

Joe Ritchey Family Christmas Greeting 2018

As we sit on Sunday evening lighting the second Advent Candle we are reminded of the blessing we have enjoyed this past year and the continued peace we have with our Lord Jesus. Here are some of our highlights:

In January we traveled to New Orleans to participate in ASTM International Committee D18 on Soil and Rock, which happened to also be the location of S&K Logistics Services senior managers meetings. The first couple of days were abnormally cold, yes it snowed while we were there. The trip was a pleasant blend of work and visits to Jackson battlefield from the War of 1812 and a side trip to the Florida coastline.

With the end of March Powderhorn Resort closed for one of the worst seasons in 40 years. Darlene spent the season working in the lodge store and cash room. We took a short trip to Salt Lake to enjoy the musical Hamilton, such that we've become entranced by early American history.

In April, Darlene's big change was having cataract surgery on both eyes and receiving implants. Her vision is the best it has been in her entire life.

In May, we were off to Des Moines IA to visit John's and watch the Tulip Festival Parade in Pella. Darlene went on to visit her friend Charlotte in KS and Mary Lou in IL before meeting Joe and heading to OH to visit family and friends and watch our nephew, Evan, graduate from high school.

Then in June rather than attending ASTM meetings, we crossed the Atlantic and spent two weeks visiting Ireland, Scotland, England, Austria, and Hungary (picture of the Danube River in Budapest from the Buda Castle).



We had two purposes for the trip; so Joe could attend a conference at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Vienna and so we could do some family history for both Joe and Darlene in the British Isles. We ended the trip with four days in London with an excursion to Stonehenge. Joe also received training at the Guinness Academy while in Dublin.

July was special because we met Tim, Rachel, Gavin and Shae in Denver and rode the Amtrak across the mountains. We were then able to visit James in Moab. Later in July, Joe ran the

Grand Mesa Ultra Marathon (18 miles).



In August, Darlene flew to DC to drive with friend, Lora to their 45th class reunion and again visit with family. They plus Joe's cousins (John and Judy) saw Hamilton at Playhouse Square. Then it was back to Lora's, with a quick stop at Tim's for a Princess party, to await Joe's coming in September to attend a National Cleanup Workshop sponsored by the Department of Energy and meet with Congressman John Curtis of Utah. We visited Monticello (Jefferson's home) and spent a little time visiting the National Building Museum.

In October, we traveled to Ohio and then to Renick, WV with some of Darlene's family to see where her mom grew up.

We were able to get the entire family together for Thanksgiving in Des Moines at John's. We enjoyed eating, playing games, seeing Santa at the Boone and Scenic Valley Railroad, shopping, and visiting. James housemate Aaron was able to travel with us. We love being the grandparents of a 3, 4, and 5-year-old. What fun they are!



Late this year, Joe has taken on a new hobby by purchasing two drones and beginning to study for the Remote Pilot's FAA certification. So far, no significant crashes.

As always, we are thankful for all of our friends and family and regret that we can't visit with each of you sometime during the year. We wish you the very best in the new year.