

# Diana and Tom Burton

Holiday 2017

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Just another slow, uneventful year for the Burtons. But, I did treat myself to another self-centered ten-day solo trip to Paris in December instead of shopping and planning for the holidays. So any holiday cards or even most gifts went by the wayside. Yet yearly missives must continue if nothing more than to memorialize the year and add it to [www.LibertyLadies.weebly.com](http://www.LibertyLadies.weebly.com) (there are 19 reports for 2017) and some photo shows onto [www.TomsKoi.com](http://www.TomsKoi.com).

The whole year went the same decadent way, starting in January right after a visit by Marie to NJ which included NYC, DC and Brooklyn. I nearly followed her home to KC as the Ice Skating Nationals Competition was held downtown, joined by daughter Alayna and my sister Beverly. I got back to NJ in time to pack for a Maui hiking trip which was a repeat but well worth a 4<sup>th</sup> trip to Hana. February took me to Israel again and it was a long overview with plenty of new sights that I'd missed in '13 when I went for the marathon. This time I added hiking in Petra Jordan and some time in Eilat. The World's Ice Skating Competition took me to Helsinki in March and while there I ferried over to the little utopia of Tallinn Estonia for a few days. April was hiking out of Amsterdam with friend Sonya, through the Netherlands and for the Tulip Festival in Keukenhof where we'd spent plenty of time in the 70s but was worth a review. Can you imagine that it hailed in April on those gorgeous tulips!



Well, Tom must have been tired of NJ by then because he accompanied me on a Piedmont Italy hiking trip out of Turin in May and then we had a few days in Alba and Asti as well. I even went truffle hunting. We'd had some day trips to NYC and the Hudson Valley but no long vacation together; this one WAS long and gave us truly Grande Hotels and upgrades at all the hotels on the hiking trip. He enjoyed following along with my hiking trips enough to also go to Slovenia for stays in Ljubljana, the Julian Alps and the Adriatic Coast. We really like Ljubljana. While there we learned about Krakow Poland being as special, so it would get a couple weeks in October. (If you like Prague, you'd like Tallinn, Ljubljana, and Krakow, in that order.)



When one is over 70, they should never try to repeat a tough hike. When you can't get to the top, it's humbling and sobering and that was the case with my July effort to hike to the top of Half Dome in Yosemite where I'd made it in '09. The week was super and joined by nephew Chad who did make it to the top, but none of us ladies did despite about 12 hours hiking and over 4,000 feet of rocky and hot elevation gain. Quebec City and the Sanguenay Fjords in Canada was a lot easier and gave me a week with partial review of areas Tom and I had biked in years past.



Before July was out I would depart to Denver for a few days with Dave and Dana who moved from NJ to Colorado Springs and who I missed a lot from my marathon days. We ate from a record number of taco trucks then turned extreme and had British style tea at Glen Eyrie Castle. They toured and hiked me through enough upper elevation areas to help ready my old bod for survival of a week's hiking out of a favorite little town of Salida and into Mt Princeton, Colorado. It was a ladies hike complete with some hot shot notable gals so my legs (and brain) got a work out.

Again, Tom must have gotten tired of NJ because he followed along on another hiking trip out of Barcelona up the Costa Brava after spending a few days still again in Barcelona, and a few days more post-week's hiking trip. Highlights included the Barcelona separatist protests just off our balcony, then the rocky coast and Salvador Dali's home. That hike would be about my 20<sup>th</sup> hike with this group but my last. (I'll stick with my domestic guides where my week long hikes might number 36 now.) The international guides have always loved having Tom join us for dinner but headquarters put a stop to it. All of which is okay as we were off to Krakow on our own anyway. Krakow's ten days included learning about Transylvania, Dracula, a real prince, and visiting unique castles. Tom continued traveling with me on an October Viking River Cruise which started in Bucharest after a few days touring, and visited five countries along the Danube River, ending in a favorite city of Budapest, Tom's 2<sup>nd</sup> time there, my 4<sup>th</sup>, and hopefully not our last. I keep saying it will be another Paris . . . .



No, we're not done: My sister Beverly visited NJ in November and we scurried off to NYC and MOMA and The Met Opera for Madame Butterfly before driving up to Lake Placid for Skate America, my 3<sup>rd</sup> skating event of the year. For some reason the skaters just couldn't stay upright; also I can't imagine what is going to happen for the Olympics in South Korea being on the North Korea border. I go about anywhere, but not there. And especially I go to Paris where we went through 5 times last year with 4 lengthy stays. I was just encouraged to visit on my own for 10 days, as Tom will go in February. I stayed in a tiny 240SF studio in St Germain des Pres but in February we'll have a 2500 SF "palace" in the Palais Royal. We end the year with Marie arriving at Christmas for a 2-week visit to Rome and Florence before returning to complete her sophomore year at the University of Kansas.



We still have our big Amazon parrot since 1980 and Pandora rules the roost. The little cockatiel Sylvie was a "used bird" when we got her in the early 1990s at an unknown age, but seems well and still favors Tom, as Pandora favors Diana. The two ponds full of about 50 large Koi are the decorator pieces of our home with outside seeming to come inside with all the glass walls. The ponds are separated by a tea house which rarely gets used but often gets admired. Thank heavens for kind neighbors, a great handyman, and friends who care for our zoo while we're gone.

Do we have much planned for 2018? Not yet, but I'm working on it and hoping my legs and our health will hold up. If not, we can surely find something less strenuous to do. We are in our 70s and 80s and holding up fairly well, and any difficulties are just added to the list, with an effort to remember all the body parts that do function well. Tom just got "new eyes" with cataract surgery and multi-focus implants and he's over the moon happy with the 20/20 again. He maintains the house with help from a great handyman, does some neighborhood walking and some weight work out. I still get in 3 weight workouts a week with a trainer whenever I'm home but newly having to work at maintaining my weight. I just wish it were muscle weight and not a lot of baguettes, butter and wine.

Daughter Alayna seems happy in Plattsburg MO just outside of KC, still works locally by choice, and grandson Joseph is just changing jobs and moving to Arkansas to join a lovely sounding and looking gal named Angela who is a teacher and running coach. Can't be bad. We feel blessed that our "kids" are adjusted, happy, have their head on right and give us plenty of joy.

Or as Tom says often "Life is Good" and we are grateful. A toast to you, our friends and family and wishing to hear from you about your year too.

A belated Happy Holidays or Happy Any and Everything.



Miscellaneous pictures - Joseph, Diana at Helsinki and then up on top of Colorado's Monarch Pass.



Marie on a Facetime screen shot, Diana with a rare selfie, and Tom in the Bucharest Parliament building.

