



## **Dear Family, Friends, and Anyone Else Lurking on My Facebook Page,**

We hope this electronic document finds you happy, healthy, and enjoying a restful and restorative holiday season with loved ones.

Long-time readers may have noticed a change in format. I've retired the holiday letter. You can't read a letter on a smartphone, a wily watch, or the even smaller products in development—I'm squinting at you, iPinkyRing.

The Samsung Eyelid Note may one day be capable of projecting an image of a letter onto your retina(s), but I'm not prepared to put all my holiday greeting eggs into the eyelid basket.

Instead, I'm distributing an electronic document that we'll no longer pretend is a letter. Two key features:

1. This document has been painstakingly optimized for mobile devices by using a ridiculously skinny page layout and an absurdly large font.
2. This document is being transmitted using only free-range electrons.

So let's get to it!

As the holiday season brings the year to a close, we're pleased to share some family news. In return, we hope you might share with us your heart, your thumb, or any other body part that registers a presumably positive emotion via the constantly multiplying and mutating array of graphics on Facebook.

If you've inferred that I now have a Facebook page, you've inferred correctly! There you'll find more pics and videos of the Ruscio boys than you'd expect.

You're also invited to Yelp us on SnapDragon, Tweet us via InstaChat, or Lyft us an UberGram. I used to be able to lyft an ubergram. Those were the days.



Halloween is always eventful. You haven't lived until you've chased tiny but surprisingly fast mouse feet and a nearly invisible Darth Vader across all of your neighbors' lawns!



**Left:** Welcome! Mousely greetings! Due to slow fiscal growth this quarter, we had to scale back some operations. Your Disney fantasy will now take place in my living room. Fortunately, the obvious parallels between my home in Pennsylvania and the Magic Kingdom make this work. Gimme some mitten!

**Right:** I'm saving my batteries until I get outside, but you should still fear my light saber. If not, you should fear my glowing red eyes! And my oversized chest thingy, whatever this is. I may have been a computer in the 1970s, I'm not sure. Fear me!

\* \* \*

OK, so the boys are healthy enough to run door-to-door, in the cold, for two solid hours. That's a good sign. What else can you tell us about them?

Keep on swiping, there's more!

The boys are a year older than they were this time last year. **Max** is now  $(12/22/2016 - 1/31/2009) / 365.25 = 7.89$  years old. Lately he self-identifies as  $7\frac{3}{4}$ .

Max is in the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade at his Montessori school. Some of his favorite activities include math, reading, chess, and long walks on the beach. I'm confident that last part would be true if his school wasn't land-locked.



Max has been making terrific progress at karate. He's earned a **blue belt**, won a **gold medal** in a tournament this summer, and joined the **black belt club** to get extra weapons training.

Yes, you read that right: *weapons training*. He's learning to use:

1. Kamas. These look kind of like commas, but in the right hands they're more lethal than punctuation.
2. Bo staff. This looks exactly like a bo staff.
3. Nunchuks. These look like what ninja assassins might use to kill you because that's what they are.

A hefty part of the fee for these classes must cover personal injury insurance premiums.

If all else fails, Max is willing to serve as a friendly firefighter who delivers mail (see photo at right).



**Zach** is 4.69 years old. He's in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year at his Montessori preschool, where he spends 5 mornings a week amazing the staff. Then he comes home to amaze his family. He's been reading independently for 0.69 years, and his memory is alarmingly good. What would you do if I gave you these stickers:



Stick them on things? Choose one for a free sweatshirt? Study them in secret and surprise everyone at lunch by reciting all 32 NFL teams, in order? That's our Zach!



**Left:** Zach spent plenty of time paying his dues with mellow acoustic floor jams.

**Right:** With gift money, he bought a Squier Mini stratocaster to make some noise! The blue strap matches the guitar, not the Mickey slippers.

Zach also maintains serious interests in legos, puzzles, and crafts. He cheerfully and proudly helps out at home (cooking, cleaning) and away (grocery selection, checkout, and bagging). We'll enjoy this while it lasts!



**Ayelet** has been on *sabbatical* this semester. Here are the synonyms that thesaurus.com provides:

break, furlough, holiday, leave of absence, liberty, recess, time off, vacation

So how has Ayelet been enjoying her *vacation*, using her *break*, taking her *liberty*? Why, she's been working on submitting papers for publication and planning the next 5 years of research in her lab!



You can't see Ayelet in this photo because she's at home. On her computer. Writing a grant.

You can see her below with her siblings' families:



Despite working long hours while on *holiday*, at least there's no commute. Ayelet makes up some of the lost mileage by bringing the boys to their Secular Humanist Jewish Hebrew school each Sunday morning.

Ayelet is in denial that her *furlough* is almost over.

**John** commutes as usual, but while at home he enjoys spending time with his family, his fish, and his guitars.



This is Silvia, our Rose Queen Cichlid who's trying to outgrow the tank. To cope with her—oh, how to put it gently?—her *output*, I built a custom filter. It seems to work! If you meet a male Rose Queen Cichlid, would you please invite him to the spawning pit that Silvia has lovingly prepared in the back right part of the tank?



This is one of the guitars that I built and continue to modify. There's more info at my guitar page (<http://ruscio.pages.tcnj.edu/guitar/>), which is written in the style of our holiday letters. The page boasts that...

*Ruscio plays with all the heart and soul you'd expect of an academic psychologist who specializes in statistical methods.*

If you're curious what this sounds like, I've been posting videos on YouTube. These are not difficult to find if you can navigate to Google and spell my name. For example, a search for "John Ruscio YouTube Echos" should bring you to a fine musical specimen.

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**Thanks for swiping through this electronic document!**

**We hope that you and your loved ones have a joyful holiday season and a wonderful new year!**



