



MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL AND A VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR

2024 Was a great year with so many visitors from Thanksgiving thru January 3, 2025, that I wasn't able to get my Christmas cards and letter out! So, don't worry! Jim and I are fine, just inundated with friends and family...which is a good thing, right?

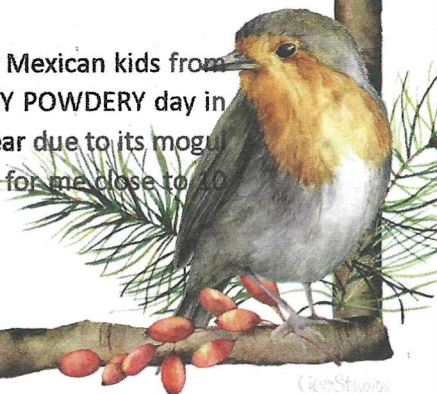
The Viper Club is still going strong, and we joined them for the annual Holiday party, a BBQ at Hoover Mercedes (who works on all our vipers, and to whom I sold both the viper and the Mini cooper when I couldn't find winter storage for them anywhere in Colorado), the Rheinheimer's 60th anniversary BBQ, July 4th trip to Grand Lake and attend a play there by fabulous cast (such a good drama company, we went again to see Kinky Boots in August with Houston friends Dick and Linda Wiesner); and now I am an associate member of the club since I don't have a viper, but 20 years as the treasurer and \$100/year allows me (and any other previous viper owner) to join in the fun and trips and parties. So, I'm still a member of the viper family!!!

Speaking of friends and family visits: Jim's daughter Merritt and kids Jude (15) and Lake (11) joined us in March for their first ever ski trip. Jude and Lake took lessons at Keystone, and Jim's oldest daughter Christian skied with them afterwards in Vail/Beaver Creek. Christian took on a part time job in Vail helping a large restaurateur/landlord with organization issues, so comes once or twice a month to visit. Jim's oldest grandson, Connor and his soon to be fiancée Joanna, and Connor's mom Christian arrived in August to join us in a golf tournament. Turns out Joanna will have Jim's first great grandchild in March, and there will be a wedding in Brazil sometime in summer 2025 that we will get to attend! All very exciting!

My ex, Wayne Randall, died of bladder cancer in July, and the Memorial was held in October here in Summit County, so all the Randall kids and their kids were here for the weekend: Molly with Logan and Emily, Jessica with Braylee, and Amy with husband Ryan and twin 4- year- old daughters. Whew! But a grand sendoff we all gave Wayne. I had high tailed it to Austin area in July to support Molly and Jessica through the last few days of Wayne's ordeal. (Jim flew down and joined me to help drive home, sweet man that he is!)

Other guests included the owner of the Breckenridge Comedy Club and his featured comedian a couple of times for a 2-night stay...always fun to get to meet and chat with a comedian on the way up! And finally, the guests of honor: Tami Veenendaal and partner Bert for 4 days just before Christmas! Tami has been the bike-n-barge guide we've been following around Europe for 7 of the past 14 years! We finally got to host her on our soil, and had such fun taking them dog sledding, skiing (with a little help from my friends lending me their passes, thank you very much Becky and Laura), and dining in old time rustic Colorado restaurants. Cindy and Larry Nelson, who have joined us on several of Tami's bike tours, joined us all for a great reunion celebration.

Skiing winter of 2024 was enhanced by being joined by my South African friends, my Mexican kids from Poncho years, meeting several new and old girl friends to ski with, and the final VERY POWDERY day in late March was spent with cousins Don and Ann on a run I'd been avoiding the past year due to its mogul field, but which I amazingly made it down without falling while Don and Ann waited for me close to 10



minutes at the bottom. I've decided maybe I'm relegated to easier runs for the future: no more super mogul double black runs for this nearly 80 year old! But...at least I'm still skiing! And with such early snow for 24/25 season, I've started early to ski this season. Whoopee! Summer was spent on the golf course, as usual. We never get any better, but we always have fun.

In April we went to Cabo with friends Doug and Holley Adcock and their friends from Boulder. We spent a week at Diamante Golf resort, then went to Todos Santos to celebrate Doug's 80th birthday. The resort I had booked was not available when we arrived because they had overbooked a wedding, but they had moved us to what ended up being a less convenient but much more elegant resort 5 minutes from town by car. We had hoped to be walking distance to town, but were very happy with the change as this resort had a pool, a lagoon with kayaks, a spa, rooms with private verandas, a breakfast restaurant, a bar...what more could we possibly ask for? A fun celebration for sure!

The other big trip this year starting in August, was a trip to Gothenburg Sweden to take delivery of Jim's new 2024 Volvo XC40, a small red SUV with all the technology updates we've never had before, and have had 3 separate training sessions to learn the use of so many great features! Volvo paid our round-trip airfare, gave us 2 nights lodging in a great hotel, a dinner at a fabulous upscale restaurant called Mr. P's, a tour of the Volvo Museum, and lunch on the day of delivery. We immediately gave the car back to Volvo to begin shipment home to the U.S. Then we flew to Frankfurt, Germany, to reconnoiter the pickup of our friends, Cindy and Larry Nelson, to begin a week-long bike n barge tour with Tami along the Mosel River from Merzig to Koblenz. The tour was enhanced by the fact that it happened to be Wine Festival time in Germany while we were there. Also, Tami's mother, Franca, joined us for this tour so we finally got to meet her and I did quite a bit of hiking with her to visit some of the castles on the hills (Jim didn't want to join us on hilly or long hikes) and more hiking around some of the towns to visit sites that didn't interest Jim. After the bike tour, the four of us took a train to Heidelberg and had a private tour of that area which included a couple of castles and the most fabulous garden of the king's summer palace just outside Heidelberg, which rivalled (and in our estimation exceeded) the gardens of Versailles that we had visited in summer 2023. The guide also took us to his favorite restaurant and ordered all the great German dishes we should try. And by "all the dishes", I mean ALL the dishes...about 6 different dishes of 3-4 servings each to be eaten by 5 of us. That, of course, left quite a bit of leftovers for the guide to take home "to his dog"...riiiiiight!!! Anyway, the food was the best meal we had in Germany, and in fact, on the entire trip! After Heidelberg, we took the train back to Frankfurt where we boarded a tour bus the next day for parts unknown because we were the only four on the bus who failed to receive the very detailed itinerary which also discussed the various Euros required for stops/entrance fees/tips etc. Thank goodness for Larry and his ATM card, because no way had Jim and I the kind of cash required. The tour began in Germany, went to Prague, Slovenia, Budapest, Austria, Switzerland, and the Black Forest part of Germany before arriving back in Frankfurt. The next day we headed for home on our free return air reservation. We arrived home to all things broken: wine cooler, microwave, fireplace, garage door...it was amazing we could get all replaced/repaired by the time our first guests arrived!

So...that's pretty much it for 2024! No plans for 2025 as yet, other than a trip to Brazil to witness the wedding of Jim's oldest grandson! That sounds pretty exciting since, other than that trip to Peru several years ago, we haven't been to South America. Stay tuned!

Much love to all : Penny and Jim

Ms Penny Banks
71 Silver Cir
Breckenridge, CO 80424-8953