**USC Football Game at the Coliseum**

On October 8, 2016, Chris and Louis were invited to attend a University of Southern California (USC) Trojans football game at the Coliseum against Colorado Buffalos. The tickets were free (for a contribution to USC) and they included a “tailgate” party on campus along with free parking. Wow, I have not been to any football game in over 35 years. I wonder what has changed. First difference, the parking lot was much further away from the stadium; fortunately a shuttle bus was provided to get from campus to the Coliseum entrance. Second difference, the entire campus was now one large party before the game. Hot dogs and hamburgers were served upon request to anyone who wandered by. The band, the cheerleaders, and the song girls showed up across campus and performed before marching to the game. Various alumni groups met at different locations on campus while being hosted by USC staff members. We were invited to the college alumni contributor party (behind a fence) which had more elegant food such as paella and pasta. The seemingly mandatory alcohol was also served.

The Coliseum had a few more commercial advertisements scattered about, but needed a new paint job and maintenance of the seats. It appears that the stadium had not been repainted since the Olympics in 1984. There was a new large digital scoreboard. The band (when not on the field) had been moved to the bleachers at the peristyle end of the field. They played the same songs in the same style with “Conquest” featured. Of course, this was perfectly reasonable since the band leader, Dr. Arthur C. Bartner, has been leading the band since 1970. The song girls were wearing the same white outfits with cardinal and gold pom-pons that they used in 1970 as well. I think there are probably new outfits made each year. Their dance routines and on-field behavior were the same. Even their appearance seemed not to change. Perhaps the director is still the same? I wonder if they all still came from the Kappa sorority. The white horse, Traveler (with some roman number afterwards), ran around the field after USC touchdowns like always, with the rider waving the (same?) sword. The band put on a good show during halftime honoring veterans, and also after the game. Two pictures are included at the end of the article; they show the seat location and the decorations at the stadium. Attendance: 68,302

The game started at 1 PM; this meant that we were in the sun all afternoon; therefore, sunscreen was mandatory. We were very far from the actual game action. Football is better on television with replays and close-up shots of the players. The football game also seemed like the traditional USC style from the 1970’s. Colorado was dominated at the line of scrimmage by the larger USC linemen. USC still ran through the middle, around the ends, and passed the ball upfield. They moved the ball quite well and seldom punted. The defense was pretty good, but made the occasional severe error. The freshman quarterback did not seem like the stereotype for the position, but he got the job done by running away from the opposing rush. USC won the game 21-17. A few invisible fumbles made the game close.

When it came time to catch the bus to get back to the parking lot, there was a huge traffic jam around the Coliseum. We waited in the bus (by ourselves) for an hour, but nobody else showed up. The bus finally started to move and then took another hour to get to the parking lot. No wonder most people elected to walk through the rose garden in front of the Natural History Museum to get over to campus. I was jealous of the people who got to use golf carts on the sidewalks to move around. The second best method to get to (and leave) the Coliseum is to take the new Metro Expo light rail line.

My friends who are longtime USC boosters report that the real way to enjoy the game is to park your recreational vehicle directly in the parking lot across from the stadium on Friday night, party for two days and leave on Sunday, with a short party interruption to go to the game if you really want to. Many alumni and friends just watch the game on their large screen television in their (or a nearby) vehicle. The problem with this approach is that they do not get to experience all the band activities, which is the real reason to go to any college football game.



