

Hello to all my friends and family. I hope that you are feeling peaceful, cozy, and happy in these winter months. It's snowing hard outside as I write this letter to you.

I'm now in the middle of my 6th year of graduate school. I'm still enjoying my time in the Wright group—I hope to be here for a while yet. The past year of graduate school has been frustrating in some ways. Lots of progress has been made, but I haven't reached the key checkpoints that I hoped to reach. I'm looking forward to being a teaching assistant for a graduate-level electronics and instrumentation course next semester.



This summer was busy for me. In mid May three college friends (Kate, Nina, and Claire) joined me here in the Midwest. We spent a few days exploring Chicago—river tour, museums, food, even a local contradance. Pictured above is us outside of Shedd Aquarium. We then drove to Madison and spent a few days in Wisconsin. Exploring the House on the Rock with Benji was a highlight of the trip for me.



I was honored to stand as a member of Claire's wedding party on June 24th. The wedding took place near Claire's parents in beautiful Napa Valley, California. It was a great wedding and I really enjoyed catching up with the Parker, Eckert and Till families. It was also great to briefly see the Niensens—Jim and Tracey were kind enough to loan me a car during my time in California.

After returning home from California I had just 24 hours before flying to Amsterdam for an academic conference. Coherent Multidimensional Spectroscopy (CMDS) is a small biennial conference in my narrow subfield. My advisor—John C. Wright—was a founding member of the conference and still sits as chair of the organizing committee. This year

the conference was held in beautiful historic Groningen, the Netherlands. The first molecular photon echo was resolved in Groningen (DOI: 10.1103/PhysRevLett.74.674). At the conference I presented a poster on my work to make CMDS instrumentation more reproducible and robust. Afterwards I spent five days exploring Europe, traveling to Brussels and Amsterdam. Pictured above and left is me in the famous Grote Markt. I didn't really plan anything about my trip, just stepped out of the hotel and started walking. Everywhere I went was filled with great food, people, and artwork. Very enjoyable—but I was ready to return to Wisconsin after five days.

This year I've enjoyed learning more about philosophy, rationality, and psychology. Daniel Kahneman's book *Thinking, Fast and Slow* has changed the way I think about human cognition. I'm trying to incorporate these ideas more into my personal behavior.

Have a fantastic 2017. Stay in touch.

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