

In June of this year, we lost Chromaggus. He had a tumor on his pancreas, that was discovered back in October last year. But, he did have many good days in his last 8 months. The loss we feel now is the price we pay for all of the years of love, acceptance, and laughter that he gave us. Thank you, Chro. Good Dog.

Omen is doing very well, and is getting used to being an only doggie.

He does keep in the company of other Corgis, through the Corgi meet up group. about once a month, a bunch of corgis from our area meet at one of the local parks, and just hang out and let the dogs play together.

Then, we drove up to Fort Collins for the 3rd annual Tour De Corgi. About 400 corgis and their humans get together in Fort Collins for a costume contest, and a parade around downtown Fort Collins. It is something to see, and Omen enjoyed being a star. Well, more like a king.

On a more elaborate road trip, Debbie and Joe took a wonderful little road trip to Alamosa, Colorado in August. Debbie had never been to the area. On the trip down we stopped at Bishops Castle, near San Isabel. That was a sight to see. We also stopped in Pueblo, and spent a little time with Joe's brother, John, and his wife, Sandie. We went to the Sand Dunes near Alamosa, which is really something to see. We rode the Cumbers Toltec train from Antonito to Chambers, New Mexico. We also rode the Denver Rio Grande scenic route from Alamosa to La Vita. Both rides went through beautiful mountain scenery. The Cumbers Toltec is an old steam/coal fired locomotive, while the Denver Rio Grande is a more modern diesel. We also went to the alligator farm. Yes, alligators in Southern Colorado. The history of the place is interesting. There are a lot of alligators there, and some of them enormous. On the way home, we stopped in Colorado Springs, visited with Nick, and went to the Great Wolf Lodge. Great Wolf was kind of fun, though oriented towards families with younger children.

Our big trip, though, was a Disney Cruise through the Panama Canal in May. We had once before gone from west to east, and this time we went from east to west. We started in Port Canaveral, Florida. This gave us a chance to stay a couple of days in Walt Disney World. We stayed at the Animal Kingdom Lodge. We could see savannah animals, like giraffes and wild boars from the balcony of our room. We also enjoyed the highly themed lodge itself, with even more wildlife viewing. We were also able to go to the Animal Kingdom one day, and enjoy the safari animals, as well as the wonderful rides and attractions. Dinosaur and Expedition Everest continue to be fun and thrilling.

On the cruise, we stopped at Cozumel, Mexico, and enjoyed a glass bottom boat tour through the coral reef. We stopped in Cartagena, Columbia, enjoying a tour of an old Spanish Fort from the 1500s. The cannons and battlements were something to see, as was the amazing view of the city. We also got a brief tour of the old part of town. It is a neat city, but very hot and humid. We then went through the canal itself. On our previous trip, we went through the old locks, which have been around over a century. On this trip, we went through the new locks. They are so new that we were the first cruise ship to pass through these locks! We got a commemorative certificate. After passing through the canal, we stopped in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, and toured the Our Lady of Guadalupe church. It is a magnificent church. Then, we stopped at Cabo San Lucas. The main event there was a ferry ride out to Land's End. This is the southern tip of the Baja Peninsula, and is known for its stunning rock formations. The Arch is something that we always will remember.

In addition to the wonderful ports of call, we enjoyed a total of 14 nights aboard the wonderful Disney Wonder. The entertainment was again amazing, as was the food and service. Our verandah 6 stories above the water provided fantastic views of the ocean and the canal.

The next cruise, coming in May of 2018, is a big one. We are doing a traditional trans Atlantic crossing! We are on board the Disney Magic for 13 nights. We leave from Miami, then sail to Ponta Delgada in the Azores. After that, we stop in Lisbon, Portugal. Then, we stop in Cádiz, Málaga, Ibiza, and Barcelona (all in Spain). We plan to stay a couple of days in Barcelona after leaving the ship. Then, we are taking the train to Paris! We will use our Disney Vacation Club points to stay at Disney Land Paris. We will only go to the park one day. But, we will stay on property four days. We will use it as a base from which to tour Paris. This is Debbie's first trip to Europe, and only Joe's second. We are already getting excited!

But, Nick beat us to Paris! This September, he and Christina Allard flew to London. They toured London, Paris, and Dublin before flying home. We are jealous of their pictures of the Louvre, the Eiffel Tower, Notre Dame, and the Palace of Versailles. But, next spring, it is Joe and Debbie's turn.

Although, we got the privilege of watching the puppy while he was gone. Yes, Nick got a puppy. He is a rescue dog, and some kind of mixed breed (German Sheppard, Labrador, and Australian Cattle dog might be in there). We are not sure how he is managing a big dog in his little one bedroom apartment in the Springs, but the puppy is lovable.

Nick is still living in Colorado Springs, and working at Oracle Corporation's office there. He is doing quite well there. The work is in the field where he earned his degree, and the company seems like a great place to work.

Meanwhile, Joe is ready to stop working. His company, Four Point OH Consulting, is finishing off one last contract, then he is probably done. So, the end of 2017 will probably be his swan song. He has been consulting full time since 2003! And, has spent nearly 40 years in the engineering profession.

It's just too much fun watching Debbie enjoy retirement. She has been retired for five years now. It just seems like such a good life, enjoying her scrapbooking and her gardening, and spending time with Omen.

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

The Obrins