



Happy Holidays to all our friends, relatives and neighbors (and everyone in-between):

Okay, first with a bit of old news but maybe some of you still have not heard – Erik & Lauren got married on January 1<sup>st</sup>. Yep, after a 10 year trial run, they decided that they would have a quiet ceremony – even the parents of the couple were not invited. Laurel thinks a couple grandkids will ease her despair, but she may need to settle for watching their pets occasionally.

This spring we decided to spend some of the children's inheritance and take a cruise through the Hawaiian Islands. We arrived in O`ahu and spent a couple days in Honolulu to adjust to the time change and just enjoy the beauty of paradise. Then we hopped onto the the Pride of America cruise ship for 7 days stopping off at 3 other islands (Kahului, Maui; Hilo, Hawai`i; Kona, Hawai`i; Nāwiliwili, Kaua`i) for day trips and adventures. We saw rain forests, volcanoes, villages & cities, a lu`au and more. We did some shopping (yep, we even acquired and wore some classical Hawaiian shirts), had a drink or two, and ate some amazing meals. The cruise was a nice way to see multiple islands without worrying about transportation and handling luggage. After the cruise, we stayed in Honolulu for a couple more days to get ready to return to Minnesota. All in all, it was a nice time. We even sent a picture of Mark wearing a KCHK t-shirt on the cruise ship to the local radio station. Do we know how to have fun?!?

Our summers were a continuation of farmers markets selling sodas and having people come out to the backyard brewery for a drink or two. We had 5 open house events with live music including 2 new bluegrass bands. Next year we are thinking of cutting back to a single market (New Prague) and focus more on people coming out to our place. We like the less set-up and tear-down activity. One special event we did in early October was to support our neighbor's hot tub and sauna party. They had about 100 people out there basking in classical Ukrainian health care rituals called '**Banya**' and then we were open in the evening for those folks that believed they earned to drink a beverage or two. We even acquired a 6 passenger golf cart to shuttle them between our two properties. We call it our 'Root Beer Mobile' It is electric, real quiet, can go up to 20 mph, and can run 14 hours on a single charge. The kids may inherit stuff they don't want and no money at the way we are going, eh?!?

The day after the sauna party, we started a road trip to Litiz ,PA for their annual Chocolate Walk. But first we need to make a stop at Seroogy Chocolate in De Pere, WI (just because it is kind of on the way to Pennsylvania). Then a stop in Kenosha, WI to have dinner with Diana. Then as we traveled the road less traveled (we were avoiding toll roads, which is not too easy once you get into Illinois and head east) when we stumbled across Sweeties Chocolates somewhere in Ohio. We bought a sample. Eating the sample on the road we decided we would need to try and find this place again on the way back. We did spend about 5 days in Lancaster county PA leisurely touring around and just being lazy. This year we noticed the chocolate walk was beginning to strain our gluttonous abilities. We only consumed half the chocolate and called it quits before the final bell tolled. Then again, we did bring 2 coolers so we could keep the chocolate from melting. Good planning, eh? By the way, we did find Sweeties again.

It has not been all fun and games this year. In mid-September Mark was admitted to the hospital with an infection. After 4 days, they still couldn't really tell what it was but after lots of antibiotics and loving attention by the nurses, he was declared good enough to be released back into the world. There was some chatter about surgically removing his gallbladder, but with no stones found it was decided to shelve that procedure for some other day. Anyway, Mark is all better now and misbehaving to his best ability.

Our two death traps of outdoor decks were fixed up this year. Our neighbor graciously took on the job of replacing the floor boards and putting on railings that should keep folks safe. He even fixed up other problems that showed up as he looked closer at the decks. They are now made of no-maintenance materials (which we like a lot). If anyone wants a recommendation for excellent workmanship, we would be happy to tell you about Denis. Oh, and while we were at the State Fair we purchased two swivel rockers made of that no-maintenance material too. They are on the big deck in the back yard overlooking the backyard and brewery..

Oh!! We had visitors this year too - both from Freienwil, Switzerland. Both of our previous Swiss slaves stopped by to visit. Mark's cousin Andrew and his lovely girlfriend (Yaël) came by in early August. Samuel and his new bride (Viviane) (yep, this was their honeymoon) came by in mid-October. It was so great to visit with all of them.

As to the election results this year, well, lets just say 2025 may be a new adventure.

We are planning another gathering at Boathouse Brothers Brewing in Prior Lake on Christmas Eve. We still miss the gathering "in the old days" at Glockenspiel in St. Paul. So we are trying to recreate the atmosphere of snacks, drinks and fellowship as we prepare for the more traditional festivities. We still have not found anyone to play Christmas music on the Alp horn, but if not this year we hope there will be many more opportunities in the future years. Any volunteers??

Not to keep rambling on, but we do want to wish all of you a joyous Christmas, happy and prosperous new year, and looking forward to seeing many of you in 2025.

Take care and God bless you all.



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