



Happy New Year, Track and Field and Cross Country Alumni!

We love seeing and hearing from alumni! Over the course of the year, we've enjoyed the company and correspondence from many alumni — at Homecoming, supporting the Cobbers at meets and games, stopping by our office when passing through town, lunches on campus, crossing paths at high school events, meet-ups on the road, and many calls, emails, and messages. During the holiday season and throughout the year, we appreciate the dozens of alumni updates we receive. Please keep in touch with a message of your own.

READ ABOUT OUR SEASON

Larson Family Update

This summer was filled with big events. In June, Mary and I, our daughter Greta, and son Mathias and now-fiancee, Penny, joined us on a trip to Europe! Our route spanned 34 days and traversed Italy (Rome, Cinque de Terre, Florence); Spain (Barcelona, Grenada, Seville, Madrid); and Portugal (Lisbon, Nazaré, Porto), along with several day trips to smaller locales. The Vatican, sea kayaking, the Colosseum, Cinque de Terre cliffside village hike, and cooking class were some of the many highlights. The history, architecture, and food and wine, along with highly-valued family time, made for precious memories.





In August, our annual Larson clan reunion added a couple of significant others, Penny (Mathias) and Tyson (Greta), as we celebrated Martha Larson's (Garrick's mom) 81st birthday on Blackwater Lake in northern Minnesota. We've been so fortunate and thankful to gather both my brothers' (Blair and Adam) families together a couple times of year.

Mary's dad, Len Dieter, lives nearby us at Riverview Place, an independent living facility across the river in Fargo. The facility has great food, singing and social events, onsite worship services, and lots of fellowship. It's a great place providing stimulating interactions for Len. In September, we celebrated Len's 95th birthday at his granddaughter's home (Jenny Lingen) in Mantador, North Dakota. The family of Mary's brother, Dave Dieter, joined the celebration.

Garrick is full-fledged Concordia Cobber in his 32nd year coaching track and field. The college students reinvigorate him daily with their youthfulness and energy. Working alongside young people has always been a calling and brought Garrick an enormous sense of fulfillment. He also continues to manage a handful of rental homes in Moorhead near the colleges.

Mary, an associate professor of public health at North Dakota State University, concluded her year-long sabbatical in August, although she led an NDSU class to Sardinia, Italy, just prior to our big trip. She's been grinding away on research and writing and had a couple of journal articles accepted for publication this fall. Mary and niece, Jenny, have been regular company for her dad, Len, at Riverview — having dinner, playing cards, and visiting often.

Our son Mathias, now 27, lives in a downtown Moorhead apartment on the river. Mathias returned as a barista at Atomic Coffee in downtown Fargo, North Dakota. Mathias and Penny got engaged in Europe, actually happily re-engaged multiple times throughout the trip as they found the next great proposal location. Then, at the Larson reunion, Penny surprised Mathias with a return proposal along the beach at the lake. The pair founded a Fargo-Moorhead entertainment company and have organized near-monthly shows over the past year.

In May, our daughter, Greta, graduated from Concordia with a nursing degree. She took her nursing board exams right before we left for Europe and was relieved to learn she easily passed before getting on the plane. Greta lives in West Fargo and took a job as a registered nurse on the cardiac floor at Essentia Hospital in Fargo.



Roeske Family Update

Quinn and Lisa went to Rome for a week this fall with Lisa's sister's family for our nephew's ordination as a church deacon. He has been studying there for two years to be a priest. It was Lisa's first trip to Europe but Quinn's fourth trip of various durations. I stayed home for my Concordia work and my third season — first as the head coach — for the Central Cass High School (Casselton, North Dakota) cross country team. I have missed cross country coaching, so I'm grateful for Concordia's blessing to work in a sport that I love with a great group of kids.



Both of our daughters are fledging the nest. Quinn lives in a nice, brand-new apartment in downtown Fargo with her two cats and a best friend living just down the hall. She loves her work as an individualized teacher of kids with dyslexia for Haley's Hope.

Leah lives in a nice, brand-new apartment in downtown Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. Leah is fulfilling her dream of becoming a dance instructor by studying dance at the Winnipeg Royal Ballet. She is in a two-year instructional track so she can build her teaching skills to another level. Her aim is to return to Fargo to coach and teach dance at her old studio, and maybe someday own her own dance studio.



Lisa has worked for the Fargo Public Schools for over 30 years as a teacher and presently as a reading and writing specialist on the Elementary Schools Curriculum Team. Coupled with the additional time she gives to our church and to an independent professional development program, it seems a toss-up contest between us to see who is the busiest. Our work is fulfilling and they are labors of love.

Jan. 15 will mark my 30th anniversary at Concordia College. I'm blessed with the job of my dreams at a special place, and the best student-athletes ever. I'm grateful for the wonderful relationships, experiences, and memories with Concordia Athletics. I'm excited to add more Cobber memories this year and in the years to come.



Van Beek Update

I can't believe I'm in my fourth year at Concordia already, but here we are! The end of the fall season was especially emotional for me as this is my first season where I've coached athletes through their entire four-season cross country college career. These seniors are a special group, and I will miss them dearly. It was a fun fall, gaining experience with a very young team (on both teams, six of our top nine were first-years or sophomores!!), and I'm really looking forward to the track and field season.



This last year, I took a break from training and did a solo road trip through Colorado, across Utah, and to the Grand Canyon. I had never taken a road trip that far alone, and it was an incredible experience getting to see some of this world's beauty for 10 straight days. I came back both fatigued and rejuvenated! In March, I helped Garrick with the first track and field spring trip that we've taken since I've started at Concordia, and wow, that was amazing! It was so fun to see our athletes gaining perspective and experiencing new places out in the Pacific Northwest.

In April, Daryl had a major reconstruction for his forehead (a continuation of the process to resolve his post-cancer surgical complications) and he healed up incredibly well. He has one more surgery to go, fingers crossed!!! Over the last decade, his positive attitude has been a major inspiration to me and continues to lend perspective on what's most important. Our summer included lots of small trips to see some of our favorite bands, including Yellowcard (a bucket list band for Daryl) and Bleachers (my favorite artist). This December, Daryl's last surgery was delayed to 2025, so we took a trip to San Diego and he ran his first-ever half marathon! Daryl has just recently gotten into running, and it's been so fun to "coach" him through his new hobby and see him grow.

Our "McBeek Zoo" crew is going strong, with our two cats Harley and Penny Lane, and our two rescue dogs, Winn and Willow. Winn and Willow joined the team for cross country practice once a week this fall, and they LOVED getting plenty of attention from the kids — I don't know who loved those days more, my dogs or the team.



Currently, I'm sitting at the USTFCCCA Coaches Convention in Orlando, learning more about our sports and trying to continue to grow and learn to best serve my athletes. I can't help but reflect on how lucky I am to be surrounded by such wonderful people at Concordia.

Thank you for reading, for your continued support, and I hope you have an amazing holiday season with loved ones.



We love hearing from you! Please reach out and let us know what you're doing:

gzl Larson@cord.edu, 218.790.2306

roeske@cord.edu, 701.799.7510

mvanbeek@cord.edu, 218.371.1477

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MOORHEAD, MINNESOTA

Concordia College
901 8th St S
Moorhead, MN 56562
218.299.3733

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