

2018--- Happy New Year ---2019

This year we spent most of December in Southeast Asia, so we decided to send out our annual letter to welcome the new year. On December 5th we flew via Taipei to Singapore, where we stayed the night and had the best street-vendor mango ever. We boarded the Sapphire Princess on the 8th. We saw the Lok Kawi Animal Park and Sabah Heritage Village in Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia; enjoyed a Cai river cruise in Nha Trang, Vietnam; had a rain-soaked bus tour of the temples, Big Buddha, and coconut-picking monkeys in Ko Samui, Thailand, (The 52 km road around the island turned into a meter deep river in many places, which the bus was amazingly able to slosh through.); visited a spice garden and butterfly farm in Penang, Malaysia; and had a bus tour of Kuala Lumpur. After disembarking, we took a ferry to Bantam Island, Indonesia, where we spent two days at a seaside resort snorkeling and enjoying some of the best local seafood on the trip. We then flew to Jakarta for two nights, where we took a quick tour of the city (5 different transportation modes), then flew to Pangkalan Bun, Kalimantan, Indonesia, boarded our private EcoTour houseboat, and entered the Tanjung Puting National Park. We had a crew of five, including a guide and a chef, and we took hikes to orangutan feeding stations, sometimes in the rain. With wildlife sightings along the Sekonyer River, we saw about 30 orangutans, a gibbon, a wild boar, numerous birds, and monkeys. The proboscis monkey bands were especially interesting to watch. We then flew back to Singapore, where we toured the city, with a special stop at the Botanical Gardens. Back home through Taipei, we had a 15-minute connection to get to our LAX flight; EVA facilitated our plane exit from the delayed Singapore flight, but we had to run.

Our pace in 2018 was not nearly as brisk as December's. In February, we spent a long weekend with Katy, Seanna, Kaiden, and dogs in a rented Lake Tahoe cabin. We had fresh snow to enjoy and throw snowballs at each other. The kids went skiing; we relaxed. In March we went skiing with the Conejo Valley Ski Club to Mammoth. The snow was finally good after a drought year that left many runs closed. We figure that about two consecutive days of skiing is our limit these days. In July, we flew to Minneapolis along with Andy's friend Ken and met up with Andy, Suzuna, and Melina, who flew from Tokyo. We rented a van and drove to International Falls, where we picked up JoAnna. We all then proceeded to Sioux Narrows, ONT to visit Ron and Marilyn at their Island. We had two weeks of catching up, fishing, and good food, including the traditional fish fry. In September Chris made a sad trip back to Milwaukee to be with mom during her last few days. Jennie Geosling passed away on September 29, age 96, after a life with many sacrifices as well as happy times. In October, Chris attended the annual Society of Women Engineers national conference in Minneapolis. On November 8, several wildfires broke out in California, two of which were near Calabasas. The Woolsey fire became massive and passed within about two miles of our house. Luckily, we were upwind throughout its course, but we were affected by a power outage and multiple road closures, which Chris has to navigate around to get to and from work. We were lucky; many were not.

Chris is still enjoying working at Northrop Grumman. Roughly once a month, she goes fishing with a group from work on an ocean charter out of Oxnard. She also caught several tuna on a Fishing Club trip out of San Diego. It's hard to eat enough fish to keep the freezer from filling up. Lou stays busy keeping the house in shape, creating computer games, playing bridge, and planning trips. Katy did a renovation and new roof on the house in the Carmel mountains. Seanna (16) and Kaiden (12) are doing well in school. Andy and family still live in Yokohama. Emily and Victor bought a house in Portland, OR with a large yard, garden, and guesthouse. They now have three cats and chickens.

Happy 2019 to all!