

# Clark Holiday Newsletter - December 2019

Holiday Greetings Everyone.

Barbara and I are both doing well this holiday season though we both also have the aches, pains and other medical issues that come with age. Of course, the gorilla in the room is my Multiple Myeloma. I am hanging in there. A few weeks ago, they started another experimental treatment. First I had to sign a packet that listed possible side effects – 6 pages of side effects. I already have most of them so I figured I had nothing to lose. For more details than you probably want, feel free to check out my blog at <http://warrenmmblog.blogspot.com>. Enough of that. Let's get on to more interesting stuff.

I am still making bowls and other trinkets in the wood shop. Barbara continues playing Mah Jongg and is more involved than ever in the Board of Fox Hill Village. This has led to the problem that everyone at Fox Hill seems to know us and with my memory for faces and names, I can tie very few names to faces. I do a lot of grunting with my hand over my mouth. "Oh hi there mumblefritz. How are you this morning." Fortunately, most people here have hearing loss and just assume they could not hear me.

I have also been doing some reading about Nikola Tesla. Very brilliant inventor and very poor businessman. He gave away the rights to his patents for the AC Motor to George Westinghouse. Westinghouse died rich and Tesla died destitute. Barbara points out that this is lucky for us because if it had been the other way around, people would be driving around in electric cars named "Westinghouse" instead of "Tesla". It would be like getting into a washing machine.

The high point of this year was that we got to take half a vacation.

It started off well enough as a Baltic Cruise. We visited Sweden, Finland, Russia, Estonia and Latvia with nice tours of each place. My birthday was during the middle of the trip. I did not want people making a big deal about this and was quite pleased that the day progressed without anyone in our group even



mentioning it. I should have known that my dear wife would not let this pass unnoticed. All was well until after dinner when the dining hall presented me with a cake topped with something like a Roman candle. I am surprised that it did not set the ship on fire. There was the inevitable singing and small gifts after which we escaped to the solitude of our state room. Which had been decorated by the staff with little towel figures.

So, all was well until we reached the island of Visby which is off the coast of Sweden. It was there that I became quite ill. The captain kicked me off the ship, put me into an ambulance and shipped me to the local hospital. Apparently, I had developed a touch of appendicitis.

The hospital and the people were very nice. They informed us that there was a big convention going on and that there were no hotel rooms available for Barbara. No problem. They moved a cot into my room for her to sleep on. Check out the photo of our room with the bed for Barbara and the ocean view and me looking like “death warmed over”.



One would think that we would be very upset by having our vacation ruined, but surprisingly, we did not take it that way. It was all part of the adventure. I was there for 4 or 5 days. In Europe, they tend to treat appendicitis with anti-biotics. On the last day, we got to do some sightseeing. Learning that the hospital was right next to a well-preserved medieval village / tourist attraction, we hid all the tubes that they had inserted, put on a jacket and told them we were going out for a walk.

And that was it - or so we thought. When I got back, my oncologist wanted me to see a general surgeon who wanted me to get a CT scan that showed massive appendicitis - with damage to the nearby intestines. After waiting a couple of days for the blood thinner to dissipate and for the appendicitis to get worse, they finally operated. The 45-minute laparoscopic appendectomy turned into a 6 hour major operation.

So, that knocked me out for a few weeks. I lost 25 pounds and it seriously cut into my bowl making.



We did have some good luck in October. I got a call from the gift shop at Lakes Region General Hospital that I had won a raffle that I had entered. Having forgotten that I had entered anything, I asked what I had won. It was a Halloween Ghoul. I asked if this was good news or bad news. The woman said I would have to decide on that myself, but to please come get it as soon as possible because she was sick of looking at it. Apparently, they had forced her to move it into the shop because it offended people who saw it outside the shop. You can see the ghoul in the photo at the left. The ghoul is the one in the middle.

In early December, we went to a wedding in Palm Springs. The bride was the daughter of a dear friend whom I worked with at Sun Microsystems and who was also a housemate during the 80s. The bride and the wedding were beautiful. Besides getting some high-quality visiting with our friends, we also had time for a lot of sight-seeing.



Barbara enjoyed going up in the tram. I enjoyed a tour of the machine room at the bottom.

We went to the Museum of Art. I enjoyed the figures of two bored looking tourists with whom I posed. I saw them three times before I figured out that they were not real. Can you tell which of the figures on the right are wax and which are real?

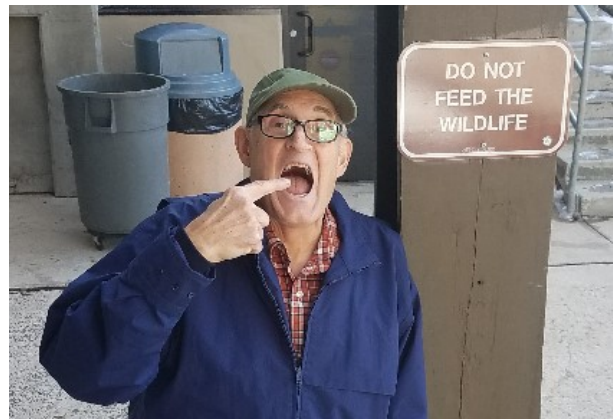


Another highlight was the the "Golf Cart Museum". This was much more interesting than it sounds. Plus it was free.



And of course there was the Palm Springs Airplane museum which was a high point for Barbara (not).

Last Saturday, we went to see Celine Dion in concert in Boston. Normally, we don't go to "concerts", but we had been invited by an old Boy Scout friend whose son is Celine's Promotion Manager. Not only did we have a wonderful time with them and great seats, but we got there early and had a tour under the stage. You have no idea how much is going on under the show. They bring the stage using 19 full sized tractor trailers with 7 busses for the 150 stage-hands who assemble it. There are lifts built in to raise and lower the performers. I was disappointed that they would not be lifting lions or other large beasts.



We have now reached the point in the year where we are starting to get some much-appreciated cards and letters. We got one from friends who several years ago sent us one that when opened, released glitter and started Christmas music that would not stop. This year we were afraid to open their card. I thought of calling the local police to see if they had been funded by Homeland Security to start a "Glitter Bomb Disposal Unit". We also considered opening it under water. Once we worked up the courage to open it, the card turned out to be beautiful but harmless.

So that's it for another year. You might want to note that we are at Fox Hill Village through most of the winter where the address is 10 Longwood Dr Apt 271, Westwood MA 02090. The apartment number is very important since there are two Barbara Clarks here and they almost always deliver packages to the wrong Barbara Clark. If you put the apartment number there, they deliver it incorrectly only half the time. In New Hampshire, our address is 40 Lovejoy Ln, Meredith, NH 03253. We now also use only our cell phone numbers. Warren: 781-710-2233. Barbara 781-710-3585. Our old "603" number now goes directly to voice mail which we seldom check. We keep it for the alarm and the convenience of telemarketers.