



Happy Holidays!

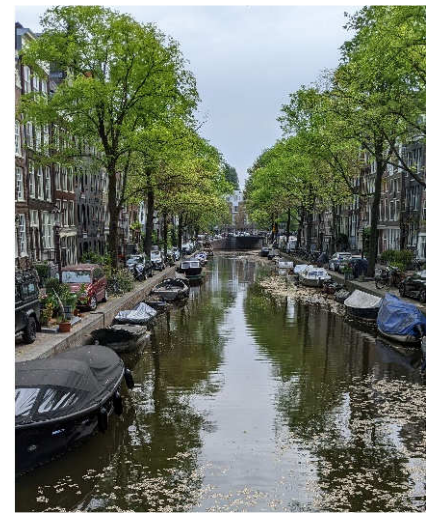
We were able to finally embark on a lot of travel this year. Our first trip was to Pittsburgh in April to see some of my birth cousins. The visit was centered around a bucket list desire to attend my first Penguins hockey game. I went to PPG Paints arena with three of my cousins and had a great time, along with an 11-2 win. We also had a couple of days to do some of our usual things in Pittsburgh, visiting old friends and walking around the city.

The first two weeks in May saw us off to Europe for our twice delayed Viking Rhine River cruise. We opted for a pre-cruise extension in Lucerne, Switzerland where we spent two days. Lucerne is a wonderful city, with snow-capped mountains, a deep blue lake, and tons of history. The weather cooperated and we walked everywhere. We hope to go back someday.

Our cruise departed from Basel, Switzerland and stopped in Strasbourg, Koblenz, Cologne, and several other smaller cities, ending in Amsterdam. The highlight of the cruise was the passage through the castles of the Middle Rhine, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This 40-mile stretch of the river features more than 28 castles, many still being used today as homes or hotels and others that have deteriorated over the years. We also saw a set of 19 windmills in the Netherlands village of Kinderdijk.



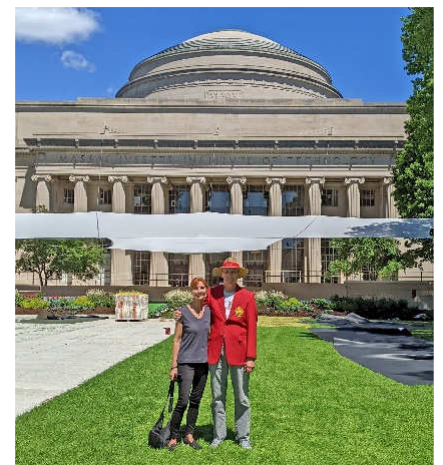
Amsterdam is a city of charming canals, hundreds of gabled houses lining the canals, over 50 museums, more than 1,200 bridges and, by one count, over 880,000 bicycles. Our hotel was in the middle of the city, so we were able to walk many places. Walking is an adventure, as there is a lot of utility construction going on, causing sidewalks to be closed. Then there is the presence of all those bicycles and vehicles racing along narrow streets. We took a two-hour canal cruise through some of the 165 canals, which total over 60 miles in length and are home to 2,500 houseboats. We visited the Van Gogh museum and the Rijksmuseum, dedicated to the arts and history. We walked past the Anne Frank house several times but didn't have time to visit.



No sooner had we returned from Amsterdam than we had to start planning for a trip to New England for my 50th MIT Reunion, which occurred over Memorial Day weekend. I ordered the 50th Reunion outfit, a red blazer and cardinal and grey tie. If you're interested, the history of this can be seen in a YouTube video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q9URtzAC0xE>.

The reunion went off very well and classes from the two preceding COVID years were also represented, making for a large gathering on campus. We got to see some old friends and attend several events. As always, our favorite event is MIT Night at the Boston Pops, where MIT has all of Symphony Hall for a Pops program. The current conductor of the Pops is Keith Lockhart, who did his undergraduate work at Furman University here in Greenville.

The reunion finished up on Sunday and we drove down to Newport, RI for an after-reunion event hosted by the Class of '67 who invited my Class of '72 to join. We had never been to Newport, so this gave us a chance to see the town and all of the mansions. We also went out on a boat to watch some retired America's Cup yachts race.



Leaving Newport after two nights, we headed north to Kennebunkport, ME where we have stayed several times before. After gorging on lobster and spending a couple of nights there, we drove on to Bar Harbor for a visit to Acadia National Park. We spent two days there, walking carriage trails and eating blueberry ice cream – delicious! From there we were off to Burlington, VT as we'd never been there. The location on Lake Champlain is beautiful and we enjoyed the college feel of the city. We returned to Greenville via Stockbridge, MA and Lewisburg, PA.

We made our yearly trek to Sanibel Island at the beginning of September. This was the 40th year owning at the Casa Ybel resort, and I've been there all but three of those years. Little did we know at the time that this would probably be our last visit for at least a couple of years. Hurricane Ian struck three weeks after we departed and, as you know, destroyed much of the island's beautiful beaches, homes, and stores. A large portion of the island is also the home of the J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge. Sea turtle nesting season runs through September, and we saw many nests that hadn't hatched before we left. Hard to know if those turtles survived and whether there will be a beach to nest on next year. Thousands of migratory birds also call the refuge home. The causeway has been temporarily repaired so cleanup and reconstruction efforts have started. We'll miss our sunrises and beach walks for now and wish all the best for the people and businesses as they rebuild.



In mid-September we again headed north to Pittsburgh, this time for a wedding. Since there was a Steelers game that weekend, I went with two of my cousins to the first live game I'd seen since I was about 15. The Steelers lost to New England and I'm still not sure what Acrisure, Heinz Field's new naming sponsor, does!



Jane continues to be very involved with Greenville Women Giving. She is now the vice-chair of the Membership Engagement committee. She traveled to DC with her sister, Ruth, to visit relatives. They also flew to Washington, IA to see their sister Ann.

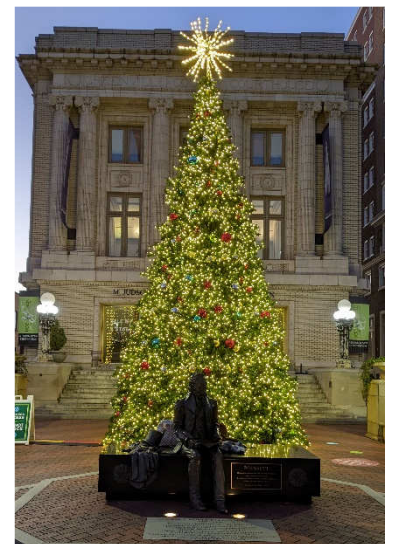
We are still taking classes at OLLI @ Furman and continue to enjoy a program that is rated as one of the best of over 110 other Osher Lifelong Learning Institute programs.

We wish you and yours a very happy holiday season and a great 2023!

Jane & John



At Nunan's Lobster Hut in Kennebunkport



Greenville City Christmas Tree
Joel Poinsett Statue in Front