



A little peace, a little wonder, a lot of joy...  
to you and yours this holiday season.

*Penny & Jim*

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**It's Christmas 2023**...it's been an interesting year health-wise, but hasn't affected our travel abilities. Jim had his right knee replaced in mid-January, and 2.5 months later we drove to Houston for our 60<sup>th</sup> high school reunion luncheon, visited all the Texas family and friends (including 2 Randall kid families near Austin and all 3 Guerrero kid families in The Woodlands), then flew to Cabo for a week with 3 other Breckenridge couples, at the invitation of Dick and Becky Roberts. We played 2 rounds of golf and did a half day walking food tour of Cabo, which introduced us to many types of tacos we'd never experienced before. It was a super fun week to be sure!

In mid-June we were traveling to Sweden for another 5-day bike ride with cousins Don Harris and Ann Wingerstrand. The 7-speed bike they gave me (because "Sweden is flat") had me cussing a blue streak, but I was nevertheless able to keep up, but it required a lot more effort than I had planned to exert. It seems that Sweden's 'flat terrain' somehow ended daily by biking UP to the hotel at the top of the hill in each city we visited. After the biking, we stayed in Falsterbo another 4-5 days to attend the Mid-Summer Celebration, which included a very silly game similar to the Hokey Pokey with 100's of our new best friends congregating around a May Pole, singing and dancing to the set lyrics sung by a locally famous Swedish artist. Everyone, including men, had to make their own flower garland and wear it to this celebration. Much fun! After the weekend ended, we took a train to Stockholm for 3 days. We greatly enjoyed the old city and the many "fika" (pastry) shops. From there we flew to Paris for 4 days where we toured Versailles by bicycle (got to see way more than the average tourist), and got left at Monet Gardens by the tour bus (a chilling prospect until the last tour bus in the lot offered us a ride to the closest town with a train). We were dropped about 2 miles from the actual train station, hiked for about an hour (Jim's still a bit slow) and there met a friendly young man who took us under wing to get tickets to Paris and put us on the right train. And, of course, once in Paris, we were familiar enough with the Metro to get home only 3 hours later than originally planned. We also got a refund of the tour fee once I complained to the company about the lousy guide they provided and the bus leaving ahead of scheduling. After Paris, we jumped another train to Auxerre where our week-long bike tour of the Burgundy region with our old friend and guide Tami began. The night before boarding the boat, we had dinner at the only open restaurant within walking distance, and ran into 6 of our boat mates, all from Australia, so we knew we were going to have a good time this week, even though Tami had broken her foot a week before and would not be joining us on this boat! BUMMER! She's the main reason we keep going back to bike in Europe, so...we signed up for another tour with Tami next summer! Are we NUTS?

September 4-10 the Colorado Viper Club hosted the biannual National Viper Event (NVE) in Colorado Springs, and we spent the week there working at the event in various capacities to ensure that this event was touted as the BEST EVER! It was wholly planned and executed by a super team of our members and we surpassed all expectations. Pretty proud of our club here!!! Late September was Jim's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday! We celebrated in Santa Fe and Taos, two of our favorite cities, and walked about 5 miles a day to visit museums, play golf and sample some of the best restaurants to be found anywhere in the world!

Somewhere in the winter, Jim was diagnosed with a lung issue by an emergency room doctor, and was given the name of a surgeon in Denver who could remove benign "glob". Not one of these doctors is a pulmonologist, so I recommended that he get a 2<sup>nd</sup> opinion from an expert. Meanwhile, his general doctor sent him to a urologist who thought he perhaps had prostate cancer and ordered a needle biopsy...which thankfully turned up negative for cancer. And, after that, we saw the pulmonologist who indicated she wanted another lung scan and would simply watch this benign growth in his lung since it hadn't changed in a year, and he perhaps has had it all his life? Hmmm...beware of surgeons with college age children!

Early December saw us in Cabo once again, with winter golf galore.

Wishing one and all a Merry Christmas and a pain-free/doctor-free New Year.

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