

I will honour Christmas in my heart and try to keep it all the year.

Charles Dickens, *A Christmas Carol*, 1843

AS WE HONOUR CHRISTMAS 2020 IN OUR HEARTS (SHOULD WE?), WE THINK FONDLY OF FRIENDS LIKE YOU AND THE PERSONALITY TRAITS YOU POSSESS THAT QUALIFY YOU TO RECEIVE THE 28TH ANNUAL ALTERNATIVE INGLIS NEWSLETTER. BUT ENOUGH ABOUT YOU...

2020: WTF??

If 1918 had sex with 1929, their offspring would be 2020. Misery: a damn [plague](#), mass sickness and death, George Floyd, heartache, bombed economy, RBG, loneliness, social isolation, hardship, military vs. protesters, depression, science politicized, tragedy, millions losing jobs, riots in the streets, food lines, wildfires/drought/floods/hurricanes. *What IS this?!* Satan's gift to the world?

Yet out of the slime and the muck of 2020 grew a lotus flower. I have seen a lot of days — heck, I remember when electricity was invented by the Wright brothers. But the absolute happiest one of my life was Nov. 7.

Ah, Nov. 7. From 10:30 in the morning until going to bed that night with sweet dreams, we were downright ecstatic — laughing and spontaneously dancing around. On the TV, great crowds of people the world over were doing the *exact same thing!!* And to think all this time I thought “dancing in the streets” was just a figure of speech!

Despite the sloppy aftermath of that day, hope returns for a better day.

A grand saguaro in the Sonoran Desert



Balcony flower



Toni & Ian's Excellent Adventures

Ian: “What do you think of our renting a travel trailer?” (something we’ve never done)

Toni: “Great question!” By which I meant, you idiot.

In February, back when Douchebag was keeping the plague a secret from us, just for fun we rented an R-Pod to take out to Big Bend with Walter.

Full of irrational exuberance, we arrived at the designated self-storage place to meet the owner and pick up the trailer. We waited at the big rolling gate that requires a code to open. No owner.

Shortly, we got a text saying he’d be late because he’s looking for a gas station to fill the tires that “look low.” Really? He’s just now prepping it for us? Low tires? The lily begins to wilt.

Precious finally arrived, and thus began our “tutorial.”

Every time we asked a question we got, “YouTube is your friend. Look it up,” as he looked at his watch. “What’s this button for?”

“I don’t know.”

“Well then, what’s *this* button for?”

“I don’t know,” as he remotely started his truck.

“Shut up!” I scolded in a playful voice after his making several boundary-crossing remarks. “YOU shut up!” he snapped back in a not-playful voice. Later, when I displayed genuine aggravation with the little twerp, he explained the problem was that he was just sooo hungover. Ah.

“You don’t want to run the furnace, but this little baby’ll do ya just fine,” he announced, holding up a tiny heater that looked like he paid \$9.99 for it at the Stop-N-Rob. This he announces to an elderly couple who has never pulled a trailer and is going to Big Bend, elevation 4,000 feet, in early February. The lily wilts a bit more.

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As Mr Subtlety again looked at his watch and again remotely started his truck, he told us that he was a salesman (DUH!) and did we want to buy it from him, this thing with a bad furnace that we first laid eyes on five minutes earlier.

After impatiently showing us how to hook his trailer to our car and checking the brake lights, he zoomed off practically laying rubber, leaving us standing outside the trailer. I assumed he'd be waiting at the gate to let us out. Hahaha!

Waiting in front of the gate that wouldn't open:

Toni: "Ian Inglis! This is the *stupidest* idea you've ever had!!"

Ian: "Don't worry, dear."

Finally an incoming stranger pulled up and opened the gate. Thus began our first trailer trip.

The trim on the trailer was loose and in some places hanging off; everything was rusty; nothing was oiled; the fridge and "freezer" both cooled to only about 60 degrees. Other than that, the little heater worked great even though it was 25 degrees and snowing in Marathon where we stayed, and the two-burner stove worked. The smell of [sizzling bacon](#) in beautiful Big Bend country made up for a lot. The lily sprang back to full glory — until we got back home.

Arriving at the storage lot starving and needing a beer after the long drive from Big Bend, it took us (former bus drivers) one solid hour to back the [expletive] thing (crookedly) into its slot. Thank god, night had fallen so no one could see us.



New Mexico



Colorado



By June, four months into the misery and isolation of the pandemic including not being able to see [grandkids](#) living three miles away, we had to escape. Not too discouraged from the first trailer trip, we rented an [Airstream](#) and headed to New Mexico with its great climate, adobe houses and scenery, then on to Colorado with its wide [rushing streams](#), mountain trails and aspens.

We rented another Airstream to spend September in [Friday Harbor](#) on the [San Juan Island](#) where my best friend Claudia and her dog Roxey live; Ian's best friend Jim lives in nearby Seattle. Wearing masks and distancing, a grand time was had by all.

In November, we rented a nüCamp teardrop to hike through state and national parks in Southeast Arizona. The "[standing-up rocks](#)," as the Apaches called them, and the Sonoran Desert were phenomenal, as were the [homes and desert landscaping](#) in Tucson's "[barrio viejo](#)."



As I've said before, I think Christmas is stupid, but not *nearly* so much as this ridiculous newsletter. NOTHING, however, can compare to the rank nincompoopery of that boneheaded dog who has the intelligence and insight of plankton. For three and a half years now I can't take a single step without his trying to get me to play. Thankfully, they all keep going on trips.





Walter's Excellent Adventures

(by Walter)

Ohboy-ohboy-ohboy! What a terrific year!! Mom and Dad were home a lot more and took me to [Pease Park](#) to hike and

[throw the frisbee](#) almost every day! I've really missed seeing Lily, though, and I think [she's gone a little crazy](#) from the isolation! We went to a bunch of states, and you wouldn't believe the smells! I smelled a bear in New Mexico and Colorado, and on the island, I chased deer and foxes! I thought sure they would want to play with me, but they just ran away, like Tina always does. I guess cats and deer and foxes have more important business than schnauzers.



Roxey doesn't run away; she LOVES to play! We [romped and chased](#) all over the island!

Mom told Dad that while it's great to see the Rockies and Cascades and the Chiricahua, Sandia and San Juan mountains, that it's time we went to the [beach](#): I got to go to Port Aransas!! My favorite sport is [fetch](#), and that's especially [fun on the beach](#)!

(My Uncle Burton makes fun of me for using so many exclamation points!)



Distancing

Professor Smarty-pants

Precious continues his long and infuriating tradition of using words from Mars, thus bringing conversations to an abrupt halt. (*Definitions on back page.*)

Ian (talking about the Hampton Sides book he was reading on James Earl Ray):

"He had a hunting rifle with a scope, about four feet long and carried it in a blanket. People in the boarding house knew something was up when they heard the report from the gun."

Toni (fascinated, until the axe fell):
"REPORT?? FROM A GUN??!"
"What the hell??" (See raccoon.)

Toni: "Can you believe that [expletive] is accepting the Republican nomination from the White House?"

Ian: "Yes. Lending the imprimatur of government in that manner is most improper."

Toni: "The WHAT of government??!" (See raccoon.)

Toni (demonically rubbing hands together): "Won't it be delicious to see New York go after him after he leaves office?!"

Ian: "Yes, especially fun to see him hoisted on his own petard."

Toni (deflated): "To see him WHAT??!" (See raccoon.)



During a visit to College Station, Ian (high school salutatorian) and his wonderful 98-year-old mom were sitting on the big Kilim rug in her living room engaged in an erudite discussion while, sitting on Mrs. Inglis's large African chest covered by African woolen grain bags worn by camels, Ian's sister Nancy (high school valedictorian) and I (high school B+ student) were having a light conversation. Suddenly, Nancy's head turned sharply toward them.

Nancy (pronouncing adamantly): "The Prussian War was fought from 1870 to 1871." (Apparently, she overheard Ian refer to its being fought in 1870.)

Toni (thinking): Did I just land here from Planet Zorcon? What's Prussia? A war? Why were they fighting? Conclusion: Either these people are not normal or I'm an idiot. But let us not quibble.



The. Fabulous. Ms. Roberta. Inglis!



Talula graduates and off to Reed College, Portland, OR



Burton with brown trout he caught in Wyoming



Washington ferry



John & Will



AJ & Andrew



Andrew



No more seasons of Schitt's Creek!!



Will

On a serious note, we thank our lucky stars that 2020 found us retired with children raised and gone from the home and that we have food on the table. We think of you and younger people and hope you have not endured suffering too great this horrible year. Oh, Christmas Spirit, may we all feel ye now.

Here's wishing you a 2021 full of RECOVERY, adventure, covid vaccines, good health AND LOTS OF APPLAUSE.

*love,
the Inglises*

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Definitions
who knew any of these??

Report: An explosive noise
Imprimatur: Sanction, approval

Petard: A small bomb made of a metal or wooden box filled with powder that explodes with a loud report (even Merriam-Webster is a smartass)

