

Christmas

2019

Another year of retirement filled with fun has passed.

Here is a roundup.

We spent February 6th through the 15th on a trip to Peru. What a fabulous journey! One of the best we have ever been on. We started in the capital of Lima on the ocean, where we visited some pre-Incan ruins, historic sites and toured the catacombs under Saint Francis Monastery filled with the bones of 25 thousand or so of Peru's ancient citizens.

Next, we traveled to the Sacred Valley, where we visited Urubamba. From there we saw the Maras salt mines, then Moray, a site where the Incans conducted agricultural research developing and testing crops (there are 4000 varieties of potato in Peru). We toured Ollantaytambo, known for the Ollantaytambo ruins, a massive Inca fortress with large stone terraces on a hillside. We also viewed the huge Sun Temple and the Princess Baths fountain.

Next was the highlight of our trip, Machu Picchu. We can only describe it as breathtaking, awe inspiring and downright spiritual. This alone was worth the trip. We'll include a few pictures for you. However, we were not done.

We stayed in Cuzco, the ancient capital of the Incan empire located about 6000 feet above sea level, for a few days and toured that city. From Cuzco we traveled to the town of Puno, on Lake Titicaca, over 11,000 feet in elevation. We enjoyed an excursion out on the lake to visit man made islands constructed of reeds. The Uros people have lived this way for many centuries. They very graciously invited us to inspect their cabins made of the same reeds from which the islands themselves are constructed.

From there, we returned to Lima and then, the next day, home.

May proved to be a pivotal month. Janet had retired from Gunderson in May of 2016, but had continued as a part time employee picking up a shift from time to time at the request of her employer. However, after 3 years she decided it was time to truly retire and turned in her resignation. Also, we hired Rick's Fencing to tear out the old elevated wooden walkway that leads to our front door and build a new one from scratch. Afterwards, John wired it for LED lighting on the steps and post caps. The results brought many compliments from our friends and neighbors.

In June, we took a 3-week RV trip to Utah and Colorado. First, we went to Moab, where we spent time in Canyonlands National Park, and then Arches National Park. Stunning scenery everywhere! Next, we traveled to Loveland, Colorado and spent time touring the Rocky Mountain National Park. The wildlife was abundant, and the views from 12,000+ feet up are wonderful.

After that, we stayed in Colorado Springs to visit with John's cousin Mark Packard and his family over the 4th of July holiday. Mark and his wife Charlotte were gracious hosts, taking us to local historic sites, the Air Force Academy and the amazing Royal Gorge. We also enjoyed Charlotte's excellent cooking, and visiting with their extended family.

In September, we attended the state Winnebago rally near Salem. The theme this year was Mardi Gras, so we had much to contribute to the decorations and festivities. They even had a local creole / Cajun restaurant cater the party!

We decided to take the motor home down to Las Vegas in October. There we toured Red Rock Canyon and the Hoover Dam. Most of the rest of the time we were just relaxing or walking the Las Vegas Strip while people watching.

The rest of the year was spent relaxing and maintaining our home. For 2020, so far, we have bought a cruise package out of San Diego in February that takes us down to Central America, through the Panama Canal into the Caribbean, finally ending in Ft. Lauderdale. Who knows what other adventures we'll find, but we'll let you know in next year's letter.

Here's wishing you a merry Christmas and a happy New Year. Please keep in touch.

John and Janet Spain

john.spain@frontier.com janet.spain@frontier.com



John at Machu Picchu



Machu Picchu



Cousin Mark, Janet and John at the Royal Gorge



Cabins on reed islands on Lake Titicaca



Terraces in Ollantaytambo leading to sun temple



Our new walkway at night