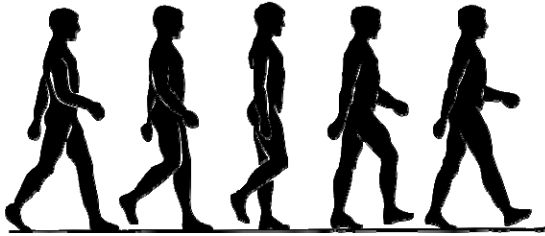
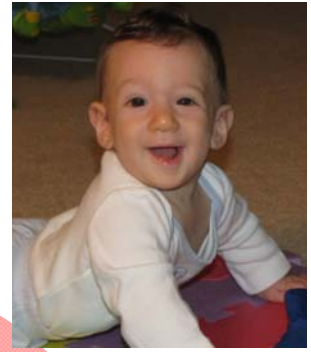


December, 2012



Dear Recipient of This Holiday Letter,

We hope this letter finds you happy, healthy, and enjoying a restful and restorative holiday season with loved ones. Hey, wait a minute, you're asking. I recognize Max, but who's that kid on the right? Easy now, we'll get to him. This year, our news is organized chronologically. Due to circumstances beyond our control, this does not correspond to order of importance.



Our year began—and our news begins—on January 1. After staying indoors all day, John went out for walks around town totalling 44.4 miles over the rest of that week. A streak of consecutive walking days had begun.

Note that John is even more fit than depicted in the schematic at left, there is only 1 of him, and he wears clothing—seasonally appropriate clothing.



In the spring, Ayelet was awarded an R01 grant from NIMH to support her psychopathology research. The approximate cash value is shown at the right. Each man, woman, and child in America contributed about \$0.006, though that's not literally how the funds were raised.



Each image shows \$1 million



Work on Ayelet's grant research has begun in earnest. The team includes a new graduate student (Ed), a new lab manager (Ted), and Ayelet's first post doc (Ned). Because we did not obtain informed consent, these are not their real names (or genders). We can assure you that they are as enthusiastic and professional as the office workers shown here.



Ayelet's first graduate student defended her (or his, we're still protecting identities) doctoral dissertation in April. Later that day, Ayelet went into labor. Twenty-six hours later, on April 13, Zachary Meron Ruscio was born. He arrived nearly 4 weeks early, but he's been happy and healthy from the start. We've penciled in his Ph.D. dissertation defense for the spring of 2028.



Later that night, John took a brief trip home from the hospital. He arrived home around 4:00 AM, went for a 5 mile walk to extend his streak to 103 days, then slept a few hours.

If only John's evening walk in Yardley, PA took him closer to Westminster Abbey and the London Eye (left), or even the Changi airport tower in Singapore (right), the view would have been spectacular!





**Max, the “Best Brother in the Universe” (left), loved being a big bro right from the start. He did not perform the ritual circumcision, but he has helped Zach through the bris (center) and beyond (right).**



**Though they were born a little more than 3 years apart, we initially suspected that they might be twins (with a very lengthy, complicated delivery). Can you tell who is who in the pics at the left? (A: No, you can't.)**



**By the time they were over 6 months old, it was easier to tell them apart (Max, Zach shown at right). Plus, there is still that 3+ year age gap to help us get the names right on a day-to-day basis...**



**Max started preschool this fall, where he enjoys bear sorting, HVAC repair, noodle pouring, double-entry accounting, number stencils, and other Montessori work organized on trays. He made a Pilgrim-style hat (shown at left, with peers; at right, with teachers) for his classroom Thanksgiving celebration, which lasted 70.5 hours less than the Pilgrims' 3-day feast in 1621.**



**For Halloween, Zach went as peas in a pod (left). The peas and pod were not actual size (but Zach was).**

**Max went as a triceratops. This dinosaur is extinct (but Max isn't).**



**We purchased a new camera. To show you three pictures of it (left), we used the old camera (right), which we photographed using the new camera.**





Zach has reached a lot of milestones. He's ready to crawl (left), enjoying solid foods (center), and verbalizing (right). To experience the sounds of Zach, hold this letter (or your computer) very close to your ear (either one) and then babble loudly like an 8-month-old baby.



This fall, Max has been watching NFL football with John. Here, all three of the Ruscio boys watch as the New England Patriots soundly defeat the NY Jets. So far, their 10 decisive victories (outscored their opponents by 202 points) stack up well against the 3 very narrow losses (Cardinals, Ravens, and Seahawks) in which they were outscored by a total of only 4 points. Won't you please join us in cheering on the Brady-Belichick led Pats in the playoffs this year?



In a new feature, we offer one projected news item from the near future. If John keeps at it, his walking streak will soon reach 365 days. This meaningless feat rivals the day in December, 2007 when he walked 50 miles.



Long-time readers know that we record Max's life week by week, and now the same is true for Zach. We're up to week 201 (Max) + 034 (Zach) ... and counting. Albums of photos + videos are online at <https://picasaweb.google.com/113323955775289784206/>



If you're new to our holiday letter, suffering from memory impairments, or simply want to relive the thrill ride of previous letters, they're in the archives at <http://www.tcnj.edu/~ruscio/holidays.html>

Actually, the archives are digital, so they look more like the photo on the right than the one on the left.



We hope that you have a wonderful holiday season and a happy new year!

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