



December 2010

To our family and friends,



We hope this letter finds you well, and looking forward to a new year full of happiness and good health. The year 2010 did not start out that way for us, and indeed a diagnosis of breast cancer on January 1 was a bit of a downer. Fortunately I was able to have surgery within two weeks, and afterwards received the good news that prognosis was excellent, and I only needed radiation, and not chemo. Before starting radiation, they want you to heal from the surgery, so of course we took advantage of this window to - what else - travel! We had already planned a trip to Las Vegas and were so glad we didn't have to change it since we were to

Las Vegas just before Chinese new year



meet up with one of Clement's high school classmates who was there for a convention. It is amazing to me that two people who haven't seen each other for 45 years can so quickly bridge the time gap, and interact as if it had only been yesterday since they last met. We had a wonderful time together, seeing shows, visiting the hotels, eating, traveling outside the city to Red Rock Canyon, etc. Fortunately for us, we couldn't figure out how to use the slot machines (they don't take

money anymore), so our money stayed safe.

Radiation was a bit of a bore, and had me going to Roswell Park (the Cancer Institute where we work) 5xwk for 36 treatments. We postponed a trip to Washington as a result, but other than some fatigue, and the resultant sunburn which interfered with my golf swing, it wasn't really a problem. Indeed, four days after ending radiation, we headed out on our first driving trip of the year, to Georgia and South Carolina. When we exchange into a new timeshare, we're never sure

Villa Rica, GA (near Atlanta)



what we will get, but this time we ended up overlooking a lake, perfect for much needed relaxation. Of course that word isn't in Clement's vocabulary, so we took day trips into Atlanta where we visited the very impressive Martin Luther King National Historic Site, which presents a very informative, and interesting story of the civil rights movement. We also went to the Aquarium (largest tank in the world) where we were fortunate to not only see the various species of fish, whale sharks, etc, swimming by, but we also were permitted to go to the top (education) floor which allowed us to look over the gigantic "swimming pool" in which we saw everything swimming below us. Interestingly,

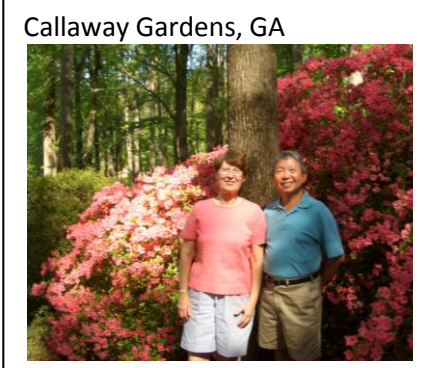
the whale sharks traveled to Georgia from Taiwan via UPS! No trip to Atlanta would be complete without a visit to CNN, Coca-Cola, the High Museum of Art, Botanical Garden, Zoo, etc. We also took interesting side trips outside Atlanta, one being to Warm Springs, GA, site of FDR's Little White House, and where Roosevelt suffered a massive stroke and died in 1945. Both Clement and I had been reading about FDR, so this visit, as well as one later in the year to the FDR Memorial in Washington were particularly memorable. If you haven't read "No Ordinary Time: Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt: The Home Front in World War II" by Doris Kearns Goodwin, I highly recommend it.



As we traveled in Georgia, azaleas were in bloom everywhere, and we stopped many times to enjoy the display.



Over 20 years ago, we had visited Newport RI, and were so intrigued then that we decided to return to visit the "summer cottages" of the gilded age (e.g. the cottages built by the Vanderbilts). We drove with

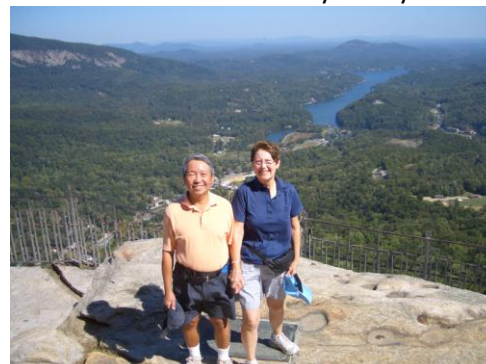


our neighbours, and had a great time exploring many of the "cottages", as well as the surrounding areas of this coastal town. This trip got us thinking that if the Vanderbilt family considered these places as cottages, what would one of their homes look like. We therefore planned a trip to Asheville NC to see the Biltmore Estate, built by George Vanderbilt II, grandson of the family patriarch Cornelius Vanderbilt. The photo shows only the house, but the original size of the property was 125,000 acres, and was fully landscaped by Frederick Law Olmsted who designed Central Park in NYC, as well as the Buffalo parks system. Awesome doesn't even describe it. The same word can be used to describe the price to visit the Biltmore, although the AAA rate helped a bit.



In October, we drove to NC and Tennessee, a time of peak colour in both areas. As usual, Clement planned a "relaxing" trip that included a fascinating underground tour of a coal mine in Beckley WV (he even plans tours while we are en route!). We headquartered in Lake Lure NC for a few days, and from there visited Asheville, and nearby Chimney Rock. We also played mountain golf at two nearby courses. Even more challenging than the golf, was driving the golf cart down the steep cart paths. Clement told me I screamed all the way "we're going to crash, we're going to crash". We didn't. However, I won't discuss how many balls I lost. From Lake Lure, we drove to the Smoky Mountains National Park where we were

On top of Chimney Rock, over-looking one arm of Lake Lure. Very windy!



On top of Old Smoky (too early for snow)



On top of a tower atop Old Smoky



extremely fortunate to have an unusually clear bright sunny day. On the NC side of the park we visited an Indian Village and took a scenic train ride in Bryson City; on

the TN side (where we stayed a few more days), we stopped at a craft show in Gatlinburg. Unfortunately for Clement, I couldn't pass up a couple of not so cheap items, but then again, why go to a craft show if you don't purchase something.

On our way back to Buffalo, we drove through Kentucky, where we took a tour of a few horse farms. We saw some "babies" (5 months old), a horse worth 500 million dollars (I'm not sure of his racing resume, but I remember that he had two sons who won big races), and we learned about breeding. There is no artificial insemination. It has to be "live" and is videotaped as proof. The owners of the really good horses (including the one we saw) used to get \$300,000 for each breeding, and the horse may "service" up to 4 mares per day. Great money. With the recession, the fee has gone down to \$150,000. Pregnancy success is about 97%, so pretty good odds. The female horse is "teased" first by a teaser horse

Clement with the "babies"



(at one farm, the name of the teaser was Gigolo), and when ready, the stallion comes in. We weren't allowed to actually watch, but there was a session going on in the barn, and all the stallions in the nearby paddocks must have known because they started making a lot of noise. The horses we saw were all chestnuts, and absolutely beautiful.

A bit too soon after our NC/TN/KY trip, we drove to Washington DC for the visit we had to postpone earlier in the year. Both of us have been to Washington multiple times for business, but only once before (a long time ago) had we gone as tourists. This time we stayed in Alexandria VA, and did the whole tourist thing. There is so much to see we will have to return. We were the last tourists through the White House before Obama had his press conference where he lamented the shellacking he got in the elections the day before. We of course did not see Obama, but we did see the East Room all set up for the press conference, including the teleprompter. We were actually lucky to get into the White House since all tours after 10:30 (we were scheduled for 11:00) were cancelled for the day because of the press conference; we happened by early just to check out the location of the entrance we were to use, and they told us to get in line, which we did. Lots of security here and everywhere. A special treat on this trip was to meet up with a classmate from the Univ. of Wisconsin (my roommate); we had a wonderful evening with her and her son.

Our final trip of the year, another road trip, was to our two timeshares in Florida, where we spent the first week with my brother and his wife on Captiva Island, and the second week with colleagues from work at Bonita Springs. Besides the great times we had with both couples, two events stand out from this trip. The first was on a golf course that has water on every hole. I was about to tee off on one hole when Clement told me to "hurry up". I asked him why and he pointed to the alligator that was swimming rapidly, head up, to the tee box on which I was standing. I sure got my tee shot off fast when I saw that! The second event was the blizzard as we drove through the Cleveland area on our return to Buffalo. You couldn't even see the exits to get off the highway. I just followed a big truck, and hoped he knew where he was going (our GPS told us when we were getting near the exit from one highway to another, which was a big help in knowing which truck to follow!).

By now, you must be asking if we are still working. Although it may seem hard to believe, we do still go into work 3 times a week, although the caveat remains "when we are in town". Retired life has been good to us, and we want to continue to enjoy travel while we can.

With our best wishes for a happy and healthy 2011.

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