

The Parkins Report

Events of 2007

2007 has been a time of changes for us, some subtle, and some not, and also a time when we have been more like ourselves than ever. On the home front, we became more involved than ever in our hobbies and businesses. After nearly a year without TV cable and nearly that long since we had rented movies, we gave our 20-year-old television to charity in the spring and didn't replace it. Our evenings are now filled with reading, hobbies, and Montana Public Radio. Here's some of the things we do:

Bicycling:

Larye continues his year-around short commute to work. Together, we continued another season of bicycling on our old tandem, despite a busy schedule and heavy smoke from the Idaho forest fires. In the spring, we took a long weekend to Arrow Point resort on Lake Coeur d' Alene in Idaho, intending to ride another section of the Trail of the Coeur d' Alene's bike trail that follows the old mining railroad grade up the Coeur d' Alene River to Wallace and Mullen. Alas, it poured down torrential near-freezing rains, flooding the river basin, while the upper trail along I-90 was still covered in snow and fallen trees in spots. We opted instead to ride the portion of the Centennial Trail from the city of Coeur d' Alene that follows the old US Highway 10 route along the lake, so as to be closer to civilization in case of hypothermia. We took our bike to Orofino, Idaho for a weekend getaway: riding was short, but hilly, as our B&B was about 600 feet up the side of the Clearwater canyon. In mid-summer, we rode our first 50-mile training ride on a day that turned out to be the densest smoke of the fire season; by the time we got home in mid-afternoon, exhausted from too much smoke and too little water, the street lights had come on and the sky was a deep red.

But, by September, we were ready to tackle the MS Bike Tour. For the third year in a row, we traveled to La Conner, Washington, to ride with 1800 other bicyclists to raise money for the Multiple Sclerosis Society. The first day of the two-day tour is extremely hilly, circumnavigating Fidalgo Island, with excursions onto Whidbey Island. The second day starts and ends in the flat Skagit River Valley, with some ridge-climbing in the middle. We take the 50-mile-per-stage routes, as our mountain-style tandem bike is too slow to cover the 75-mile route in the 8-hour time limit. The weekend turned out to be unseasonably hot, so we were glad to do our 50-mile stages and be out of the hot sun by a little after 1:00pm.



Illustration 1: Crossing Deception Pass Bridge, MS Bike Tour

After spending a few days in the Seattle area, we headed south, stopping at Eugene to test-ride a few Bike Friday machines, and ending up at Klamath Falls, Oregon, where we took some leisurely 20-40 mile rides in the valley during the week, to keep in shape for the final ride of the season. On the Solstice weekend, we joined Larye's cousin, Mary Korbolic, her husband, Paul, and about 800 other bicyclists to ride the second annual Ride The Rogue event, to raise money for expansion of public greenways along the wild Rogue River. The ride was on another hot day. We climbed

steadily away from the river toward the first rest stop. Mary and Paul waited for another rider at the start, but overtook us before the stop. At Jacksonville, we turned and climbed, steeper yet, to the summit, racing down the other side into a narrow valley of farms and vineyards. The lunch stop was nearly 20 miles, a long reach, and we arrived as the rest of our team was finishing lunch. We did not see them again until the finish. At Grant's Pass, a last break in the park, then we climbed up the canyon of the Rogue parallel with I-5, for a total of 65 miles, which took us seven and a half hours at our lumbering pace. But, there was still food left when we arrived at the finish line.

Quilting:

Quilts, of course, dominate our life to a great extent. Both of us quilt, and Judy's primary business activity is as a professional longarm quilter. In the nearly six years since she hung out her shingle as Realizations Fabric Arts, she has quilted over 575 customer quilts and quilts for the local Hospice and other charitable causes. Larye completed two quilts this year for the biennial quilt guild show; Judy entered a number of her own quilts, some of which she had pieced by her customers in exchange for quilting services. Judy won several ribbons. We also entered quilts in the Mission Valley quilt show in Ronan, near where our weekend cabin is located. While on our fall bicycle tour circuit, we visited the Quilt Museum at La Conner, Washington, and twice visited the Latimer quilt museum and fiber arts center in Tillamook, Oregon, as they changed the exhibits during the time we were in Oregon. Taking a detour back out to the coast on the way home from Rogue River gave us an opportunity to visit with bead embellishment artist Larkin van Horn. We also took in a quilt show in Orofino, Idaho on a combination biking/quilting weekend in early summer.

Fiber Arts:

Judy has also branched out into bead and fiber embellishments: she has been creating works for three years for entry in bead and quilt shows, and has won top prizes for her works, including Best of Show for Home Arts in 2006 at the Ravalli County Fair. This year, she made her gallery debut with a Featured Artist opening and month-long exhibit at the Red Poppy Gallery in Ronan during September, and her major work, an art quilt named Reclamation, was on extended showing at the Whooping Crones Gallery in Missoula for the remainder of the year, and is booked for showings into 2008. Her works primarily have a quilted basis, embellished with felted and thread-stitched fiber, beadwork, wirework, and surface treatments such as flower-pounding, painting, and stamping. She has also taken up hand-weaving and produces one-of-a-kind handbags, neck scarves, and table runners, as well as making custom clothing for herself. Most of her works are showcased on her web site, <http://www.realizations-mt.com>. She has a number of items for sale in area gift shops and galleries. She has also presented trunk shows and lectures to area quilt guilds over the past year. One of her framed bead and fiber creations was auctioned at a fund-raiser for the Teller Wildlife Refuge.

Clubs:

We have also been busy with our hobby interest groups. Judy was on the quilt show committee with the Quilters Guild and is the program chairperson for 2007-2008. Larye has gotten more active with the local chapter of the Experimental Aircraft Association, volunteering to cook for some of the spring and summer Breakfast at the Hanger monthly pancake feeds, and is the secretary-elect for 2008 and the newly-appointed webmaster for the chapter's web site. Together, we are the committee to construct the 2009 raffle quilt for the Bitterroot Quilter's Guild and active in the Electric Quilt users' mini-group in the Guild.

Aviation:

We added some aviation interests to our travels, taking in a Beech Staggerwing fly-in at Seeley Lake, Montana and the Evergreen Museum in McMinnville, Oregon, home to Howard Hughes' Hercules transport, better known as the Spruce Goose, after 60 years still the largest aircraft in the world. Back home, the Waix #44 airplane project is proceeding slowly. From time to time, some parts and sheets of metal get clamped together in shapes that some visitors recognize as possibly parts of an airplane, but the finished product is still a long way off. The right wing is almost ready for final assembly, but Larye realized he needed to first install lights and wiring, which haven't been ordered yet. The downturn in the value of the dollar prompted an order for one of the last of the 2007 engines, before the next shipment from Australia arrived at much higher price. Jabiru 3300 S/N 1485 arrived November 30, nearly 2 years since we first started cutting metal, and now sits in a crate at one end of the workbench, so there is incentive to get an airframe on which to hang it, before too long.

Friends and Family:

Friends and family played a smaller, but important part in this year's activities. The Abrahamsons (Ben and Bing, Judy's sister) arrived in Montana late and left early this year, but we did spend some time with them. We also dropped in on Judy's brother Tom, and Danielle, at Odessa, Washington on our way west for the bike tour. We stayed with grandson Ethan's Aunt Liz at Mount Vernon during the MS Tour and then with Ethan and parents, Mark and Candice, at Carnation for a couple days. We spent several days in downtown Seattle, where we had dinner with our quilting friends Connie and Roberta (Bobbie), and Connie's actor son, Dan Sharkey, who we saw in the Seattle debut of the ill-fated musical play, Lone Star Love. We visited friends Gary and Charlene in north Idaho at their vacation home, and friends Kathleen and Webb visited us on a trip through Montana. And, of course, we visited with Mary and Paul and son Chris in Rogue River during our bike tour.

Judy made a visit to Carnation for Ethan's birthday, and we did drop in during our bike tour, but most of the children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren were much neglected during 2007. We made no trips East or South this year, so did not visit Larye in Billings or Matt and Patricia, Ashley, Travis, and CJ in Wisconsin or, in New Mexico: Lisa, Sheri and Jose, Shawna and Steve, Jason, Krysti and Marty, Kalen and Paul, Zylania, Alex, Cage, Claudissa, Zanthian, Chano, Paul, Zundrian, Patrick, and, last of all, Karyssa, our newest great grandchild, who we haven't met at all, yet. We are looking forward to our planned tours to New Mexico this winter and to Wisconsin in the fall. Sheri and Jose have moved to Belen, New Mexico, where they opened a new jewelry store, Sheroz, and Jason has been promoted to manager at the Red Lobster in Las Cruces. Daughter-in-law Candice just completed her first year as city manager in Carnation; everyone else is pretty much still in the same jobs. Our granddaughters are all settling in or embarking on careers: Zylania has followed her Uncle Jason into the food service industry. Ashley is in her second year of college, but commuting from home. Krysti graduated from NMSU in December with a B.S. in Nursing, to get her RN, and Kalen, after seeing her two boys off to school, has a new daughter to keep her home. Grandsons Alex and Cage are in high school; Travis is back in Wisconsin to continue studies after spending most of 2007 in Tinseltown pursuing opportunities in the acting field. Zanthian and Zundrian are both in grade school; CJ is in kindergarden, and Ethan is in Montessori school, and is anticipating a new sibling next summer.

Jobs and Businesses:

As for us, Judy is trying to balance her quilting service with her expanded fiber and fabric arts venture; the quilting still keeps the lights on in the shop and pays the fabric store bills. Larye remains with Perot Systems Government Services, halfway through his seventh year of providing systems administration and bioinformatics programming services to the Rocky Mountain Laboratories, his longest work assignment ever. A research paper on comparative analysis of genomic variations in antibiotic-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*, for which he contributed original

software and data analysis this year, is pending publication in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences in early 2008.

Community:

Life is generally good in the Bitterroot Valley in Montana. We are subscribers and supporters of the local Performing Arts Center and have attended some extraordinary concert series in the past few years, with an eclectic mix of international, national, and local musical venues. We joined the Ravalli County Historical Society this year and have enjoyed their Sunday programs at the museum. We like our small but high-tech town, where we enjoy the big-city amenities like the Bitterroot Brewery, a microbrew pub with great food and live music, and a number of excellent bistro restaurants and coffee roasteries. We enjoy our activities with the quilting and weaving guilds, where we are in company of a number of extremely talented and creative artists. The aviation community in Western Montana is very active and involved in promoting grass-roots aviation and youth education. As we approach our putative retirement years, we are also becoming more involved in the arts and quilting community near our property in the Mission Valley, where we currently plan to settle after retirement.

We wish for all our friends and family happiness and success in the coming year.

Larye & Judy

Web sites:

<http://www.realizations-mt.com>

<http://waix.parkins.org>

<http://www.info-engineering-svc.com>

<http://www.parkins.org>