

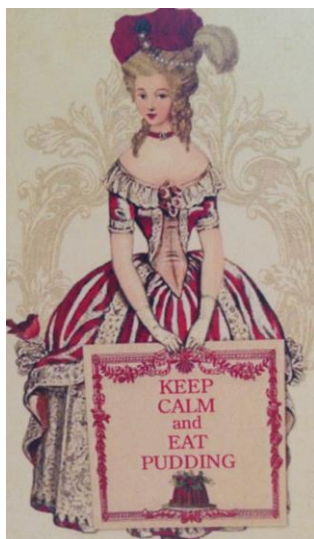
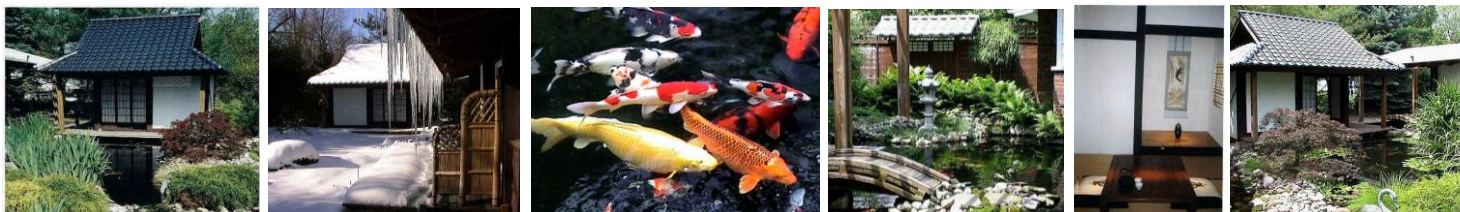
Diana and Tom Burton

Holiday 2013

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I'm happy to say that we've had 45 years together and as I look back at the book of "Holiday Letters" we've been sending out as yearly missives for most of them, having started in the early 70s while in Belgium, I'm a little surprised and somewhat amazed now at how far we've come and how far we've traveled. We lived in a little chateau in those early years in Belgium - see an artist's rendition here. We now live in our little Shangri La with the garden that Tom built and continues to enjoy (though with a bit of hired help at times). Our life remains an open book through his Photo Shows at www.TomsKoi.com and my trip reports at www.LibertyLadies.weebly.com.



If I were to send out holiday cards, it might be this one just received: Keep Calm and Eat Pudding. Sounds like Tom? No one is calmer or happier or more contented. He's had a couple of health challenges and not only gets through them but turns out to be the hero for doing so. After trekking through Sydney and then Hong Kong with a catheter apparatus installed last year, he one upped himself and went on a driving trip through the Amalfi Coast of Italy only a month after a couple hospitalizations and a resultant vision issue. He still does his daily walks and weight training and continues cooking and looking after the house and he very much still cherishes his special Lexus LS460 and Mercedes SL500 (a '97 classic).

You might recall that we started the year in Vienna with Marie, then added Paris for her Spring Break and San Francisco for the summer hiatus. We so love Paris; it was a delight to see it through a teen's eyes yet we would later return in November -- just the two of us. We were in San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara area in April, Vancouver in May, not only Amalfi Coast but Rome too in June, Portofino, Cinque Terre and Florence later in June, Deer Valley Utah in August, and a reunion with Las Cruces, NM where we set up house-keeping together and married in 1970.



Marie in SF; with friend during our Paris eating extravaganza; Tom in Santa Barbara; Marie with Tom at home

Me? You think I'm still doing marathons? Not! In January at a marathon I got the "sign of the times" when I forgot that silly but signature Liberty Lady Crown, took forever too long, and just had too much fun "having a good

time finishing" instead of a "good finish time." It was suddenly a relief to decide I'd been there/done that. I've qualified for Boston, I've done well over 100 marathons and I've done the Big Five. I like hiking instead and thus I've liberated myself to enjoy a half marathon. Yet I still did a few full marathons; Anaheim, San Luis Obispo, and Paradise U.P. Michigan, but I reduced to a half those in San Francisco Golden Gate Park, even Jerusalem (as part of a 12-day trip), Vancouver Canada, Elkton MD, Las Cruces NM and Istanbul (where I still went across the Bosphorus Bridge from the continents of Asia to Europe and spent 10-days as a tourist.)



In Sausalito; Procope in Paris for coq au vin; Paris in snow; Portofino from high above where even Tom hiked; in Sorrento



Hiking most hits my fancy now and I spent a full week in doing all of the Amalfi Coast, Whistler out of Vancouver, Canada, Glacier National Park, Minnesota's Lake Superior Trail, Cinque Terre, Italy and Capitol Reef with Grand Escalante in Utah. I have even more planned for 2014 to include European hiking and touring adventures with Country Walkers (Tom will piggyback again like in Amalfi and Cinque Terre using the same hotels and touring on his own in a rental car). We'll be in Provence in May, Dolomites in June and the Lakes of Italy in September.



Domestically I'm off hiking in Joshua Tree, New Mexico and Santa Fe, Canyonlands, Yellowstone, Grand Tetons and Monmouth, Rocky Mountains, Lassen Volcano, and High Sierras and Yosemite. Wanna come? With my favorite leaders - see www.ParksPlusHiking.com. There's more . . . half marathons in Huntington Beach, Phoenix and Kings Mountain SC as a start. I want to ensure there's never a dull moment.

I'm still trying to get Daughter Alayna to join me on a hike as she's into health and fitness now. She thinks she'd rather sit on a beach but can you imagine me sitting on a beach? Maybe later . . . That hippie-looking couple? Surprised me too when I visited Kansas City both in February and again in August to find that while Alayna gets younger and cuter all the time, grandson Joseph at only 28 looks like an old mountain man. Long-time girlfriend is in the National Guard and cute as can be in her little tutu affair for dinner.



Hiking in Glacier NP for my second time; Reunion with Cousin Cheryl and Sister Beverly. Pikes Peak with Dana.

Beverly is going with me to Kripalu Yoga Retreat for the third year in a row this January after a week in Boston for the Olympic ice skating trials. What a delight to see Beverly doing serious hiking these last couple years. Both Beverly and I were late bloomers so I hold hope for Alayna. Smile.

So what's on your plate and when might you join us for a hike? Life is good and we're off again soon to sample some more while we can!