

It has been a year of travel, enjoying retirement, and Corgis!

In the Spring, we went on a Disney Cruise to the Virgin Islands. We had never been there before. We also swam with dolphins in Tortola (British Virgin Islands). It was a lot of fun, and we got some great pictures. In addition, we went to Saint John and Saint Thomas in the American Virgin Islands. Most of Saint John is a US National Park. We did a very nice bus tour, seeing a bunch of gorgeous beaches, and the ruins of an 18th century sugar mill. It was a beautiful day, with gorgeous weather, and we got some more great pictures. In addition, we spent a day on Disney's private island, Castaway Cay, and actually had beautiful weather this time. Of course, we also got to enjoy the gorgeous Disney Wonder ship, with its amazing live shows, movies, bars, and great food. The service, naturally, was wonderful.

Since this cruise left from Florida, we snuck in one day at Epcot on our way to Port Canaveral. We also spent an extra day at Downtown Disney on our way back. This sure made the return trip nicer. It was great to be in Epcot again, reliving the great rides and attractions in Future World, and the international flavor of the World Showcase. We were also there during the annual Flower and Garden festival. We got to see stunning topiaries, beautiful flower displays, and special butterfly gardens.

In 2017, we are cruising again. We will be going back through the Panama Canal, on the beautiful Disney Wonder. The last time we went through the canal, we went from west to east, this time we are going from east to west. In addition, the last time we went was the original canal, which was over 100 years old. This time, it will be the freshly opened new canal. So, we will have been through both. Also, the Wonder has had a refurbishment, and there are new things to experience on the ship.

We are still thinking about that transatlantic crossing in 2018. Disney has not released the dates of their crossing yet, but we are very seriously considering making the journey.

We made a second trip in the fall, this time to the west coast. We spent a few days in San Francisco, within walking distance of Fisherman's Wharf. We had a neat time enjoying the food and the shopping, and the swarm of sea lions. We also took a neat boat tour around the bay, getting close to Alcatraz (though the boat did not dock there), and going under the Golden Gate Bridge. In addition, we did the on and off bus tour, which let us see China Town (Joe did a walking tour here), Union Square, down town, Haight Ashbury, Golden Gate Park, and other areas of the city. It also crossed the Golden Gate back and fourth to Sausalito, where we did a mini bus tour. We also got to do a night tour of the city and the Bay Bridge.

For the second half of the trip, we rented a car, and drove up to Medford, Oregon. There, we met up with our cousins, Tom and Ruby. Tom really knows the area, and took us around to the redwood forest, Crater Lake, and the Oregon beach. The redwoods were magnificent, but Crater Lake is even more stunning and surreal. The seafood at the beach was even better than in San Francisco.

On the drive back to San Francisco, we stopped and spent a couple of days in Marin County. We made a trip to the Walt Disney Family Museum, in the old San Francisco Presidio. Even though we know a lot about Disney, we learned some things, and enjoyed some really interesting exhibits.

It looks like Nick will be leaving Denver. He has left his job at the City and County of Denver, and accepted a position at Oracle Corporation. He will be working in Colorado Springs, not far from the Air Force Academy. He will be supporting Sun Microsystems legacy products.

While Debbie continues to enjoy retirement, Joe's business, Four Point OH Consulting, keeps on going. His current client has him working back in the aerospace segment. The team he is on is developing analytic equipment in support of unmanned and possibly manned launch vehicles for the United Launch Alliance (ULA). When this project winds down in 2017, it may be time for him to join Debbie in retirement.

Debbie keeps busy in retirement with her scrapbooking (she has done a LOT this year). She continues to hone her skill in Photoshop, as she produces one after another gorgeous scrapbooks.

Omen and Chromaggus (the Obrin Corgis) are still doing well. But, Chro is getting up there in years, and slowing down a little. They are still a source of joy.

We have been doing a few Corgi events, with a group Debbie found online. We did the Tour De Corgi in Fort Collins for the second year, and spent a day at Chatfield Reservoir with a bunch of other Corgis (and their humans). Omen, of course, is a pure bred Corgi, but Chro is only half. He has been welcome though, and is happy to go!

Happy Holidays to all of you, and best wishes for 2017.

The Obrins