

MMXVII in Review

The Bird's Nest West

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In 2017 Tom got tired of seeing how much Anne was enjoying her retirement. He grew more and more jealous that she was able to go off to help with family situations and spend time with grandchildren while he was still bound by an academic schedule. He made a sudden decision to retire from the classroom at the end of the academic year and started benefitting from Roosevelt's largesse in August. While he is no longer teaching, he has not retired from the profession and is still active in the classical world. He plans to continue as secretary-treasurer of CAMWS (the Classical Association of the Middle West and South) for a while longer, and has been busily giving professional papers and planning writing projects. In fact, if our previous end-of-year letters gave you the impression that we traveled a lot, retirement has opened the flood gates. It seems that we are rarely home.

Here is a quick overview of our travels in 2017: Tom made two trips to Canada: to Toronto in January for a Classics meeting, then to Waterloo/Kitchener for the annual CAMWS meeting. Anne came along to CAMWS and enjoyed seeing our many friends there. While there, we visited a maple bush (Canadian for "woods") where we actually saw the sap flowing. Tom also traveled to Michigan twice. At an Eta Sigma Phi convention for classics students in Ann Arbor, he remembered our family stay there in 1987 and was pleased to revisit St. Thomas Church, where Julia received her First Communion. Another Classics meeting took him to Grand Rapids, where he enjoyed a gathering with several past and present Latin students and visited his first presidential library (Gerald Ford's). He also took two trips to Albuquerque, first in February to speak on editorial cartoons with classical themes, then in the fall, to plan the 2018 CAMWS meeting. In November he gave another version of the cartoon paper at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah (which Tom was also visiting as a possible site for CAMWS 2023). While there he enjoyed a visit to Robert Redford's Sundance ski lodge.

Usually, we travel to coastal Maine for a summer visit to Anne's family. This year the whole family gathered for a memorial service for Anne's father, who died in October 2016. We made a second trip Downeast for Labor Day. Since Tom had taught Labor Day classes for 33 years, he felt the best way to celebrate his new-found freedom was to spend the holiday on Damariscotta Lake. From Maine we drove to visit Tom's brother Eddie on the Jersey shore, where we also spent a few happy hours walking on the Boardwalk with Tom's high school and college buddy, Robert Ruggieri, before leaving with Eddie to join in a festive celebration of the twins' 60th birthday. The celebrants traveled by ferry to Manhattan, saw a Broadway performance of *Wicked*, and dined at the 21 Club, originally a Prohibition-era speakeasy with a large Frederick Remington collection. We sat at the same table where every president since FDR has eaten.

We visited Richard and Jessica's home in St. Paul twice, first in the spring to help plant their first garden and later in August to enjoy their prize veggies. Marie's daughters, Sylvia (now seven!) and Phoebe (aged 2 1/2), inspired several trips to Mundelein, Illinois, where Grandma Anne and Grandpa Tom are called



upon to read piles of books.

In October we traveled to Virginia to visit Julia who has moved from Pittsburgh and is now teaching art history at Roanoke College in Salem. She and Dorothy (aged 2 $\frac{3}{4}$) live in near-by Roanoke. Her book on Benjamin Latrobe is moving steadily toward publication with University of Delaware Press. Her husband Victor is still teaching in Arkansas but in November gave the first Sienkewicz Lecture on Roman Archaeology at Monmouth (an annual lecture series endowed anonymously). While in Virginia, Tom gave two presentations at Virginia Wesleyan University and then a third at a pilgrimage conference at William and Mary. That third presentation was particularly rewarding, because he gave it with Richard Harrod, a former student who is teaching the Sacred Places course Tom used to teach at Monmouth.

In May Anne and Tom traveled to Shanghai, China for a conference celebrating the bimillennium of Ovid's death and Tom presented a paper on scenes from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* on 18th-century Chinese porcelain. We went from Shanghai to Xian to see the impressive terracotta warriors, and then to Beijing and the nearby Great Wall! Right after our return from China we celebrated our 45th wedding anniversary with a trip to Chicago to see a performance of *Hamilton*. Tom, of course, was entranced with the duel scene, which took place in Weehawken, not far from where he grew up. In October Tom returned to Beijing to read a paper at another pilgrimage conference. The highlight of that trip for him was visiting religious shrines in five different religious traditions (Buddhist, Moslem, Tibetan Buddhist, Confucian, and Catholic) all in one day.

Anne and Tom also traveled to England twice this year, in March for a student trip to Roman Britain and in December to London to toddler wrangle while Julia attended a conference and gave a paper. Dorothy was especially eager to see Buckingham Palace but we also took her to see Big Ben and the Parliament building and spent a lot of time in the toddler-friendly Natural History and Victoria and Albert Museums. On both trips we managed to spend some time with our good friends Viv Edwards and Chris Morris in Reading. On the December trip Tom was delighted to discover the little church of St. James in Reading, built on the site of Reading Abbey, destroyed by Henry VIII, and still a stop on the British route of the Camino de Santiago. On the way back from Britain we made a stopover in Iceland long enough to see the Northern Lights, the tectonic plate where the continents of Europe and North American meet, some geysers and the Gullfoss waterfalls which are even greater than Niagara. Tom even imitated Icelanders in their daily trip to an outdoor geothermal-heated pool for a swim. Despite the -6° C. air temperature the experience was nice. Final word on Iceland: fascinating but very expensive!

You might think that one year of such whirlwind travel is enough, but Tom's plans for next year already include Boston in January, two more trips to Albuquerque, Rome in March (with another group of Monmouth College students), and then to Lithuania in June for a conference. A trip to North Carolina is also in the cards, as well as one to NYC for nephew Roy's wedding.

Meanwhile, happy holidays and best wishes for a happier 2018 than 2017 has been.

Anne and Tom

