

December 31, 2025

Friend,

2025 is ending, and unless chaos and a palpable sense of unease are your things, you're thinking, *good riddance*. It was a hard year, and my hope is that you found moments of joy to contrast with the past 364 days. 2025 was also a banner year for hot takes, and reading endless opinions about everything feels suffocating. It's okay not to have an opinion, and if I have a resolution for 2026, it's to simply say, *I don't know*, when I don't.

2025 has been my first full year living in Plattsburgh, New York, a few miles from the Canadian border.<sup>1</sup> I'm writing this while sipping my oat milk latte<sup>2</sup> at the Koffee Kat, which I love for the hospitality they share with anyone who wanders in, the funky interior that was painted by the same artist who painted the entryway of Jill's and my home, and the outdoor balcony where I enjoy my coffee on warm days. I'm here frequently—for coffee, to chat with friends, or talk Braves baseball with the owner.

Civic life can feel like it's unraveling, and one of my joys, here in Plattsburgh, is participating in our community. I joined a local Rotary Club where I've made friends, and work on projects that benefit our city and surrounding towns. Jill and I know our neighbors, which isn't a given anymore, and when it snows, we all pitch in to shovel one elderly neighbor's driveway and sidewalk. She repays us in dog treats, which Rox and Ben think is a good deal.

Rox and Ben want you to know they're still around. Rox is almost 16, and according to her vet, will probably outlive us all. Ben is 10 and coping with health challenges. He's happy and energetic, though, which is a gift. They disagree about cold weather and snow (nah, says Rox, while Ben is all for it), but agree that walks around the pond at the nearby campus are the best.

I went into 2025 jobless, by choice, and through a series of coincidences found my way to a new professional home at the Spina Bifida Association of America. It's an organization that does necessary and underappreciated work and is ripe for change, so it suits me well. I'm the COO, and lead fundraising, data management, marketing, field operations, and public affairs. This is a challenging time to work for any nonprofit; many are being forced to evolve

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<sup>1</sup> Yes, it can get very cold here. Thanks for asking. A snowblower and car with remote starter are my two favorite possessions.

<sup>2</sup> I promise I'm not chasing trends or converting to veganism. I discovered that oat milk is much better for my blood sugar than whole milk, so it's my go-to for coffee and smoothies.

in ways that can feel uncomfortable, and I thrive in that kind of environment. I feel like I'm exactly where I should be.<sup>3</sup>

Jill is the nursing department co-chair and a professor at SUNY Plattsburgh and works as a nurse practitioner in a private mental health practice. She is looking forward to my becoming a billionaire so she can retire. I'm sure I'll continue to be a disappointment on this front.

Eli started work this year for the US Postal Service. He's a rural carrier assistant, and fills in for carriers in West Chazy, Saranac, Peru, and Plattsburgh. He loves his job, knows a lot of the dogs on his routes, and doesn't complain too much about the blazing heat or bone chilling cold.

As much as we love being home in Plattsburgh, travel is my and Jill's passion, and this was a full travel year. The highlights include Brugge, Paris, Scottsdale, Orlando (twice), Philadelphia, the western slope of Colorado, Birmingham, Chicago, the Berkshires, Lake Tahoe, Las Vegas, Death Valley, Sacramento, Coeur d'Alene, Orlando, Knoxville, Montreal (several times), Washington DC, and Playa del Carmen. There were plenty of other stops; my handy travel app tells me I covered 53,736 miles and spent 96 days away.<sup>4</sup> You can see a few photos of our travels at <https://flic.kr/s/aHBqjCFaXj>.

Of course, the highlight of 2025 was marrying Jill. There was no wedding, as such – we had a brief ceremony on a balcony at an inn overlooking Lake Champlain. Our friend Matt officiated, and his wife Kelly was our witness. We exchanged vows, rings, and private letters with one another, then hopped in the car and drove to Albany for a Breakthrough T1D Gala. It was a beautiful evening, and we were happy to celebrate with Jill's family and friends from across the country. Jill and I met through Breakthrough T1D over a dozen years ago, so it was very much a full circle experience.<sup>5</sup>

We're still both very involved as volunteers with Breakthrough T1D. Jill is a member of the Grassroots Leadership Team, which coordinates advocacy among chapter volunteers. They do powerful work and play a huge role in ensuring research funding and policies that benefit all of us with T1D. I'm grateful for her activism.

I serve on Breakthrough T1D's Global Mission Board, where I work on special projects that help advance the organization's mission. These days, my work revolves around systems that support collaboration of volunteers and staff.

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<sup>3</sup> You can learn more about our mission and work at [sbaa.org](http://sbaa.org). I'm a fundraiser, so I must ask, will you please make a donation?

<sup>4</sup> I think it was 100, but I'm going by what the app says.

<sup>5</sup> The next day, we flew to Knoxville, TN and celebrated with my family. Don't want you to think they didn't get in on the fun.

We're hoping for less pain and more joy in 2026. Jill and I travel to Genoa, Nevada in a few days, where we'll spend a week working remotely. Lake Tahoe is just over the mountain, and the resort where we're staying is built atop hot springs, so we're aiming for serious work/life balance while we're there.

We're planning a long road trip this summer, looping through Maine, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island, camping along the way. We've never visited NS and PEI, and we're looking forward to it.

I'm sure there will be more. More travels, more adventure, and more joy. I hope you find all of that in 2026, too.

All my best,

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