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**January 6, 2022 (Epiphany!) (Valentines day??)**

So, who was it that decided that 2020 was going to be 24 months long (and maybe still going)? Seems like we have been in COVID limbo forever...however, we haven't let a little thing like a killer virus get in our way...

January was all about vaccines. Deb got Moderna #1 early and I got Pfizer #1 late. We both survived without much in the way of side effects. In our Peace Corps days we were vaxxed for everything, the Yellow Fever vaccine having the biggest "kick"; a COVID vaccine ain't nuthin...We are thankful for our gainful employment: Debbie continues to work part-time in PT at Forte Rehabilitation and I still work in IT for BSF.

In February, Texas made the news (for something other than guns, anti-vax and abortion laws..) We had SNOW in San Antonio!! REAL snow: about 6 inches deep and powdery soft. Our Utah neighbor down the street even strapped on some skis and headed down the street a few times with daughter onboard. 9 degree temps wiped out quite a bit of vegetation but much survived. Deb and I also got Vaxx #2 which had a little more kick to it. #2 onboard meant a bit more freedom.



March, April and May were “routine” months for us. But, for our son Sam, it was anything but. Having healed from a serious biking accident in Sept 2020, he was more than making up for lost time in outdoor exercise. There was a fishing trip in Nevada for Lahontan cutthroat (BIG).



Races at Antelope Island, Moab, and a leisurely 50k jaunt at the Salt Flats. Sam still works for CR England Logistics to support his fishing, hiking and running habits. The pandemic has kept him closer to home where he can exercise his exercise habits. But it hasn't completely stopped him from traveling.

By June, Debbie and I were yearning for a change of scenery and seasons. As the pandemic pressures abated we planned for a bit of travel, first to Utah and then to Idaho. But the travel record was held by Jonas. He has been working on a project in South Africa and headed down in June (early winter there). He continues to work for Redtouch Media and has feet in CIO and CTO responsibilities in the other companies that comprise the group but I think really he is just trying to beat my Delta million miler total. He AND his brother Sam....



July was a big travel month, for Debbie and me. Even though there was the ever-present threat of a surge, we decided to get out and see something other than Texas. We flew up to Salt Lake to be with Jonas and Heather and Sam. Jonas and Heather surprised us with the announcement of a new arrival: A boat! We spent the 4<sup>th</sup> zipping around on Jordanelle reservoir. As always it was so good to be back in Utah with our family. Boating as well! From there it was up to Deb's brothers cabin in Idaho to move an outhouse and other maintenance tasks with hiking and a bit of rest in between.





But we weren't done with travel. Later in the month we headed to Shawnee National forest in Southern Illinois to meet up with my three wonderful sisters. Enjoyed a zip line tour for the first time but didn't enjoy the chigger bites that lasted for weeks after...



August – October was a bit of a blur: Flights to Chicago for dental work(!), Global Leadership Summit, Jonas back and forth to South Africa, Jonas and Heather celebrating their 8<sup>th</sup> anniversary, start up of “Sunday school” and our community group. No relief from heat but at least COVID had settled down. We got boosted!

November was a gift in many ways. Jonas and Heather with friend Carly went to South Africa together and safely returned. Sam? Well, he just stuck around Utah and ran a 50 miler in Moab, just before coming in for my birthday and Thanksgiving. Sam and I went fishing on the gulf which was something we always wanted to do. Debbie and I snuck out for a few days to Paddy Flat (Deb's brother's cabin in Idaho). My sister and brother-in-law came in from Chicago for Thanksgiving and we were joined by 7 friends which made for a full table!



December was the best yet. Deb and I have been married for 40 years and we celebrated with a trip to Timberline lodge. It was not quite as enjoyable as in the past because of being fettered by a mask, but still it was two nights of total R&R. We then headed down to Coronado managing to stay ahead of the stormy weather (yeah, we drove). We were joined by Sam and Jonas and Heather and had a Coronado Christmas that was just about perfect.



Looking back, we had a blessed year despite the ever-present COVID virus. It was family connections in Utah, Idaho, Illinois, Washington, Pennsylvania, Delaware, just to name a few, that made 2021 a gift. But the greatest Gift is the gift of Jesus who makes life and love possible in this crazy world of ours. We are thankful for His presence and how he binds His children together.

We pray that Jesus' gift of love, His gentleness and humility, radiate through you and your family in this coming year. Merry Christmas (year 'round!)