge of teaching school, and it has made her realize she really likes math! In her spare time she enjoys reading Peter Rabbit books and tries to keep the bathrooms clean! She also truly enjoys this area - hiking and exploring this beautiful country whenever she can.



Caleb Biking the Clear Creek

Our family outdoor adventures this year have included a number of mountain bike rides on some great trails in the area. One of our favorites, the Clear Creek trail, has awesome views of the Carson Valley, is mostly downhill, and only minutes from our house. Bob has taken his nephew, Alex, and the kids on this really great and scenic ride. We have also enjoyed a number of fun geocaching adventures. One took us on some very high and twisty backroads to within a quarter mile of Genoa Peak, a 9,150 foot peak just above our home. There were a couple times the road was so steep and exposed that Lisa had to shut her eyes! While there, Hannah and Bob climbed to the summit for stunning views of the Carson Valley and Lake Tahoe. Another very special geocaching outing was around Spooner Lake with our neighbors, the Summers. The kids had a great time hunting for some interesting geocaches, including one hidden in a old shotgun shell wedged into the base of a tree. Finding one cache even involved Hannah getting a boost from her Dad's shoulders into a tall tree. Geocaching is always an adventure!



Hannah on Genoa Peak



Lisa hiking in Lassen National Park

We took a couple of big trips this year that were very fun. In July we took a family camping trip to Lassen National Park in northern California. This was our third time to Lassen as a family, but this year our good friend Chris England joined us. We had a really fun time camping at Summit Lake and paddling our new play kayak around. We were also able to spend a day climbing to the volcanic summit of Lassen Peak. We have wanted to climb Lassen for a number of years, but were unable to because of trail closures. It was great to be climbing higher and higher up to the snow-covered summit and enjoying spectacular views of numerous icy-blue mountain lakes, and green forests lying below us. As we approached the summit the wind was really gusting and trying to blast us off the top. Shredded clouds went whipping by giving an other worldly feeling to our summit push. Windblown and chilly we arrived at the top only to be just in time for a "ranger talk," of all things! The ranger had hiked to the summit to give a scheduled talk about Lassen Peak. We had fun chatting and even shared our lunch of saddle bag sandwiches with him. It was a special climb made all the more enjoyable by having our good friend Chris England along. He videotaped our climb and posted it on YouTube at: <https://youtu.be/z7cDDc6wqCE>. Lassen National Park is an awesome place and one we always look forward to visiting.



Caleb on the Tahoe Rim Trail

Not even a month later, we loaded up the camper again and headed off to the beautiful land of Yosemite National Park. We've had some memorable camping adventures in Yosemite and now that we live a half day's drive away it's easier than ever to visit. Are we spoiled, or what?! Once again we were happy to have Chris England join us for part of our stay. He's a fun guy and always a pleasure to be around. We spent five days exploring the rocks and rivers of this beautiful and historic place. We set up camp high



Our Family at May Lake in Yosemite National Park

above the Yosemite Valley in Tuolumne Meadows with plans to explore some of the areas nearby. We enjoyed a beautiful day hike to lovely Elizabeth Lake tucked in the shadow of Unicorn Peak (I love the names in Yosemite - they evoke such a fairyland quality). While there the kids and Chris had fun wading out into the lake and climbing on rocks. We also hiked to the very quaint and historic McCauley Cabin hidden back in the trees on the backside of Tuolumne Meadows. This cabin was originally built and used by shepherds, like John Muir, back in the day when grazing was allowed in the park. We also enjoyed a wonderful climb to the top of Lembert Dome where the views of Tuolumne Meadows and the surrounding area are truly spectacular.



Caleb and Hannah on Lembert Dome with Cathedral Peak in the Distance

While in camp Chris and the kids had fun making a movie they

called "Jurassic National Park." All this, plus numerous bike rides, playing in the pools of the Tuolumne River, and roasting marshmallows made for a very special week in Yosemite. We will be back!



Morning Coffee in Tuolumne Meadows

In October Bob was able to travel to Montana for a short visit with his parents which served as a prelude to a week long family road trip over Thanksgiving. We had a great time driving through beautiful country, eating good food, playing games, doing crafts, and having many visits with family and friends. We appreciate all of you immensely!

It has been a busy year of change, challenge, and constant reminders that Jesus has been right by our side. We are truly grateful for Him and pray His special blessings on you in the coming year.

Always your friends,

Bob & Lisa
Hannah
Caleb

Bob, Lisa, Hannah, Caleb & Christy

P.S. To stay updated and follow all our adventures, visit our website at: www.pottsadventures.com