

December 1, 2013
The First Sunday in Advent

Dear Friends

It's the first Sunday in Advent, a time to sit down and think of friends and family scattered around the world; to write a note to catch up, and wonder what you're doing.



(Seattle Glassblowing Studio.)

This has been a year of winding down. Rich only had one major contract that took him out of the US; work with local radio in Tbilisi, Georgia. That contract extends until just before Easter, 2014. After that there is nothing on the books and Rich isn't sure if he's looking. Both Suzi and Rich have taken a few short-term contracts allowing them to telecommute. In one case Rich gave a Skype presentation to a symposium in Serbia. It meant getting up at 4 AM but no jet lag.

We traveled to some places we've always wanted to go (or, perhaps places Rich always wanted to go, he seems to hatch these travel ideas). They are places IREX would never take us including Gibraltar, and the Bailiwicks of Jersey and Guernsey (with our long time friends Dave and Carol Lam.) This was a good year for seeing Dave and Carol, we visited them in Belgium and they came to Alaska. We also met Brian, Liz and Liam in Belgrade and all went to Montenegro, Croatia and Holland for a family vacation. We also played busman's holiday at the BBC's New Broadcasting House, before the Queen dedicated it. We also got to Denmark to visit with Suzi's AFS "sister," Lise. We enjoyed showing the kids places we had worked and Liam enjoyed throwing rocks into the Adriatic Sea.

The whole family got together in Minnesota in July to take in a Twins game (the Yankees won), celebrate July 4th with the extended family and make our trek to the Winnipeg Folk Festival's 40th anniversary.

In Sitka we're taking on more in the community. Suzi is doing volunteer work with the Greater Sitka Legacy Fund (developing a community foundation for Sitka), the historical museum where she used to be curator, and on the board of the Sitka Unitarian Fellowship. Rich is spending time on his blog www.rich.mcclear.net, which has a lot of archive photos from our travels and includes excerpts from 20 years of weekly letters. Rich volunteers in in the Raven Radio news department. This gives him the permission to ask questions he's always wanted to ask. Both of us are volunteering on-air at Raven.

The future? For Kevin it is a new job with the Department of Natural Resources starting Jan. 2. For us, we hope to become more involved in Sitka, travel to a few select places that have been on our list but which do not need aid workers and try to spend a little more time with our kids and grandkid.

We wish you a Merry Christmas, Blessed Solstice, a Happy New Year and a belated Happy Chanukah, and, of course, for a more peaceful world.

Take Care,

Suzi and Rich McClear

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