

Joe Ritchey Family Christmas Greeting 2019

We suppose we've started previous letters with "It's hard to believe another year has passed." A common tale especially as we get older. And as something that is common to us, we've had a busy year with lots of travels.

What a difference a year makes. The winter of 2017-8 was one of the worst ever for snow on the Grand Mesa. 2018-9 brought snow, which we hadn't seen for maybe 10 years, so Joe was able to snowboard at his leisure. Later in January Joe traveled to Houston to participate in ASTM International, Committee D18 on Soil and Rock.

Also, during the winter Joe passed the exam to receive his pilot's license for unmanned aerial vehicles (drones). At the end of March Darlene completed another season working at Powderhorn.

With the end of snow, we began traveling to visit each of the kids in Cincinnati and Des Moines.

In May, Darlene was able to travel to England with her friend Laura to visit Laura's daughter working at a Christian camp near Manchester. While she was gone, Joe mostly worked and trained for summer trail runs.

In July we flew with James and Joe's first cousin, Judy, to Lebanon to spend a week with Joe's second cousins. Elias (Joe's dad's first cousin) and wife Norma and their son Pierre and wife Rita were the best hosts anyone could imagine. We visited several dozen kin folk and were able to travel to the beach and the mountains. As part of the trip we were also able to spend almost a week in Greece visiting the Acropolis, ancient Corinth, and the monasteries of Meteora.



James, cousin Judy, and some of the Lebanon cousins

After arriving back in the States, in early August we visited with Ohio family at the Ritchey family reunion with a trip to Northeast Ohio to see Darlene's mom.

At the end of August Joe, with friend JJ, attempted the 40-mile run called the Grand Traverse, from Gunnison to Aspen, CO). The key word was attempted. They missed the first cutoff about 18 miles in at over 12,000 feet and had to return to the start. Rather than the 40 miles, they ended up at 26. They made the best of the trip by enjoying an afternoon at the Maroon Bells near Aspen and then trip to the Rulison nuclear test site.



Darlene's mom, Shae, Gavin, Tim, and James

In September, we traveled to Des Moines to visit Lilo taking in a park and just enjoying time together with her, John and Mandy.



Joe and Lilo (John in background)

Later that month, Darlene's friends from Ohio Ed and Sheila came for visit and we were able to take them to Moab to see Arches and nearby dinosaur foot prints and native American pictographs.

In October, we headed to Europe again so Joe could present a paper at a uranium conference in Chemnitz, Germany. After the meeting they traveled by train for a spectacular week in Switzerland at Interlaken seeing Jungfrauoch, Schilthorn-Piz Gloria (from James Bond movie On Her Majestys Secret Service fame) and Zermatt seeing the Matterhorn from Gornergrat and Matterhorn Glacier Paradise.

Thanksgiving and Christmas this year were spent at home in Mesa. Darlene began work again at Powderhorn in the cash room and Trader store. James came up for a couple of days and was able to snowboard with Joe.

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.