

The Parkins Report - 2010 Edition

The year started with a bang—the sound of wallpaper falling off the dining room ceiling in our Montana house. Our realtor was showing the house and discovered a silent leak in the upstairs bathroom sink had saturated the dining room below. The restoration company did a great job. Later, we had the exterior repainted as well, which only served to draw attention to the rapidly deteriorating roof, which we had replaced just before the winter storm season. We also patched old-house plaster cracks and painted the upstairs bedrooms. Lastly, we dismantled the sewing room and storage racks in the garage. So, the little cottage has become the most expensive hotel in Hamilton for the few weeks we stayed there this year. The price has dropped steadily over this time, by values roughly corresponding to the cost of the maintenance, payments, and lawn care costs. We predict that, by the time the house is paid for in seven years, we will have to pay someone to take it off our hands, if the trend continues.

Meanwhile, the grandchildren, for whom we moved to Washington to be closer, moved in with us in Shelton, along with their parents. The pleasure of their immediate company stretched through October, while they watched their new house slowly come together. We're glad to have the house back, but we do miss them. But, it's only a 25-mile trip to visit, rather than the 100-miles we started out with and the 500-mile trip from Montana over the past 10 years.

We did take advantage of having permanent house-sitters to travel more this year, for business, family, and pleasure. We spent a winter weekend at Worldmark Discovery Bay, just 70 miles up the Hood Canal, giving us a chance to explore Port Townsend and Sequim at leisure. In March, we took our tandem bicycle to Victoria to ride the Galloping Goose rail-trail. It was a bit chilly weather yet, but we did manage to ride about 70 miles over three days and enjoyed the rural trails. Because of the weather, we took the car along, too, and made excursions to Duncan "up island," touring an interesting weaving studio, and another day to Sydney, where we checked out a "fabric exchange," a quilt shop run like a used book shop. We took the coast route home around the west side of the Olympic Peninsula.

Larye continued to work on projects for the Rocky Mountain Laboratories, mostly from his temporary office among the looms in the basement, but also made several on-site trips, ranging from a few days to a couple of weeks each, during which we also took advantage of the opportunity to perform or direct maintenance and upkeep on the Hamilton house. Judy attended a couple of quilting retreats while Larye worked at RML or on the cabin.

In November, we traveled to Wisconsin to spend Thanksgiving with son Matt and family, stopping in Minnesota on the way back to pass on the LaRue and Tanner family portraits from the mid-19th century and turn of the 20th century to cousin Janette Parkins. Larye stopped off in Montana for a couple weeks work at the NIH lab while Judy returned home, busy with weaving and spinning activities, as well as home repairs—furnace and flooding.

In mid-summer, we drove to New Mexico, stopping in Odessa, Washington while niece Rose was visiting, then on through Hamilton before moving on through Idaho, Utah, and Colorado, taking a few detours along scenic byways on the way to Albuquerque for the 2010 Convergence, the national conference of the Handweavers Guild of America.

After a week in northern New Mexico, including side trips to fiber galleries and museums, we spent a few days in Las Cruces with the rest of the family.

All the Parkins clan is now back in Las Cruces: Sheri and Jose have moved Sheroz Jewelers from Belen to Las Cruces, with the help of Larye Dean, who moved back to New Mexico from Montana last year. Despite record-setting torrential rains, we did have a great time hiking the nature trails along the Rio Grande with all the grandkids and great grandkids and big family potluck parties. On the way home, we looped through eastern Arizona and made a brief detour to Canyon du Chelly on the Navajo nation, with a diversion back through Hamilton.

In September, Larye attended an aircraft engine maintenance workshop, while Judy prowled the fabric and antique shops of central Tennessee. Then we drove to Paducah, Kentucky, to visit the national quilt museum and the famous Hancock's of Paducah fabric store. On the way back to Nashville, we toured an interesting 1850 interpretive farm in the "Between the Lakes" national recreation area, then the Nashville Parthenon replica and the Frist, a former Art Deco U.S. Post Office, both turned art museums—and stayed at a Victorian bed and breakfast.

We did *not* do the country music thing, nor the Jack Daniels tour, and we also missed the Beechcraft Museum in Tullahoma. Tennessee is on our "see again" list.

So it goes: we've moved to our "retirement home," but not, in fact, retired. Judy has been busy with the Ladies of the Lake Quilt Club of Hoodspport, Washington, entering a number of quilts in their triennial show this year as well as selling a few pieces at the boutique shop. She had a nearly three-month showing of the art quilt "Reclamation," along with several other fiber art pieces, in Shelton, and we've both been active in the Olympia Weaver's Guild.

Working from home, Larye didn't get much bicycling in this year, though he did commute to the Lab during on-site visits to Montana, did some one-way rides to Hoodspport and Olympia on Judy's quilting and spinning days, and a few loop rides around Shelton, in addition being joined by Judy on the tandem rides in Victoria and a couple of tandem outings in Shelton. We did spend a few days in the winter on the stationary bike trainers at the gym, but it's just not the same as being out on the road. The season ended in early October as usual with Larye's "birthday ride," this year a solo 70-mile ride in the southern foothills of the Olympics.

As the year draws to a close, we're reclaiming the Shelton House: though Judy has cut back on her long-arm quilting business, she is still busy enough with backlog to neglect her weaving projects. Larye has yet to resume building the airplane, too busy with work, home repairs on two houses, and playing grandpa.

Peace: Larye and Judy