

Diana and Tom Burton

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Holiday 2019
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Me again! Its been quite the year of extremes. Super trips, happy times, and add in a scare or two and there you have it. But at this age, who doesn't have some challenges, with hopefully more ups than downs?



Christmas with friends at their home; in Lyon France during the historical heat wave; on the historical Durango to Silverton Railroad; celebrating at Lake Placid.

We continue traveling and 2020 looks to be no exception. We hope. My website www.LibertyLadies.weebly.com has 30 trip reports, some big and some not so. International trips for the two of us included Paris where we're headed again in February, Tom's favorite on the French Riviera exactly on the Mediterranean close to Monaco, and Lyon the French Food Capital. In the summer we ventured again to Cortina in the Italian Dolomites and added some smaller towns including Innsbruck again. For fall colors we enjoyed Lake Placid and Montreal where we had a 39th floor glass-windows-on-3-sides glorious apartment. We finished up with a late November, early December trip to Rome, Florence and Torino in Italy.

Cruises for us were the left-over islands of the Caribbean that we missed in November. We had the same Viking ship and the same suite and same attendants to enjoy and including two stops in Colombia. Our more favorite ships are Viking's river boats so we took the Elbe River Cruise from Prague to Berlin with extra days on either side. Prague just gets more polluted with tourists and Berlin isn't so appealing but Dresden and Potsdam are super where we'd like to return.



In Cortina Italy; Monaco in front of the casino enjoying Aperol Spritz; pate and drinks on our Mediterranean seaside balcony outside of Monaco.

Hiking trips out of San Jose to Big Sur and the newer Pinnacles National Park was tough for me as much for the near record heat not to mention all the miles. Later in the year we found Durango to be always good with the nearby parks of Capitol Reef, Arches, Grand Escalante and Mesa Verde, plus the Silverton railroad; Tom followed along the hike in the car and joined a few of us hikers riding the railroad. A photographer's tour and hike on Oregon's coast staying in Brandon included the Redwoods. It's always interesting to see these sites again but in a different perspective. Wyoming's Grand Tetons and Yellowstone was my 3rd or 4th time and I see advantages in

going places again and again if they are good, so maybe I'll do that trip for the 5th time, if the legs are willing. It took a lot of "willing" to complete my big deal 2nd Camino de Santiago pilgrimage from the Pyrenees to Logrono and yet I've signed up to walk another leg of it in 2020 from Logrono to Burgos. This next year I'll go through Madrid instead of Barcelona hoping to miss the protestors that kept me holed up but safely in the airport hotel for two days.

Tom visited grandson Joseph in Bentonville where they celebrated the "new" Dodge Charger. Later in the year he visited daughter Alayna and "goddaughter" Marie in Kansas City where Tom and Marie celebrated her early graduation gift of a "new" Honda Accord. This is a car-man after all. It wasn't long ago that he got a car for Alayna. And early this year he got me a "new" Audi A8L.



Our family: Cousin Cheryl hiked with me in Pinnacles National Park. Beverly joined our group to Italy. I especially like Joseph's contrast of wild and happy in the air above the swimming pool then like Rodin's "the thinker" and Alayna with a couple of her dogs.

You'd see more of Alayna if she'd give me more than pictures of her dogs (but they are pretty neat). They are a lot of her life. Now - don't think our kids haven't been offered trips but they generally say "no" unless its to a beach and that's not happening for me at this stage of my life. Never say never?

Lovely words of wisdom from a special friend about family: "There are the usual challenges, along with really good stuff and really difficult stuff, which include our grandchildren doing amazing things as they learn and grow; our children confronting life's good and bad experiences while hopefully gaining wisdom along the way; our peers looking at their own mortality and maybe considering changes if there's still time; and then there are any of our parents still with us, mostly overwhelmed with health issues, but some still expressing gratitude."

Me -- I took multiple day trips to NYC, Montclair, the Hudson Valley, Philadelphia, Brooklyn, and Wilmington with Tom joining some of them, and a few days of art museums and renewing acquaintances with NJ friends who moved to Colorado. In between I've had classes at the local college including a week of Summer Scholars, and I do keep up my weight training whenever home.



Hiking in Wyoming; with a reunion of the Camino Pilgrims held in NYC; a second Camino group this year; Sue Ann my marathon friend who takes care of Pandora; in Innsbruck; more hiking; Innsbruck and the Dolomites; more hiking.

Tom? He is always happy, never complains, and says every day is a good day. Yet he's had some challenges and frightened me in Italy, collapsing in the Villa de Estes out in the boonies of Tivoli -- ambulance and an emergency room visit. We never learned why but maybe low blood pressure; he soldiered on with the 2 weeks in Rome, Florence and Torino without much strength. Six weeks later back to normal, not knowing if this is what being 85 means or some unknown but he continues to want to GO no matter.



A birthday party for the Taurus boys; in Brooklyn's Botanic Gardens; watching Lake Placid; up in St. Paul de Vence; eating in Monaco; and watching the waters of the Mediterranean.

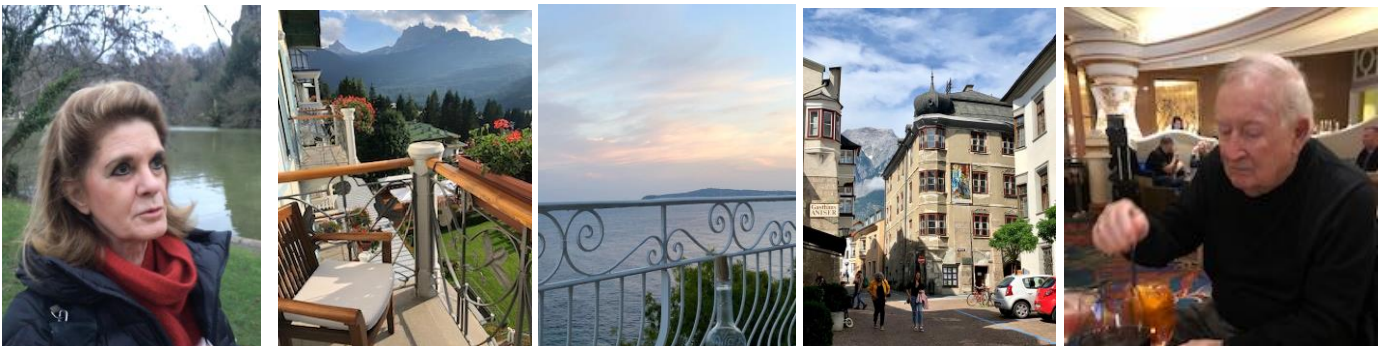
Marie joined us in NJ in the summer and again over the holidays. You'll see more of her because she is willing to travel and pose whereas I can't get any pictures from Alayna except of her puppies. Lots of those cute ones.



Marie at Lincoln Center for the Nutcracker; at our favorite brasserie celebrating Marie being 21; at the Sculpture Garden and in front of the famous Rats Restaurant.

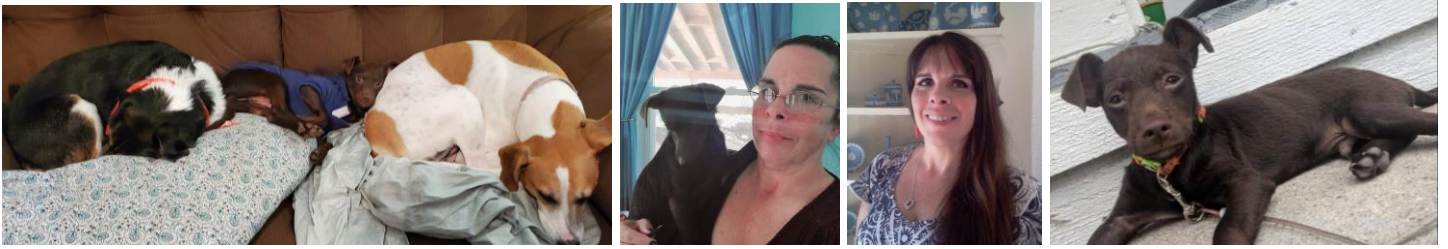
It has been our style to visit places for at least a few days with 10-14 days the best scenario. I rarely do a "fly over" even when I was running marathons where the usual runner would do next to no touring. This insistence also led me to disdain counting states, countries, national parks, etc., so I didn't join the 50 States Clubs nor the Marathon Maniacs nor the 100-Marathon club, supposing being a rebel would save me from myself. Did it? Only momentarily. I've recently added up the numbers. They suggest an obsessive personality: 120 marathons in a 10-year time span (and nearly the same number of lesser mileage races), 45 national parks, all states, and 77 countries.

So many places; so little time, I often say. Just when I think I've seen plenty, someone mentions a place I can't even find on a map. I'm not going back to the Far East anytime soon (I lived and traveled there); I go as little as possible where there's poverty (why would I like that?); all of which means my usual rule is why would I leave my comfortable house for anything less. So — We are going to Paris in February for about the 100th time (maybe?) and staying in the Palais Royale again. As Tom says, someone's got to do it. It's too late for Christmas so Merry Easter to all and with that a good night.



Until we meet again, wishes for a super 2020, from Diana and Tom

A collage of pictures and messages for the web and the memories



*One minute to midnight, one minute to go
One minute to say good-bye before we say hello*



*Let's start the new year right, twelve o'clock tonight
When they dim the light, let's begin*



*Kissing the old year out
Kissing the new year in*



*Let's watch the old year die with a fond good-bye
And our hopes as high as a kite*



*How can our love go wrong if
We start the new year right?*

Singing Sinatra

"When you go out into the woods, and you look at trees, you see all these different trees. And some of them are bent...you sort of understand that it didn't get enough light, and so it turned that way. And you don't get all emotional about it. You just allow it. The minute you get near humans, you lose all that. And you are constantly saying 'You are too this, or I'm too this.' That judgment mind comes in. And so I practice turning people into trees. Which means appreciating them just the way they are." - Ram Dass.

