

## Christmas, 2016

We hope everybody had a wonderful 2016. For us, it was a big year indeed!

John and Janet followed through with their plan to retire on May 2<sup>nd</sup> of 2016, although John extended his employment slightly to get a better retirement package. Now we are footloose and fancy free, sleeping in when we want to and working on whatever household projects that interest us.

Among those projects was a complete landscaping of the front yard. John dug in wiring for low voltage landscape lighting, and installed lights and the controller. He dug up the yard and installed a lawn sprinkler and drip irrigation system with a Wi-Fi capable Internet connected controller. We had professionals help us with plant selection, and a gardener put in the plants. We are very pleased with the results.

During the summer, John erected a gazebo on the upper deck to give us a covered space outside the master bedroom, so now most of the upper deck is protected from the rain. Other projects this year include storm doors, custom valences in the living room and dining room, and replacing the door and frame to the master bedroom walk-in closet.

With more free time on our hands, we've been able to travel more. In May, we spent a week on the southern Oregon coast at Sunset Bay State Park in our motor home. In June, we took a ferry out of Anacortes, Washington to the San Juan Islands and spent a week in a cabin on Orcas Island.

In September, we traveled to Europe with our friends Joe and Libby Calhoun. First, we went to Munich to experience Oktoberfest. Afterwards, we rented a car and drove to Salzburg, Austria, where we rented a house for a while. From there, we drove back roads to Vienna, where we toured the amazing number of historical sites and enjoyed great restaurants. Next was a drive up into the Austrian Alps to Grossglockner (the highest peak in Austria), then overnighing in the beautiful alpine lake village of Zell Am See-Kaprun. Finally, we spent time touring the middle age village of Rothenburg, Germany, before boarding the return flight in Munich in early October.

The travel in Europe was made more interesting by the fact that Janet did most of her sightseeing in a wheelchair. In August, after attending a star party at a nearby state park, she tripped in the parking lot and fractured her pelvis. We decided to go ahead with the trip (with the doctor's OK) since she was expected to be healed up enough to travel 5 weeks after the accident. We're happy to report that she is now almost completely healed and getting around without assistance.

Just a few weeks after returning, we loaded up the motor home and drove south to Yosemite National Park for a long-delayed visit. Afterwards, we spent a couple of days in Pine Grove, California with our good friends Tim and Judy Huber, their daughter Rachel and her family. They treated us to an all-day wine tasting tour of California wine country and some great restaurants. We can't wait to visit them again in the future.

We look forward to more travel in 2017, and have already booked flights to Australia and New Zealand, where we will spend the month of March. Plus, we've already booked a camp site in the path of the total solar eclipse that will traverse Oregon in August. We will be sure to share all this with you in next year's letter.

Pictures of our adventures are on our web site, [www.majorspain.com](http://www.majorspain.com). John promises to make every effort to get it updated this year.

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

John and Janet Spain

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Janet + Joe and Libby Calhoun Vienna



John & Janet @ Schonbrunn Palace in Vienna



Driving across the Austrian Alps



Zell Am See-Kaprun, Austria



Janet in Rothenburg, Germany



The crematorium at Dachau Concentration Camp