

Welcome to the third annual Chiu/Smith (“Chth” for the hip cats) family New Year’s missive—our first as a married couple!

2021 was a year of high highs and low lows, of milestones and adventures, and of friends and family. We enjoyed spending quality time and getting closer with so many of you and missed spending that quality time with more of you. We did a lot of quarantining, spent some time outside, learned more about ourselves and the world, and haphazardly our way through the second year of the pandemic as best we could. This was our last full year in Rochester and our third year living our lives together! Aaand it was a long one. We’ve chronicled our year in big events and little anecdotes, though of course we could never capture everything. This year’s highlights include Tybee Island! skiing! bleached hair! outdoor climbing! our un-ymoon in F R A N C E! disney world! getting married! birds! dear ones’ weddings! research! and the amazing technical innovation that is a wax log fire starter!

With all that in mind: Read on to exactly the degree you wish, o cherished loved ones, liked ones, future selves, and friendly acquaintances! And feel welcome to reach out to us anytime. We’re just out here.

Glossary of Nuclear Family First Names

Smith/Lovell side (Eron)

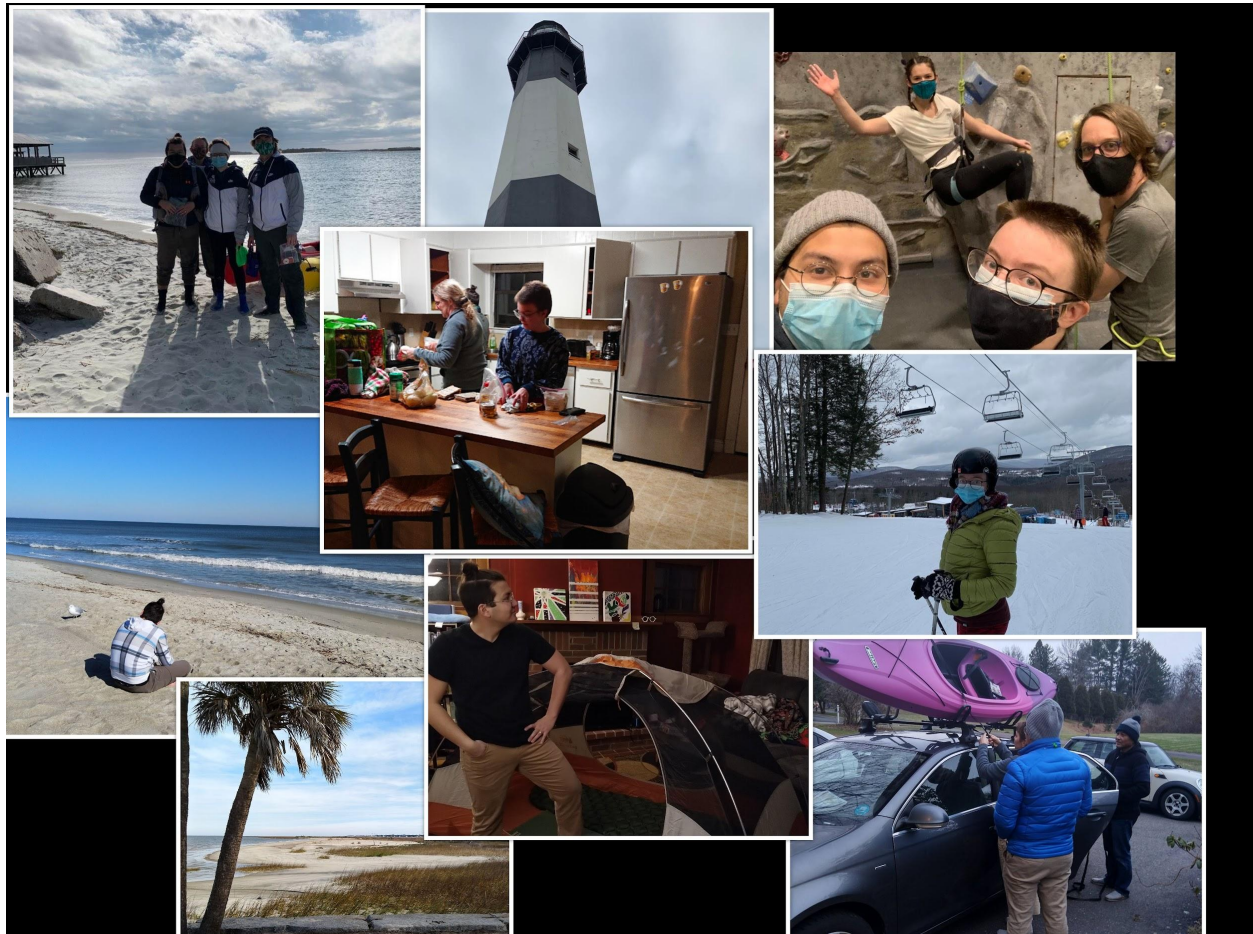
Chiu side (Matt)

Daddw	Mama	Brother (↓) & his partner		Dad	Mom	Brother (↑)	Brother (↓)
David	Amy	Allen	Risa	Jon	Chris	Alex	Adam

[JAN](#) [FEB](#) [MAR](#) [APR](#) [MAY](#) [JUN](#) [JUL](#) [AUG](#) [SEP](#) [OCT](#) [NOV](#) [DEC](#) [Outro](#) [Media](#)

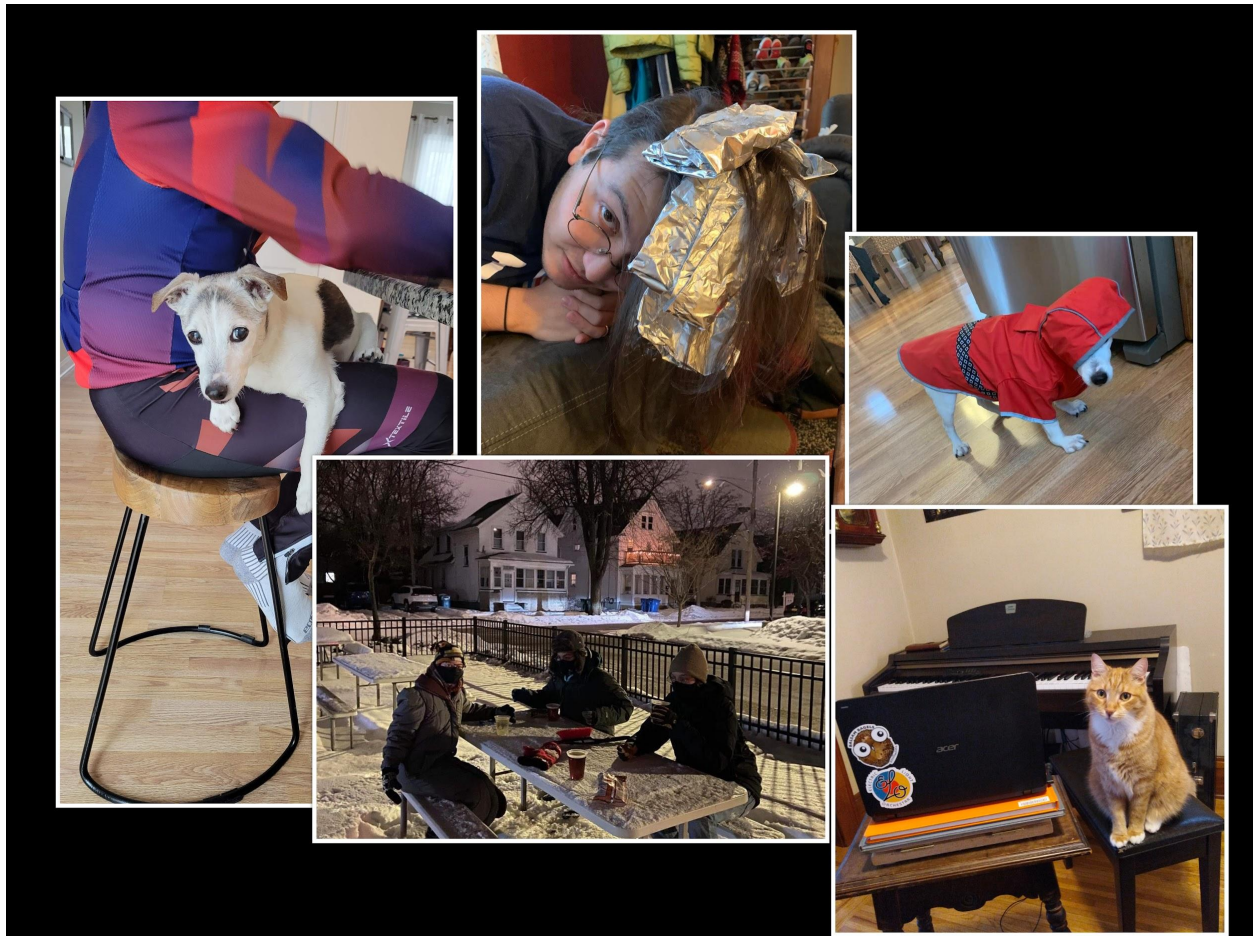
[January]

We started the year in **East Hampton, CT**, packing up our brand-new kayaks and driving back home to **Rochester, NY** only to leave immediately for vacation in **Tybee Island, GA** with Eron's parents. We walked on the beach, played a lot of escape room boxes, went to lighthouses, ate a lot of local pralines, and went on a guided kayaking tour. Meanwhile, Covid cases peaked, the Capitol riots happened, and Amy accidentally(?) bought a hat with a weed leaf on it. We returned home and began our quarantine, which was longer than expected due to a canceled testing appointment. Eron got an unexpectedly reasonable teaching contract for the spring, protest-resigned from an infuriating diversity committee, got a peer-reviewed publication accepted (SMT-V volume 8.5), and crocheted a few granny squares. Matt prepared a fleet of new research projects for a spring semester off of teaching and his second year as a journal editor. We tried out our new SNOW THROWER and got very into Jeopardy for some reason. We made yet another [commercial and jingle](#) for David's engineering design courses and hung out at the rock climbing gym with our friends (Lauren and David [not Eron's dad] pictured). Matt's Christmas present to Eron was a skiing weekend and lesson for the two of us in the **Catskills**! Skiing is scary and very fun. At the end of January, we camped indoors again for a change in pace.



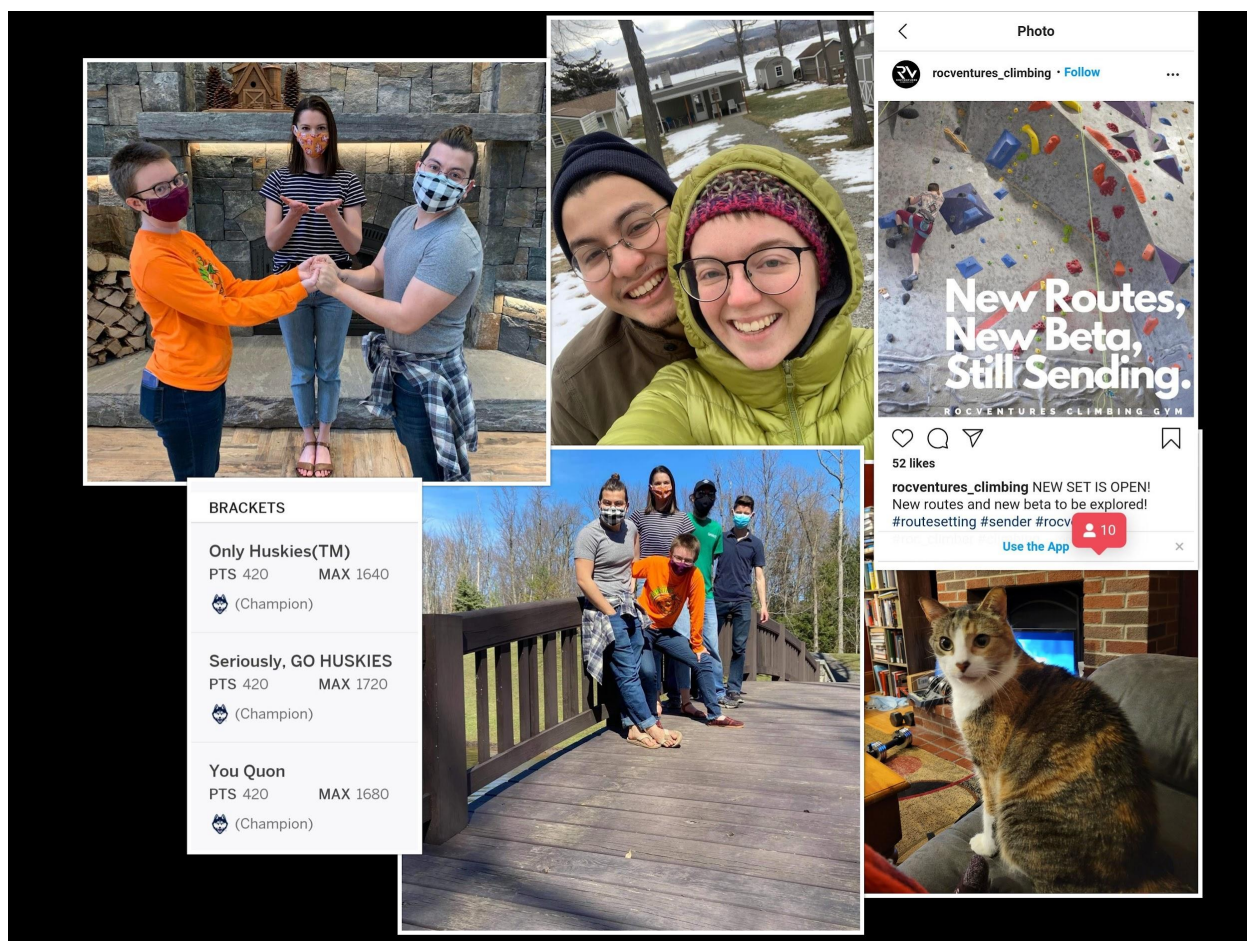
[February]

Eron started teaching both of her classes online (setup pictured here with assistant Ori). Matt's co-authored article with Tyler Howie [finally posted](#) and he presented a virtual paper (Music Theory South Central)! We celebrated some career milestones for our loved ones, including Amy being approved for a sabbatical and Sarah Johnson's recital runthrough. We watched the Super Bowl with Morgan Markel and Dan Nikolov and hung out with some friends (David F., Lauren, and Lukas) Covid-safe-style outdoors at a bar... in freezing weather. Eron turned 27 and Matt tried to throw a surprise party, which was slightly unsuccessful because of how long it took an oblivious Eron to pick out a pair of running shoes beforehand. Eron trained their new Wii Fit Trainer amiibo (Imogen). Matt bleached a good chunk of his hair. We tried to push back our wedding date due to Covid, but our venue would have none of it (long story), so we made the painful decision to lose our deposit and cancel entirely. We consoled ourselves by spending the end of the month in **East Hampton** for a fun family weekend visit!



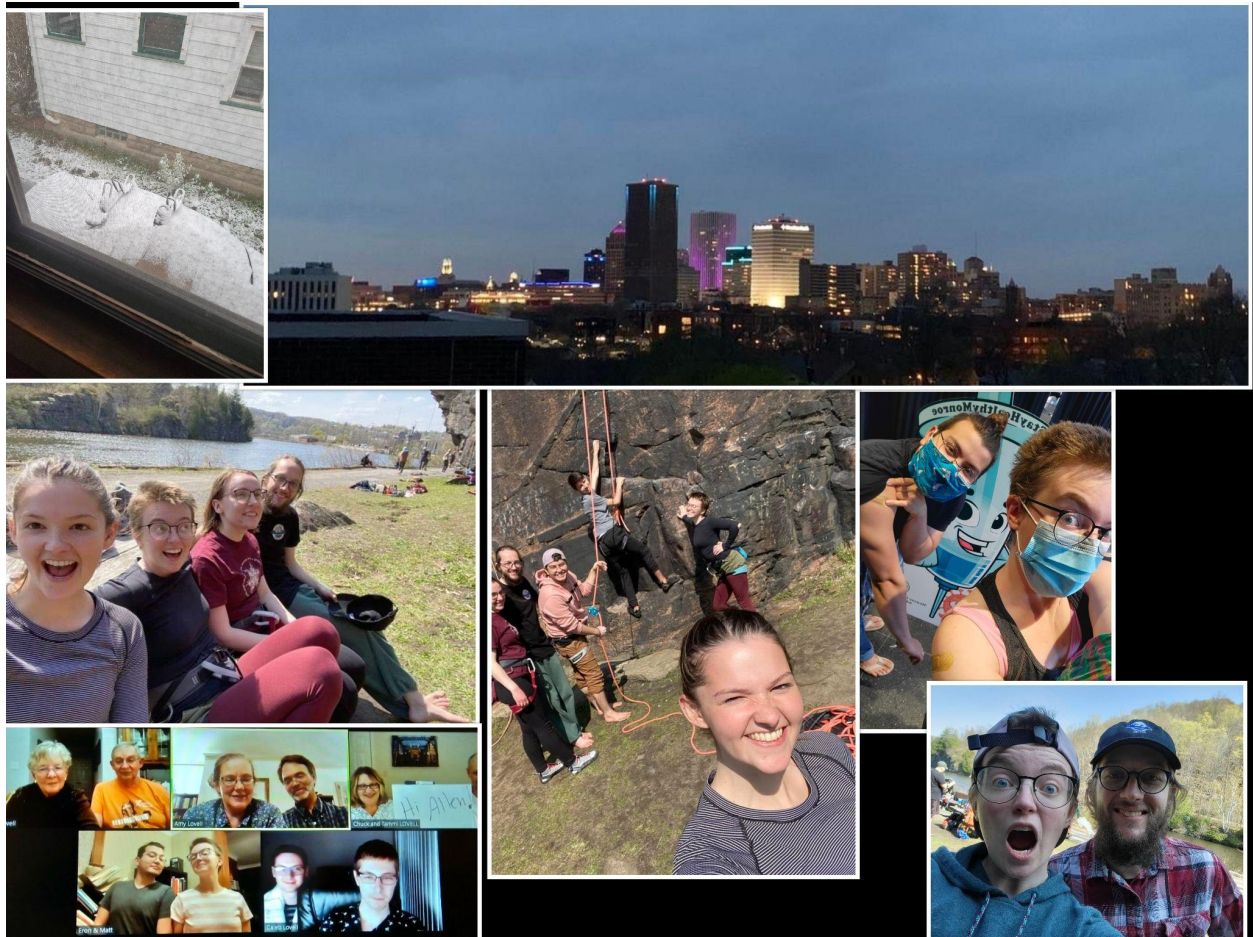
[March]

We were relieved to hear our grandparents began getting their first vaccine doses. Eron submitted a dissertation chapter, got a new phone and laptop, and got her first Zoom interview for a job. Chris made the news for her success managing the Connecticut vaccination rollout. For a small weekend getaway, we went back to the Airbnb in **Bradford, NY** where we had gotten engaged and... played a *lot* of Animal Crossing. We traveled to **Decatur** for spring break, during which Eron presented at Music Theory Southeast. Eron's back appeared on the climbing gym Instagram. We made our NCAA brackets and cheered on the UConn women's basketball team. Our friend Juniper Myler was born, making our friend Zoë a big sister! Matt got a last-minute adjunct job at Union College and threw together a syllabus in record time. The Ever Given got stuck in the Suez Canal. We went on a soon-to-be-infamous trip to a maple syrup farm with the graduate student association and our friends David F., Lauren, and Lukas.



[April]

This month got off to a rough start. On April 1, Eron found out they hadn't advanced after the Zoom job interview, and both of us found out that one of our friends (see above syrup farm trip) tested positive for Covid, preventing us from going to Easter and spending time with Matt's family. :(We quarantined, enjoyed a virtual mixology event, celebrated Eron's Grandma's birthday on Zoom, and Matt talked to a very inexperienced contact tracer. The rest of our parents got vaccinated! We eventually made it down to **East Hampton** for a belated Easter visit and brainstormed new, Covid-style vacation-rental weddings. Eron hung out with longtime family friends Noel and Lydia Slater during Lydia's college visit tour and a coinciding downpour. Matt got his research accepted to the national conference, Eron won the TA prize for Eastman despite the hell that is online teaching, and !!! we finally got vaccinated! It snowed on April 21, which shouldn't happen. We also enjoyed various climbing activities, including both of our first 5.10a top in the gym and an outdoor trip to **Little Falls, NY** with our friends Lauren, David F., Lukas, and Julianna.



[May]

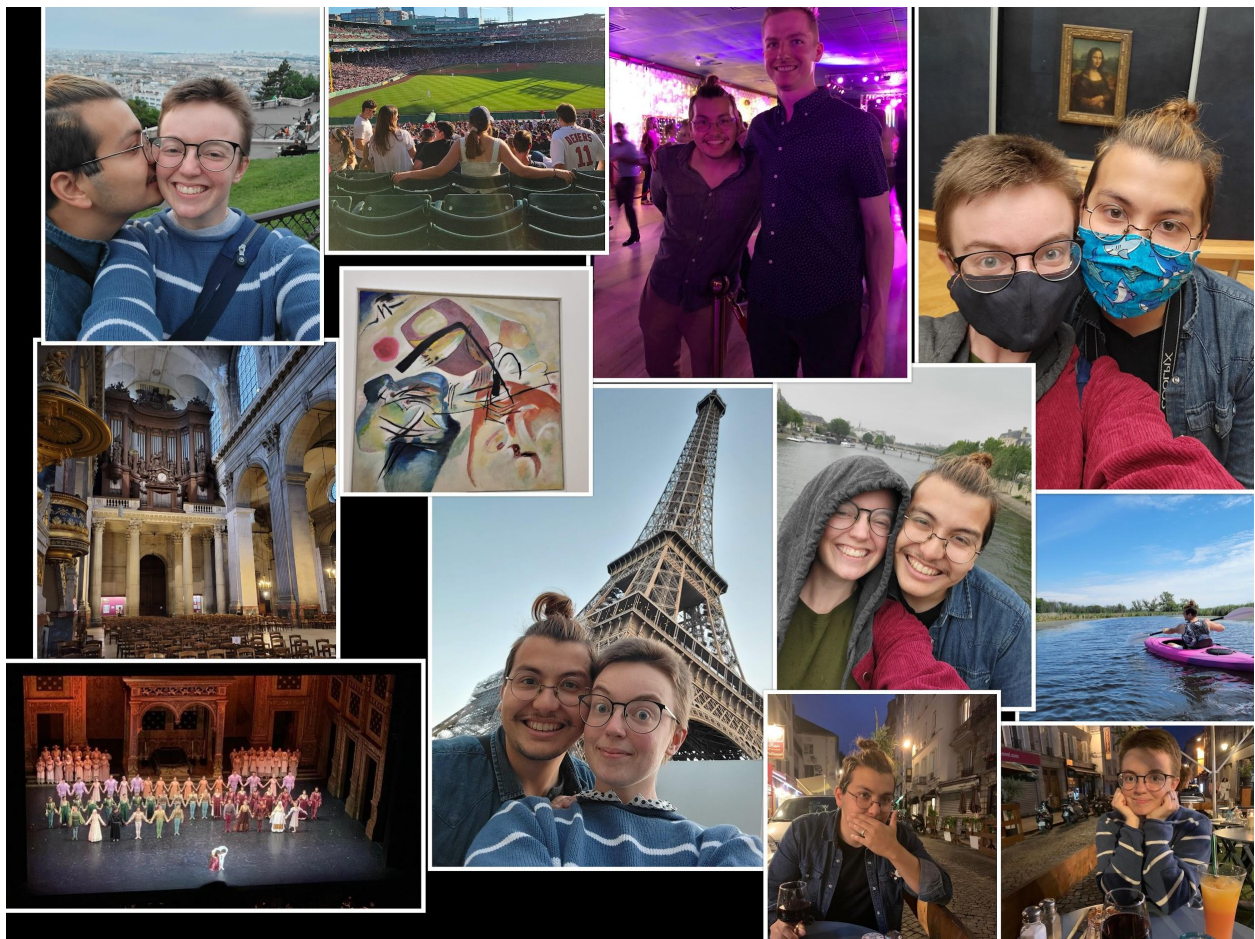
We went on a date to the George Eastman Museum—and found out we could go to France this summer after all! (Thanks, nonrefundable plane tickets!) Eron's passport needed expediting. We got our second vaccine doses. We went to Sarah Johnson's degree recital! Matt put a Tagalong on a Beyond Beef patty like the monster he is. Eron went to an aerial silks class with Lauren and got very nauseous. Eron lost her phone. Matt got a skateboard. Amy and David moved to Metz, France, and Risa graduated from college! Eron gave final exams (what dissertation?). We kayaked with all four of the Mylers, hung out in their backyard, and enjoyed getting to know Baby Juniper. Matt decided to become a birder after getting a great photo of an osprey. We went to the Lilac Festival with Morgan and Dan. At the end of the month, we traveled to **Pittsburgh, PA** for the "Indianapolis 500" with Eron's dad's side, this year observed unfortunately only on TV. We went climbing with Donald and Candler and enjoyed a large beer at the Hofbrauhaus with Cindy and Andy. We're not sure when it happened, but by now Matt had grown a mustache. He also decided to become a vegetarian (pesc) at least for now. Meanwhile, Eron's Ph.D. funding officially expired.



[June]

We spent time with our friends Morgan and Dan, going to the Fairport Canal Days (way too hot) and Chocolate and Vines (where Dan tipped us off that he was planning to propose, and where Eron left a purse containing exclusively a roll of toilet paper and had some explaining to do to the wait staff). We kayaked and saw even more birds! We prepared for marriage by getting frozen custard with our Married Friends (hello Mylers and Maxwells) and observing their ways. Matt got a cool new single-line tattoo of a bottle. Then it was time to travel! We went to **Cambridge, MA**, where we stayed with Will Funch. We walked around a lot, ate tasty vegan/vegetarian food, saw the Red Sox lose embarrassingly, and went out to a salsa and bachata night. Eron also got a new tattoo and caught up with college friend Kayla Cummings at a cute brunch spot. We got Birkenstocks, spent a couple days in **East Hampton**, and then went to France for what would have been our honeymoon (Amy calls it an “un-ymoon”)!

For a mini-missive of our trip (June 20–July 5), click [here](#)!



[July]

[this was a big month, so it's long...]

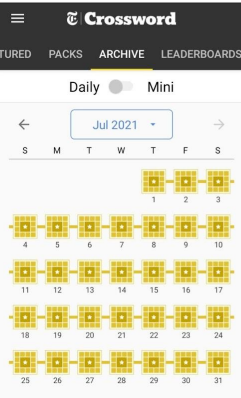
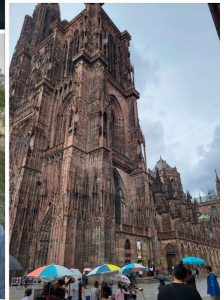
We started the month in **Metz, France** (see [mini-missive](#))!

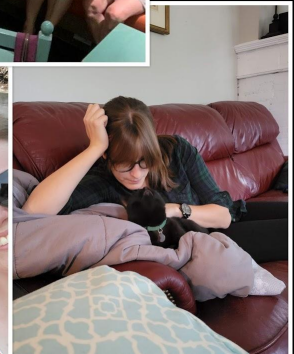
After returning to the US, we stayed in **East Hampton** for a day or two before heading home to **Rochester**. The adventures were far from over, however—we went to a “glow party” hosted by the organ department, we went to a yoga class, and we spent a day at the water park with the Mylers. Lauren and Eron had a living room slumber party. Eron finally got her teaching contract for the fall, which was much lower than expected, and had a series of unpleasant emails and meetings before eventually declining the contract. We went to **Maryville, TN** to visit Eron's Lovell grandparents! Matt dazzled at the organ, we played a duet in their church service, we had a very successful birding expedition in Cades Cove (we saw a scarlet tanager, an indigo bunting, and a northern parula!), we watched some interesting nature and genealogy programs, and we all wondered what a “phosphate” was at one tasty restaurant.

Next up was the Chiu family vacation to **Disney World**! We rode rides, ate food, played games, and did a *lot* of walking. Among other things, we visited Epcot and Hollywood Studios—one outstanding highlight was the new Star Wars ride. Meanwhile, the Olympics were on! A changing combination of Eron, Alex, Matt, and Adam watched a dentist wrestling on TV and got stoked about Olympic skateboarding. Gum, Chris, and Aunt Kathy embraced the Night Pool Lifestyle. Adam and Alex became vicious nuns for the sake of family games. Jon ate many, many tangerines. Chris, Jon, Kathy, and Eron enjoyed getting water up their noses on a big slide. Matt dove deep in the pool and messed up his hearing, so we spent a day in urgent care and alarmed a nurse with how much earwax he had.

After that, it was time to go home to **Rochester**... Eron switched bank accounts and tried to figure out how health insurance worked. Matt turned 27 and celebrated with a quiet birthday: attempting in vain to see the elusive roseate spoonbill at **Montezuma Wildlife Refuge**, grabbing Mediterranean food with friends, and having people over for Insomnia Cookies™ and the new Demon Slayer movie. He also presented two papers that birthday weekend with co-authors Derek Myler and Andrew Blake. We did a lot of other birding, finally met Sarah Johnson's cat, and Eron got a month-long NYT crossword streak!

(Next two pages are pictures...)



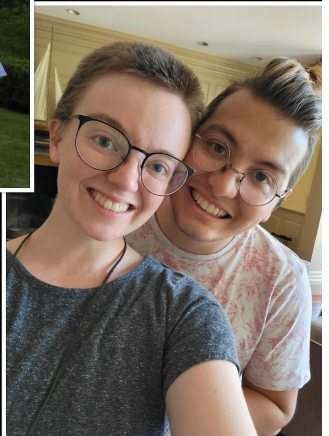
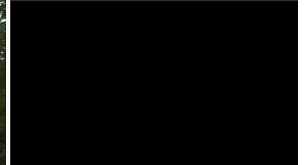


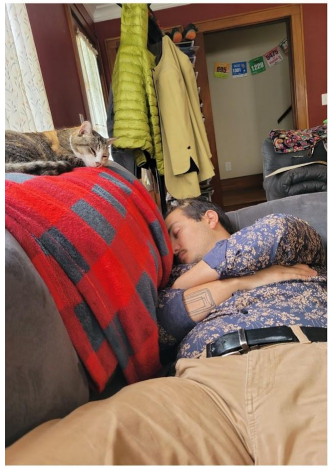
[August]

We hosted a watch party for Olympic climbing... at 4:30am! We took a day road trip to **Erie, PA** to bring our friend Noah Kahrs back from Pittsburgh, stopping at “PJ Cool’s Ice Cream Shoppe” in **Depew, NY** because how could you not? Matt ordered a copy of his birth certificate in advance of our marriage, and we picked up a marriage license. We had an all-day pontoon boat party on **Canandaigua Lake** with the Mylers, the Maxwells, Lauren, and Lukas! Then it was off to **Newburyport, MA** for our Covid wedding weekend, just in time for Amy and David to make it back from France. We enjoyed kayaking, billiards, and a ludicrously large VRBO mansion. On Saturday, we had a beautiful small ceremony where we exchanged vows, many people cried, and we all took a variety of mostly silly photos. Immediately after getting inside, the Chiu family received a call about Eli—the family dog. His health took a turn for the worse, and he wouldn’t make it through the weekend. After our photo slideshow that night, Matt’s family left to be with Eli, say goodbye, and cope with the devastating loss of a loved one. Eron’s family stayed with both of us in Newburyport until Monday, where we did some birding, played some games, and tried to make the best out of the worst.

The rest of August was, for better and for worse, less eventful. We went on dates (the fall semester Mondate was born), went for a lot of walks, and worked a lot at the library. Matt started teaching graduate theory review. Our orange boy Ori had a horrible cough, which we tried to figure out how to treat and booked a vet appointment a full two months away. The Delta variant continued to rage and we were unable to go visit Eron’s Smith grandparents. :(At the end of the month, recreational softball began again, and so did Eron’s online teaching gig at Kent State.

(Next two pages: wedding / other August photos)





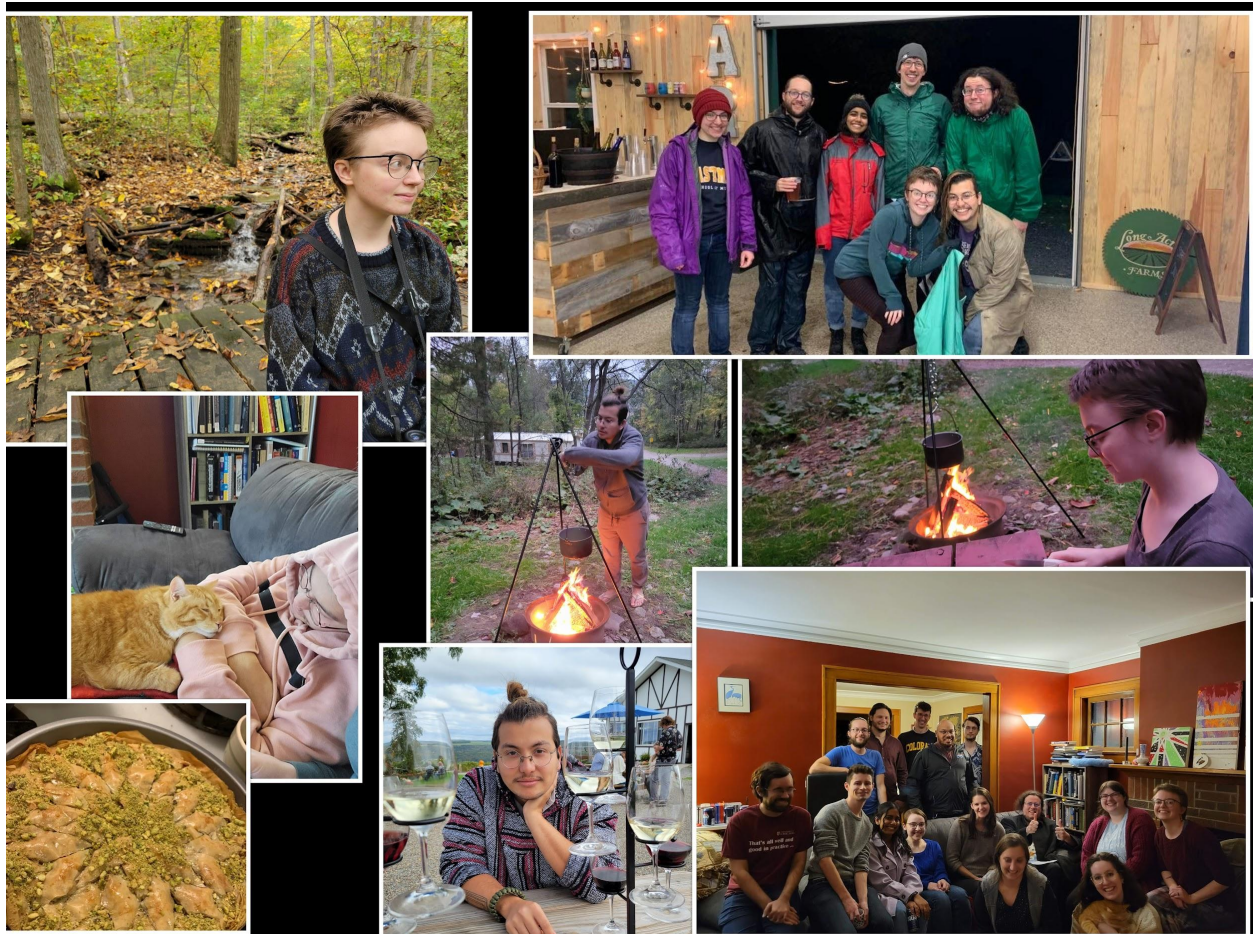
[September]

We went camping for Labor Day weekend in **Hamlin Beach State Park**! We saw lots of birds and did lots of walking. The Chiu family welcomed a new dog Delilah “Lilly” to the family. [Matt’s first full-length article came out](#)! Eron discovered the wonders of one-pot pasta recipes. Amy bought a Subaru Baja for her sabbatical and named it Geraldine. We hung out with the Blakes, met their kitten, and played some games. Matt got into wine tasting and we went to a fancy bar/restaurant in Pittsford. We spent some backyard hangout time with the Mylers and friends. We finally addressed the yellowjackets in our window. Eron made a lot of mini crosswords for friends, reorganized the kitchen, and participated in some union-lite activity at the library. We got legally married with Sarah as our witness and celebrated with chips and fancy beverages! Matt and Eron took salsa lessons. We sampled some local falafel and went to the drive-in! David and Amy visited and waged war on the backyard grapevine. The four of us went *back* to the drive-in, where we pulled a noob mistake and had to be jumpstarted. We spent time with the Maxwells! We presented virtually at the European Music Analysis Conference (Matt was, not by choice, a session chair). We went to trivia! Chris and Jon came to visit, and we enjoyed walking on the canal together as well as an adorable fall festival.



[October]

Eron procrastinated her dissertation by tackling some clutter, writing a new [jingle for PumpCo](#), and discovering the Maintenance Phase podcast. We took Ori to the vet (which he hated) but got antibiotics (which worked beautifully). Over fall break, we went camping again! Eron had accidentally reserved the campsite for the wrong time (oops), so we got introduced to KoA (**Hammondsport**), made a great fire, and visited a winery before actually getting to stay at our intended spot in **Keuka Lake State Park**. We did the **Long Acre Farms** moonlight corn maze again... this time in the pouring rain. The Eastman Theory PowerPoint Party made its long-awaited return, hosted by yours truly. Inspired by the Great British Bakeoff, we made surprisingly passable focaccia for an indoor date night and played Unravel 2. Eron suddenly got recruited for a spring adjunct position at **Ithaca College**, so she drove there on short notice and got the gig (yay and eek!). Matt bought a locked briefcase at a thrift store and, after some serious thumb workouts, eventually managed to crack it.



[November]

We made a shockingly good baklava (accidentally pictured above)! We hosted Lauren's birthday party on short notice after the would-be hosts came down with Delta variant, and enjoyed some choral singing. We saw some American black ducks, which took us awhile to distinguish from mallards. Eron advanced to the second round of a job for the first time this season, joined the board of a regional music theory society, and accidentally sabotaged a draft of Matt's research he sent to a faculty mentor. Matt did an impressive amount of research and decided to join the job search in hopes of graduating by August. We went to **East Hampton** for pre-Thanksgiving ("Pranksgiving"), where we met Lilly and had a wonderful get-together with Chris's side of the family. From there, we went directly to **Decatur** in advance of the annual family reunion at Sterchi Lodge (**Pisgah National Forest, NC**). This year was only half capacity, but we were glad to get together again and catch up with some much-missed cousins, grandparents, and aunts/uncles! *Also pictured: our friend Juniper, who had by now acquired the "sitting up" skill, dazzling Eron while big sister Zoë discovered the joy of climbing.*



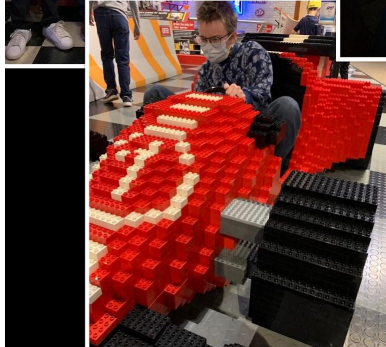
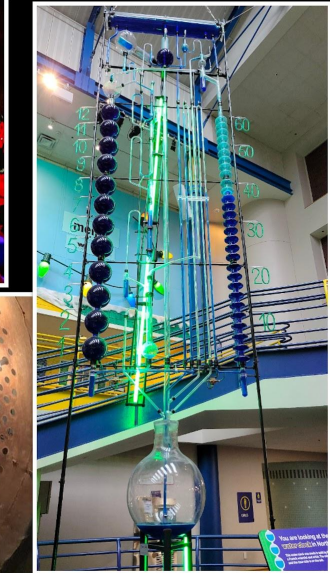
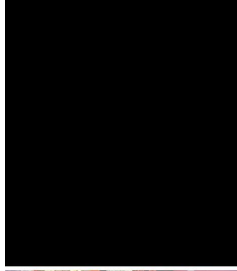
[December]

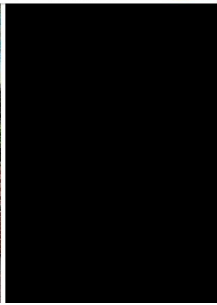
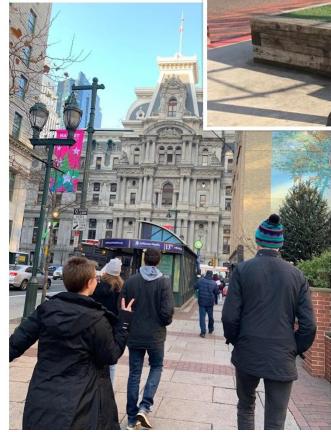
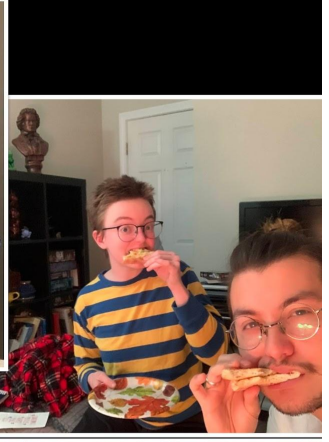
At the end of the semester, we traveled to **Indianapolis, IN** to attend David—a college friend of Matt's— and (newly minted) Emma Silverstein's wedding! (As is Covid fashion, this was their public wedding and they were already legally married.) While there, ~Meron~ shared dates to the Indianapolis Museum of Art and the Children's Museum. We returned safely to **Rochester** and filled the remaining semester with activities of varying professional/social commitment: Matt finished teaching for graduate theory review and Eron interviewed for two job positions. Scattered amongst the professional hullabaloo, they found time to have date night, make lemon bars with Lauren, see Carly Cosgrove (a Philly band), go bowling with friends, and get b-b-b-boosted!

Barreling, tumbling, and general gerunding into winter break, we got our itineraries ready to travel to Connecticut, Philly, (back to Connecticut,) Atlanta, Miami, (back to Atlanta,) Rochester in that order... Things didn't go exactly as planned. After visiting with the Chius in **East Hampton** for a few days—including board games like Raccoon Tycoon and Cosmic Encounters—we took a trip to **Philly** to celebrate the wedding of Tyler Howie and Avalon Nemec! On Tuesday the 21st, we checked in and met up with friends Will Lambert/Funch and Caity at the Airbnb, eating at a hip vegan place (with pricy gnocchi) nearby. Later, we met up with Jeff Fidler and Tyler™ Howie (we would meet the myth that is Angie the next evening). Actually, the Airbnb check-in wasn't *that* simple, but whatever...¹ We frolicked around Philly in the daytime, and while celebrating with Howie/Nemec that evening we bowled, and yelled, and loved, and cried, and at least one, unnamed friend took off their shoe (in the street). What a good group of friends. We returned to **CT**, excited to celebrate Christmas with the Chius! On Christmas Day, we got together with our CT/Chiu family—including the mischievous Lilly. Chris was somehow able to guess the number of Reese's Pieces for the second time in a row... Cheating? *J'accuse!!!*

The Christmas season was cut short when Matt, then Eron, and then the others in the Chiu house (sans Alex) contracted Covid one at a time. (During the dominoing of cases, legend has it you could hear the haunted echoes of Andrew Lloyd Webber from Matt's bedroom.) We quarantined in small rooms and all recovered within a few days, thanks to the boosters. We canceled our trips to see the Smovells and to Lauren and John's wedding in Miami :(and rang in the new year on a quiet note.

¹ On arrival, we got a call from the Airbnb host saying that there was an incident in the apartment and they were just made aware of it; apparently the previous occupants left some blood on the wall, and the host thought it best for us to find a new place. After checking locks, finding blood stains, ~10 messages, and 2 uncomfortable calls, we decided it was safe to stay.





Outro

This year [verbed] many serious life-changing events for us, and we appreciate everyone sticking with us through thick and, particularly, thin, “o cherished loved ones, liked ones, future selves, and friendly acquaintances.”

At the time of writing, we’re currently shoveling our way (figuratively, and literally from the snow) through the beginning of 2022. We don’t know what this next year holds in store, though we do have a few ideas: We’ll be moving out of Rochester, but *where to* depends. As it stands, we have an offer to move to Dortmund, Germany for a postdoc position(!). In the meantime, a few calmer New Year’s Resolutions: Matt would like to see the common kingfisher he missed in Metz (which... is indigenous to Europe *wink wink*) and handle DOMs with ease (with React); Eron would like to play more solo video games and develop a sustainable mindfulness practice.

In between dissertating (and shoveling), we hope to find more time with loved ones, to laugh and reminisce, and make more memories to reminisce on/about. And, above all, don’t forget to “Trink Wasser” ([ChTh 2019](#), 6).

Books (non-music)	TV/Board Games	Games/Podcasts/Movies
-Stuart Turton: 7 ½ Deaths of Evelyn Hardcastle*** -Jean-Paul Sartre: <i>Nausea</i> -Amal El-Mohtar and Max Gladstone: <i>This is How you Lose the Time War</i> -Albert Camus: <i>The Stranger</i> -Rachel Cusk: <i>Outline</i> -Cathy O'Neil: <i>Weapons of Math Destruction</i> -John Scalzi: The Collapsing Empire (I–III!!!)*** -Don deLillo: <i>White Noise</i> -Jill Bolte Taylor: <i>My Stroke of Insight</i> -Ezra Klein: Why We're Polarized*** -Megan Whalen Turner: <i>The Thief</i> -Sarah Pinsker: <i>We Are Satellites</i> -Sue Johnson: <i>Hold Me Tight: Seven Conversations for a Lifetime of Love</i> [not usually into self-help, but it had some good takeaways] Bold*** = Favorite	Next in Fashion She-Ra*** Lupin Carmen Sandiego (Netflix) Feel Good (S2) Brooklyn 99 Sex Education (S3) Squid Game Great British Bakeoff (S9) Jojo's Bizarre Adventure (S5) Maid Arcane*** The Witcher (S2) Taskmaster*** Aggretsuko (S4) Eron & Lissa TV Time Highlights Marriage or Mortgage The Chair Board games Wingspan Marvel Champions	Video games Animal Crossing: New Horizons Hot Wheels: Unleashed Unravel 2 Goose Goose Duck Monster Hunter Stories 2 (Cont.) Super Mario Odyssey (Cont.) Super Smash Ultimate Podcasts Maintenance Phase (c) You're Wrong About (m/e) The Grill Stream (<i>thanks Howie</i>) (m) In Our Time (m) News in Slow German (m) Movies Akira The Lighthouse Demon Slayer Jungle Cruise The Card Counter Dune

