

Christmas 2017

Dear family and friends,

It's that time of year again! A time to take a break from our busy lives and think of family and friends that are near and dear to us. Below we will share some of our highlights of the past year.

We started off the year with a weeklong outing to Death Valley.

We had been there before on our own but this was a chance to go with a group and see what we missed.

The tour was run by [Road Scholar](#). It involved a lot of hiking and some cold temperatures.



We found ourselves hiking up many canyons – surprisingly steep.



We learned a little bit of history as well. Hearing about the Native Americans who DID NOT consider this a “death valley” but rather, their winter home.

European immigration was mostly to mine borax which resulted in the fame of the 20 Mule Team.

Closer to home was a day hike into the Anza-Borrogo desert. In our younger days, we used to hike out there fairly regularly. Mark especially liked the train tracks of what was the San Diego & Arizona Railway. This hike was sponsored by the [Anza Borrogo Desert Natural History Association](#) and was lead by SD&A expert, [Rena Deutsch](#).

This hike was out to what was called China Camp. This was one of the camps used by the men who built the railroad in the 1910's.



Somewhat of a misnomer as this railroad was not built by Chinese laborers as some might remember built the Trans-continental railroad of the 1860's.

Here is the group at the ruins of the camp.



We continue our weekly hikes and walks each Friday, until...

one easy walk around Temecula in May led to a major event. Sally broke her ankle walking on a sidewalk. Actually chipped a bone that broke off from her main ankle bone. We learned that such a tiny little break led to major inconvenience. Sally could not walk for almost 4 weeks. We got her a knee walker which helped her scoot around. It was a good thing that our bedroom is on the main floor of the house. By August or September, the break was healed enough that we could resume our weekly walk/hike.



Sally was still able to help out with her two volunteer activities – but at a somewhat reduced level. Here is Sally and two of her cohorts at the end of semester potluck for her English tutoring classes – [Laubach Literacy of San Diego County](#). She also continued to teach citizenship classes at the Fallbrook Library.



August found us traveling in a big circle beginning with a trip to Utah to “finally” see Sally’s new grandson, Ely, (born February 15) along with his 8 brothers and sisters!

From there we went up to Idaho so that we could catch the total eclipse of the sun. We finished the circle going through eastern Washington and down to Oregon to visit Sally’s brother and sister and their families. It was a fun road trip with a “once in a lifetime” view of a total eclipse and lots of good “catching up”

with family!

Mark got a 3D printer to learn some new technology. These are printers that actually print with melted plastic rather than ink. Mark has built buildings and other items for his model train layout.



Mark continued his involvement with the Universe – as a docent at [Palomar Observatory](#) and hosting star & solar viewing parties with the [Temecula Valley Astronomers](#).



No greeting from San Diego can be without a photo of a wildfire. This the Lilac fire in December of 2017. This photo, taken from our porch, shows the fire lighting up the night sky. The fire was about 5 miles away and the strong wind was causing it to burn away from our house. Some 100-150 homes were destroyed.

We are now facing the challenge of cancer as Sally was diagnosed with breast cancer in October. She had surgery in November and is healing well. We will continue on with her treatment in the new year.

We are thankful for so much: good doctors, good health to heal from setbacks, good support from family and friends, and an even deeper appreciation of each other! With that we wish you and everyone around you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Mark + Sally

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As always, you can read more at <http://www.sillogic.com/>