

Christmas 2025 Letter (David M Gay)

Merry Christmas/Happy New Year/Happy Holidays! Afraid I am running late this year. The good news is that I still feel well. Periodic MRIs show no tumor growth, perhaps thanks to radiation I received about three years ago. I seem to be losing the battle with mail, both electronic and paper, so I am sometimes slow to respond.

I still miss Tanner greatly, but try to stay active. I was forced to “retire” from the Cathedral Choir, but not until after a nice choir trip to Victoria, Canada this past summer. I still sing with the Symphonic Chorus and Sandia Singers (when they are not on the local Air Force base, e.g., at some baseball games and at the recent Holiday Stroll in Albuquerque’s Old Town). And I am taking some voice lessons, hoping to improve my choral singing.

In late August/early September I took a delightful trip to Madagascar, where we saw many interesting critters and plants and a lunar eclipse. Fortunately we left before the recent political trouble there. I also attended meetings in Los Angeles and Atlanta and enjoyed seeing various family members. Sister Elizabeth and her husband Kim visited me during Balloon Fiesta, which was fun, even though winds prevented us from seeing launches the Saturday we went to the launch site. For Thanksgiving I went to Denver for a nice visit with some cousins and their families. For Christmas I will visit brother Jim Longhurst and his wife Lynn in Marshall, Michigan; there we will see their daughter Jamie and some grandkids, then we will drive to the Chicago area to see their daughters Jordan and Abby and their families.

I was going to include a page of pictures from Madagascar, etc., but the imbecilic LibreOffice Writer just makes this too hard. I have uploaded the files from which I intended to choose to

<https://www.daveandtanner.net/pics25.zip>

and will simply provide some commentary here. The files whose names start with “dsc” were taken with the big Sony camera I have had for years; those with names starting with “img” were taken by my iPhone and converted to jpg files by the heif-convert program. We traveled around Madagascar by bus (pictured) and plane. Much rice is grown. Cattle called zebu are very popular, a sign of wealth, and are sometimes used to plow fields and haul wagons. We only saw a few geckos, but I did manage to photograph a couple of them. There are many national parks in Madagascar. We saw a large, recently shed snake skin and a critter that disguises itself as tree bark. We saw many lemurs, but only a few of the 100 kinds. The “img” pictures start with two at a local “No Kings” rally. In Madagascar, we saw some interesting insects, such as an odd looking weevil (img_0166.jpg). One place we saw lemurs was a preserve called “Lemur Island” for lemurs rescued elsewhere. We got to the island via canoe. (Lemurs do not swim, so the island retains them.) We had an excellent guide from Madagascar, and, to help view the lunar eclipse, an astronomer from the Lowell Observatory in Arizona. In the Spiny Forest we saw some baobob trees; since we were there in their winter, they had no leaves. I saw a giant cuoa (a bird roughly the size of a chicken) just outside my room, but in general did not see many birds. We did see a small boa constrictor, some farmed alligators, and some turtles.

Some other pictures by other folks from our trip are available at

<https://www.smugmug.com/gallery/n-dFNVT3>

More Views (2025)

David M Gay

I still believe what I wrote in

<https://www.daveandtanner.net/views23.pdf>

<https://www.daveandtanner.net/views24.pdf>

but will not bother you with a repetition of those views. Instead, let me observe that the current administration (of “Liar Trump”) opposes some fundamental principles that have made our country “great”. Science, in general, does not know how things really are, but works with theories that agree with observations — experiments. An experiment cannot *prove* a theory, but only support it (if results agree with the theory’s predictions), but it can disprove a theory if its results disagree with the theory’s predictions. To make this process work, we need accurate observations; we should not dispute a result simply because we think it should be something else. Science has greatly changed our lives by enabling new products and new technologies. It has enabled much of our modern life. This has been possible because of *honest* evaluations of observations (experiments). Honest reporting is key.

In our modern life, many things could be better, but deciding how to make them better depends partly on honest assessments of the current situation. Liar Trump’s practice of firing people who provide honest data that disagree with his views is horrid, a practice that convinces me he is decidedly the worst president in our history. (There are other reasons for this opinion, but details are widely available, so I will refrain from repeating them here.)

Another feature that has made our country “great” in the past is immigration. We have benefited considerably from people who have moved here from other lands. We have also benefited significantly from marriages of people of different backgrounds. Thus I see no advantage to encouraging genetic or even racial purity. Indeed, the mixing of genes sometimes has desirable results and should therefore not be discouraged. In general, it is through mixing of genes that animals evolve.

Mainly I want to see happy marriages. If both parties try to make a marriage work, it often does. I am very grateful that my marriage to Tanner worked well.

Concerning ICE, expelling duly convicted serious criminals makes sense, but folks should not be detained or expelled without due process.

I concur with the U.N.’s Universal Declaration of Human Rights. See <https://heathercoxrichardson.substack.com/p/december-10-2025>

Alas, the internet provides many sources of false statements. Knowing what to believe is sometimes not easy. All I can advocate is one should examine various sources of information and try independently to assess their veracity.

If you find some of my views wrong, please feel free to tell me why. My E-mail address is dmg@acm.org.