

Diana and Tom Burton

Holiday 2011

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After 28 trip reports and about as many Photo Shows this year, somehow a holiday letter feels redundant or at least TMI as in *Too Much Information*, yet since we've produced a yearly missive since early 1970s, it's a tradition I hesitate to skip. Just as is the tradition of being late. Find those photo shows at www.TomsKoi.com and trip reports at www.LibertyLadies.weebly.com.

We say *Life is Good* often enough to feel guilty yet I count my blessings all the time that we are still in GO mode. Well, sometimes in GO mode; I seem to have either a GO or STOP mode whereas Tom is the consistent one. And GO we did this year and even together (smile) to Charleston, Rome and Orvieto, San Francisco and Lake Tahoe, Bordeaux and Sarlat and Nice, Veneto and Venice, Richmond and last but not least we just returned from Budapest. Some even bigger trips are in the planning for 2012. Tom took his usual trip to Virginia for the Crooked Road Music, and he graciously took care of house and home and importantly the Big Bird known as Pandora while I did five major hikes and another 18 marathons (way down from the 25 for my 65th year.)

My hikes took me to national parks in Maui, Big Bend, Bryce and Zion, Glacier and Waterton parks, and Mt Rainier; my marathons always give me a few extra days as a tourist and included Boulder NV, Charleston, Houston (where I ran my fastest at 5:39), Surfside TX (where I managed my slowest on the sandy beach at 7:13), Rome Italy, Knoxville, London, Gettysburg, Capon Valley WVA (for my 4th time at this 50K), Traverse City MI, Madison MT (the highest road race in the Americas at near 10,000 feet), San Francisco (for my 3rd time), Medoc France (in costume and through 59 vineyards complete with tastings), Berlin (which completed my Five Majors), Dublin (adding other Irish touring), Richmond, Tulsa and Memphis. Just as fun was participating in San Francisco's 100th Anniversary of the famous Bay-to-Breakers (fun nudity galore with 50,000 participants) and Atlanta's equally famous largest road race in the country called Peachtree with 55,000.) If my legs let me continue with the trips I have booked, I'll have 100 marathons before I reach 67.



Daughter Alayna has positioned herself into an all-new and adventuresome career with Slim4Life and she only surprised herself, but not me, when she lost a lot of weight and is now about a size 14 children -- I noticed this brings out her lovely cheek bones. Grandson Joseph sounds to be fine but has pretty much disappeared within a new life with a girlfriend Alayna likes a lot. He is so non-communicative that we're especially grateful to have Marie - our 13 year old 'fairy god-daughter' from K.C. We feel that her adopted family is also our family now. When Marie visited NJ in June we made a trip to Boston, in July she attended surf board camp here and during her visit over Christmas and New Years we plan to see some more of NYC. Next year we have a number of trips planned too. She's 13 and a delight. Don't think we haven't invited Alayna and Joseph too but it seems we have to get them young for there to be any interest in NJ!



To be in GO-mode we have to be healthy and I'd say for 76 and 66, we are. Tom continues working out on his own, walking a few miles most every day, and keeps as busy as he wants to be with the house and kitchen for which I'm most grateful. We have hired some garden labor help as his prior 'labors of love' got less loving. I still work out with a weight trainer who abuses me to no end and I remind him that is what I pay him for. I've just been reminded that there's no excuse for any reduced strength -- push-ups and squats can easily be accomplished in hotel rooms.

Remember that these holiday missives are so we can keep in touch, so we can hear from you, so let's hear it!