

Dear Friends & Family,

Christmas 2019

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from the snow dusted foothills of the Sierras! After living twenty years in Southern Nevada and five years in the Carson Valley, we are glad to call Nevada - HOME. For us, Nevada continues to have the enduring appeal of the Old West. In fact, the route of the original Pony Express runs just a mile from our house!

Nevada's state song is "Home Means Nevada" and that seems to be our family's theme this year. Bob continues to vigorously promote Nevada's economic development by working with state agencies and helping companies to set up shop here. This past April, Bob was promoted to Deputy Director of the Governor's Office on Economic Development (GOED). He is doing an exceptional job in his new role and we are very proud of him. Public service keeps him on the go - this past year he traveled to Alabama, Maryland, Florida, Idaho, and took about a dozen trips to Las Vegas. He also spent a week touring rural Nevada meeting with leaders in vital industries such as mining, agriculture, renewable energy, manufacturing and technology. He's a very busy guy and often expresses how thankful he is for the great staff of 40 he gets to work with. In his spare time he likes to get outdoors (he has walked over 1500 miles since his cancer surgery in 2017!) and enjoys doing home improvement projects. This fall, his big project was putting beautiful new laminate floors in our house. Due to his various projects, many of the staff at our local Home Depot are on first-name basis with him!



Our Family Backpacking in the Desolation Wilderness Area



Bob and Caleb Putting in our New Floors

enjoying her first taste of college dorm life. She is taking classes towards an Elementary Education degree, with an emphasis in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL). Before graduation she had the opportunity to travel to the Czech Republic with our church's youth group on a mission trip. She really enjoyed her time there. Her experiences traveling internationally have broadened her horizons and increased her interest in incorporating travel into her career plans. We miss having our girl at home, but are glad that she is doing so well in her new life.

Caleb is a sophomore at Sierra Lutheran High School and is really becoming quite a young man. He is currently working on his 50 driving hours towards his Nevada State driver's license. He enjoys spending time with friends and performing in the school's theatrical productions. This fall he had a lead role

Hannah graduated from Sierra Lutheran High School this past June and chose to go to college in our home state. She is now a freshman at the University of Nevada - Reno (UNR), just 45 minutes from Carson City. Hannah is



Dropping Hannah off at UNR

in the school's production of Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream. In his spare time he enjoys running, leading his own Dungeons & Dragons group, building miniatures, and mountain biking. He also produces videos for his own Youtube channel (D20 in Disguise).

I am working part-time as our church secretary, with occasional stints of substitute teaching at the high school. I enjoy quilt projects, going to new restaurants with Bob, interacting with our teenagers, trying new recipes, and exploring the surrounding area.

On a heavier note, on July 25 we were saddened by the loss

of our beloved nine year old Shih-tzu, Christy. Christy was diagnosed with diabetes this past year - leading to insulin shots, blindness, and failing health. We really miss her! But, on September 5th we were blessed with a new Shih-tzu-Bichon puppy (with the help of Craig's List) who we named Chester. Chester is now nine months old and is a furry bundle of fun. He is a super sweet and lovable dog and has been a great blessing to our whole family!



Caleb Mountain Biking on the Tahoe Rim Trail



Our New Puppy Chester

Our family enjoyed many special times this past year, among them a camping trip to Fallen Leaf Lake in June and a family backpacking trip to the Desolation Wilderness Area at the end of July. This past winter, Bob did a major renovation and upgrade of a used pop-up camper he purchased from a neighbor. After completing this project, he wanted to take it out for a "test drive" and Fallen Leaf Lake Campground was the perfect destination; close to home, but a world away from the daily grind. Only a little over an hour drive from our house, Fallen Leaf Lake lies

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Hannah and Lydia Moretto with Bob's Renovated Pop-Up nestled below Mt Tallac, just southwest of Lake Tahoe. The campground is surrounded by big pines, wildflower meadows, and lots of great hiking and biking trails. Mount Tallac (which Bob climbed this year with a group from our church) looms over the lake at an elevation of 9,738 feet. Hannah's good friend, Lydia Moretto, from Las Vegas flew up to visit Hannah and joined us on our camping adventure. Hannah and Lydia pulled the renovated pop-up behind Hannah's RAV and we pulled our pop-up behind Bob's Tacoma. We parked under the pines in two adjacent camping spots, making our own little pop-up village. Bob's newly renovated camper looked beautiful and performed well and was a great home-away-from-home for the girls. We



Beautiful Fallen Leaf Lake

played in the cold waters of the lake, rode our bikes through the aspens on single track trails (Lydia's first mountain biking experience) and roasted marshmallows under starry skies. It was a great couple of days which Caleb aptly described as "Perfect!".

In late July, our family and a few good friends (Christopher Robison, Chris England and Dave Norvell), packed our backpacks and headed out for a three day, 23-mile, backpacking adventure in Nevada's Desolation Wilderness. Bob has had his eye on the rugged, snow-covered landscape of the Desolation Wilderness as a potential family backpacking trip ever since we moved to the area in 2015. The Desolation Wilderness is 63,960 acres of sub-alpine and alpine forest, granite peaks, and glacially-formed valleys and lakes. In 1910, when the first tourists were beginning to make their way over the narrow dirt roads of Echo and Donner summits, the area was made part of the newly formed Eldorado National Forest. In 1931, the area was named the Desolation Valley Primitive Area and in 1969 Desolation Wilderness was included in the National Wilderness Preservation System. It is a truly magnificent area filled with high mountain lakes and impressive snow covered granite mountains.



Our Desolation Wilderness Backpacking Crew



Our Camp on Lake Aloha

and go for a swim in the clear waters of the lake. The photographers in our group enjoyed wandering around taking pictures, as everywhere you turned was a beautiful shot. We found a spot to set up our tents and Hannah and I did a little yoga on a granite shelf overlooking our camp. What a great place to enjoy the beauty of God's creation! Dinner consisted of a sampling of various backpacking entrees with Pyramid Peak (9,983 feet) in the background. Watching the stars come out through the skylight of Bob and I's backpacking tent was a special treat. We woke rested and ready for a strenuous second day. After a breakfast of "power oatmeal" we donned our packs for a 9-mile hike which would include the climb to Dicks Pass (elevation 9,390 feet) and the descent to Dicks Lake. The trail wound among granite boulders and twisted krummholz trees, making us feel a bit like hobbits wandering about in Tolkien's Middle Earth. Winding among high mountain lakes, the trail turned upward for the push to Dicks Pass. Crossing mountain streams among fields of wildflowers, we often stopped to look down in amazement at range upon range of mountains surrounding us. Taking a breather at the top of Dicks Pass was refreshing and filling the bandanas around our necks with snow kept us cool on the way down. The trail off Dicks Pass was often snow-covered, so route finding was a bit difficult and involved some slipping and sliding. Our knees and feet were aching as we hobbled into camp at Dicks Lake.

On July 28th, our group of seven shouldered our packs at the Echo Lakes trailhead. As we hiked along Upper and Lower Echo Lakes, I realized that I had not been backpacking since I was pregnant with Hannah 18 years ago! Now we were hiking in a beautiful place with our wonderful daughter who was about to launch out on her own. What a blessing! Our first night's camp was along the shore of Lake Aloha. At just over 8,000 feet, Aloha's stark beauty, meandering shoreline, and countless islands make it a popular destination. After eight miles of high country hiking it felt good to take off our boots



Dad and Hannah on the Trail

but we were rewarded with a pink sunset over the mountains and wild lupine dancing in the evening breeze. Our third day dawned bright and sunny and I treated our family to Cinnamon Swirl pancakes and sizzling bacon for breakfast (not a small feat on a tiny backpacking stove!). We hiked along the shores of a beautiful little lake called Fontanillis (Bob's favorite), then past Upper & Lower Velma Lakes. One of the day's highlights was crossing the rushing stream tumbling out from Lower Velma Lake. Bob led the way, confidently stepping across on the wobbly rocks. Hannah and Caleb followed his lead, making it across with nary a wet boot between them! Another highlight was a welcome dip in Granite Lake, located at the bottom of an especially hot and dusty hill on our descent to the Bayview Trailhead. We were all glad to stash our packs and take a dip in the refreshing water. To our surprise, the lake was filled with tiny minnows that nibbled our toes! The swim in the cool water

and laughter over the tiny fish made it a special moment. The last stretch of our hike included scenic views of Lake Tahoe from high above Emerald Bay. As we hiked out the last dusty mile, we were truly grateful for our wonderful family, great friends, and a beautiful spot on the globe to explore!



Our Great Kids at the End of a Great Trip



The Town of Genoa Taken from Genoa Peak
 The Sierras, Genoa is just a 15-minute drive from our home in Carson City. Settled in 1851, Genoa is the oldest settlement in Nevada and was a last stop for pioneers before braving the mountain passes of the Sierras on their way to California. Some of these settlers decided to stay and make the Carson Valley their home. We, too, are thankful to be settled here, where the real treasures are the beauty of the land and the friendliness of the people. It's good to be HOME in Nevada!

This year we are sending out our Christmas letter from the little post office in Genoa, Nevada (population 939). Nestled in the shadow of the

May your home and your hearts be full of cheer this Christmas season!

Love,

The Potts family & Chester

Bob & Lisa
 Hannah
 Caleb



Bringing Chester Home

We would love to have you visit us in this amazing area we are blessed to call home - just give us a call at 775-392-0113. You can visit us anytime at our home page at www.pottsadventures.com.