



Merry Christmas!

Just a day after waddling away from the Thanksgiving dinner table, we are faced with Christmas shopping drama and thoughts of what fun facts to contribute to our annual letter.

We had a healthy year. Alan had cataract surgery and is finding the world to be a much brighter, more colorful place.

We began the year by circling half of Australia on an Oceania cruise. Circling the first half was how we ended 2017. We decided a 35-day cruise in the southern hemisphere (during wintertime here) was quite pleasant. So is Australia.

Jan spent most of her time being an ancestry sleuth, creating new paintings for an exhibit, and creating boutique items. She finds ancestry research compelling and has found a number of interesting relatives with whom she chats online.

She and her friends decided they needed new venues and audiences for their arts and crafts sales, rather than doing a holiday boutique at our house. Jan elected to participate in a street fair in Old Town Cottonwood. The weather totally cooperated, so it was a fun event.

Jan was invited to do 3-month exhibit at a local “country club” clubhouse, along with one of her art friends. She spent months creating nearly two dozen new pieces. Some were small, but a lot of work, nonetheless. The clubhouse combines their monthly pot lucks with an artist “meet and greet.” Jan was very pleased with the turnout and support from her fellow artists. She sold a mind-boggling, five pieces that night alone! And the sales are still coming!

Alan got in a number of long-distance motorcycle trips. In addition to Death Valley and Lake Tahoe, he rode up to Calgary where he picked up Jan, drove up to Lake Louise, (site of our honeymoon 24 years ago, in case anyone is counting) and met up with our Canadian motorcycle buddies, Rick and Julia. We toured Alberta and BC for two weeks. Unfortunately, it was at the height of the wildfires. The sky was yellow, and visibility was very low. Still, it was eerily beautiful. We had such a good time.

We took Cindy and Gordon and our two granddaughters to Iceland and did a drive all the way around the perimeter of the country in a 4-wheel drive van. We arrived around 6:00 am, after a too-short night of sleep. We spent the morning lounging around the famous Blue Lagoon spa. The country is full of waterfalls. We may have covered them all! The van’s 4-wheel drive capability was definitely needed on one road. One water crossing after another. There were turns in the fast-running water, no depth markers, and steep banks. One person totally enjoyed all that, while five other were biting their nails.

Jan turned 70 this year and is still shuddering from the shock. We celebrated with a few days in captivating Venice, then flew to Prague to meet up with our friends Jeanne and Chris Kuber. We all took a

river cruise down the Danube to Budapest. That was the first time river cruising for any of us. The town centers were usually walking distance from the ship. We were quite favorably impressed.

Time does not pass without bumps or outright pits in the road. One of our bigger events was that Jan's mother became too much of a handful for the staff in the assisted living part of Wesley Village where she has been living. We had to move her to the Serenity wing this fall. She wasn't there more than a few hours before she fell and did quite a number on herself. They sent her to the ER where she was x-rayed top to bottom and got 10 stitches in her forehead. She had huge bruises on her legs. Her face would have scared small children! Fortunately, her nose was not broken as they had feared. Unfortunately, her glasses were. She has lost a lot of ground, either from the fall and/or the move. She wants to sleep much of the day. She has developed a new mannerism over the year. When she is tired of you, she makes a dismissive hand wave and says, "you can go now."

Jan & Alan