

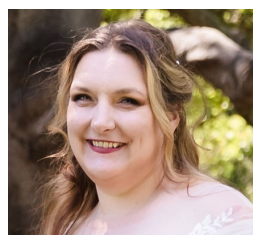
Hackett Family Newsletter 2023

On the road again. Ron and Debi on the road again. That's an apt description of our year in 2023. We started our year with a 28-day trip to the British Isles. We landed in Dublin, Ireland and spent about a week touring Dublin and the local area from a hotel near the Ha'penny Bridge beside the River Liffey. Our hotel was on the north side of the river, with easy access to the city center. We started with a pub tour that evening to get into the spirit. That tour ended at a pub with three female musicians playing traditional Celtic music.



After a busy week on our own, we joined a bus tour that would take us around the coast of Ireland, through Northern Ireland and into Scotland. We visited many beautiful and famous sites, like the 15th century Blarney Castle ruins, the Stone of Eloquence, and the city of Cobh in County Cork. Cobh is home to the Lusitania and Titanic memorials, and the decaying White Star Line dock that was Titanic's final port of call. We saw the Ring of Kerry, the peat bogs of the Black Mountains, Moll's Gap, the Cliffs of Moher, and the Giant's Causeway.

Then we crossed the Irish Sea by ferry into Scotland. After our bus tour ended in Edinburgh, we took a train to Manchester, England, to continue our tour on our own. This included a bus tour into Wales. The tour included the pretty seaside town of Llandudno, historic Conwy Castle, Swallow Falls, the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Betws-y-Coed. Then we took another train into London, where we visited sites like the Stratford Upon Avon, the Cotswolds, Warwick Castle, the British Museum, and Stonehenge. We ended our trip with a Broadway show at the Prince of Wales Theater.



We only had about 10 days to rest when we got home before flying out to San Francisco, California, for our German daughter's wedding. Dani was our German exchange student when Candace was in high school. Candace and her family were supposed to join us, but Candace had to have an emergency appendectomy the day they were supposed to fly down for the wedding. Candace has recovered, and Dani and Evan are now in San Diego, where she is working on her Ph.D.

After another brief 10-day stop at home, we were off to Helen, Georgia, a quaint little Bavarian Village in the mountains that is now a very commercialized tourist trap similar to Gatlinburg and Niagara Falls. We had a travel credit we had to use before it expired, and there wasn't much available. There were some very nice places to visit outside the city, and we found several good restaurants.

We were home for most of the summer because Ron was on call for Jury Duty. They never called him, but he was available to perform his civic duty. Then lightning struck ... literally. A lightning bolt struck the ground in our backyard near our deck. The bolt passed within about 20 feet of Ron's upstairs office while he was sitting at his desk. It wrecked our home network, Ron's Computer, the upstairs air conditioner control board, light bulbs, Debi's robot vacuum cleaner, and one of Ron's guitar amps.

For the fall equinox, Candace and her family invited us to spend the weekend with them at Lopez Island in the San Juan archipelago between Washington State and Vancouver Island, Canada. The only way to reach the island is by ferry. The highlight of the trip was Penelope and Gwendolyn building a Fairy House in the woods near the



cabin where we stayed. They were so excited when the fairies left them chocolates and stickers to thank them for building the house.

After being idle for most of the year, we finally took our 5th wheel RV on a 4-week road trip through Kentucky, Michigan, Indiana, and Ohio. We visited the RV Museum in Elkhart, Indiana, bourbon distilleries in Kentucky, and wineries throughout the trip. We had lunch with our old friends Ken and Peg Cizadlo while we were in Ohio, and we had time to visit the world-famous Cincinnati Zoo.



For Thanksgiving, we made our third trip to the West Coast to spend the holiday with Candace and her family. Candace wrote and is directing the Christmas program for Life Center Church, and we got to sit through one of their rehearsals. This is in addition to a play at the college where she teaches and a third play for a children's theater. Ben is the set designer and foreman for the church program, so Ron spent several days working with the crew to build the set.

This year we will be spending Christmas in Florida with Ron's father and sister. We will be taking our RV so our cat Sophie and our dog Lulu can travel with us. We have to start our return trip the day after Christmas because Ron has a big band dance gig on New Year's Eve, and he has to get back for the final rehearsal. Ron's father turned 92 years old this year. Both his dad and sister are in good health.

Penelope and Gwendolyn are in the second grade and will turn 8 years old this year. They are in two of the three productions that of Candace is leading. Evan is 14 years old and enjoys playing football. He also participates in an extracurricular Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) program, so he will probably be our next engineer in the family. Hunter turned 19 years old this year and has started training as a welder. Hunter and Julia are expecting our first great-grandchild in May of next year.



We hope that you and your family have fared well this year, and we wish you a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Ron and Debi Hackett

