

Happy Holidays from Susan and Bob Marley

While time is slipping by quickly, we find we're not just growing older, we seem to be growing busier. And unfortunately our minor infirmities, what Ted Bruning calls the organ recital, keep intruding into our conversations with friends and sometimes limiting our ability to perform what our minds would like to see done. But enough of that, this is supposed to be an uplifting letter of all the great things in our life and there are many to report.



We're still traveling as much as we wish. Last spring we visited Death Valley and Joshua Tree national parks with our A-liner camper. Although it was early spring, the weather was comfortable in Death Valley. We hiked to remote mining towns and visited most of the tourist attractions and viewpoints. After almost a week there, we were on the way to Joshua Tree, driving south through areas of California that neither of us had visited. While Death Valley had been relatively quiet, the Joshua Tree campgrounds were full because of the beautiful weather. Joshua Tree is one of Susan's old haunts because it is a sport climbing mecca. We were hoping to see lots of wildflowers but didn't really see many until we left Joshua Tree going south and reached lower elevations. The trip home unveiled a problem. That may be a pun

because one of the windows was ready to pop off in the 70 mile per hour wind stream. We taped it down with the every-ready duct tape and made it home.

Our next adventure was a trip to the upper reaches of Lake Powell. After a long drive to Halls Crossing, we launched the pontoon and spent 10 days or so motoring as far up lake as we were comfortable, eventually being stopped by pooled driftwood 10 miles or so below Hite. We planned to re-supply and continue for another couple of weeks but minor motor problems caused us to reconsider and head for home. At home the problem was easily resolved but it reminded us that the pontoon was over 20 years old and we had been motoring it for 5 of those years. So we cleaned it up and sold it for a fair price to a nice couple who drove down from Idaho to pick it up. It seems we now need to find another boat.

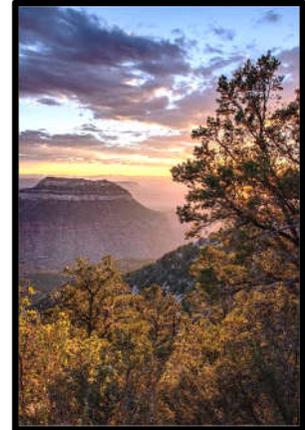


It was an especially hot and dry summer here and we tried to get out of town about half the time. When late July and August monsoons arrive the cheap-to-run cooler goes off, the air-conditioner comes on, and the electric bills skyrocket. Rather than pay them we close down the house and take our trailer to the high country. Not wanting to drive long distances we went a couple of times to Mogollon Rim campsites on an island in the sky above Pine, Arizona. This

is a delightful place in ponderosa country with spectacular views. It is a land much different from our low desert homeland. Much cooler temperatures, awesome thunderstorms in the afternoon,

and scary lightning strikes at night come with the package. There are multiple trails for hiking from the rim to a plateau that is 2000' below as well as dozens of viewpoints to be enjoyed. Unfortunately Susan was not able to fully enjoy the hiking possibilities the second time we went because she was told to rest and try to recover a problem she was having with one knee.

It did recover, so near the end of August we decided to make our ubiquitous trip to the North Rim for a couple of weeks. We hiked and biked a lot but Susan again encountered a health problem that forced us to return to Black Canyon City for medical attention. Unfortunately it also caused us to not be able to meet Mark Jennings and his wife at the North Rim as we had planned. We found ourselves frying in Phoenix with the air-conditioner running full blast. Since that was not consistent with our desire to escape the heat we looked at the O.A.T. last minute trip offerings and made a selection.



Within a few weeks we were off to Portugal and Spain. Not having been there before we were excited to see the country. A bit over two weeks was to be with O.A.T. traveling from Lisbon to Madrid. After the trip ended we journeyed on our own to Granada to see the Alhambra, one of



the finest examples of Moorish architecture. That was followed by a visit to Gibraltar where we climbed the “Rock” on a foot trail that we accidentally found. The hike began at sea level and climbed several thousand feet to the cloud shrouded top where the infamous Barbary Macaque monkeys were waiting for us. From there we hastily returned to Lisbon where we spent two days more exploring castles and churches.

When we arrived home Bob was contacted by a local organization about upgrading their computer systems. He was approached because he had done their last computer upgrade 7-8 years ago. He negotiated a service contract and was almost immediately installing and configuring software on two new Dell computers. Part of the job was training someone else how to maintain them. This almost full time involvement went on for a couple of weeks but fooling with computers is fun for him. He’s been working with designing circuitry for them or programming them since the early 60’s, almost 55 years.

But then the fun stopped. We knew that either one of us or a visitor was going to crash through our rear decks one day if we didn’t do something about it. Water and heat causes wooden decks to deteriorate badly here in 10 years or so. Ours had been in place for close to 20 years. Bob went into construction carpenter mode, engineering supports as necessary under the existing deck. Much of this involved crawling around in space that was only two feet high or even less under the support beams. First we did the hot tub deck,



then the covered deck behind our bedroom, and then the main deck near our living room. We used wood screws by the pounds to tighten everything up. Each deck section took a week or more after including prepping and painting. As the month went by he was getting stiffer and stiffer and his back started to bother him with pain in one hip. Fortunately we finished before he had a collapse.



The next few months should be really nice here, so we will be staying close to home. Bob is still hiking and biking, switching activities every other day. Unfortunately Susan's knee problem returned and became so severe she is unable to do either and is scheduled for surgery in mid-January. She has both a bucket handle medial tear and a smaller tear in her lateral meniscus. She is getting around with limited pain but is getting cabin fever from not being able to do much.

We're in the holiday mood and setting a record this year as our Christmas decorations were in place before the month of December even started. We may even get this letter out in the first week of December. If any of you come this way please contact us and try to arrange a visit. Black Canyon City is a great place to hang out this time of year.

Wishing you and yours the very best now and in the new year to come.

Bob and Susan.

PS: If you want to see more of our best photos and to read in more detail about our 2017 adventures go to www.kwagunt.net and browse around.

MERRY CHRISTMAS
AND
HAPPY NEW YEAR