

## Christmas 2013

Once again, travel has been a major part of our lives.

At the beginning of March, **Jenny took Charlie** out to dinner for his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday. She picked an interesting place for the dinner. **Paris**. Yes, the one in France. The Paris trip is documented in a travelogue with pictures at [www.plesums.com/travel/paris](http://www.plesums.com/travel/paris)



Machu Picchu

On April 24 Charlie's brother-in-law **Jerry Isenberg** (merely 63 years old) did not survive heart bypass surgery. We traveled to Maryland May 8-11 for his memorial service and to help Rita get settled (Jerry had done all their bookkeeping and investment). Other trips were more fun.

**Machu Picchu** has been on Jenny's "bucket list" forever. Charlie stopped there on his way home from Brasil in 1969, prior to meeting Jenny. He feared it would have been contaminated by street vendors and overrun by tourists, so he was reluctant to return. Charlie couldn't have been more wrong. Our trip to **Peru** May 16-24 was outstanding – highly recommended. See [www.plesums.com/travel/peru](http://www.plesums.com/travel/peru)

August 13-19 we visited **Alaska**. From Anchorage we drove south to the coast for a glacier and whale watching day-long boat trip, then north to Fairbanks to see the Alaska pipeline and Denali Park, and back to Anchorage – total of 1142 miles in 4½ days. The scenery was stunning, but not as photogenic as expected. We saw whales on the boat trip, but there was no jumping on cue, nor glass front tank like Sea World.



Alaska Pipeline (real, not a display)

We saw a glacier, and heard it crack (like a gunshot), but no big ice fell in the 45 minute we waited. We should have seen Mt. McKinley, but, as the guide book said, there is a 95% chance you will see a moose, but only a 30% chance you will see Mt McKinley (the world's tallest mountain from base to peak), since it is normally hidden by clouds (we didn't see it, even from the reported best vantage point). This, too, will have a travelogue when time allows.



Moose in Denali Park

August 30 – September 3 (Labor Day weekend) it was back to Cabin John, Maryland, to see Charlie's Sister **Rita Isenberg** again.

Our annual pilgrimage North to visit **Jenny's family** started September 11 with an overnight visit with Mark's family in the Dallas area, then a 913 mile drive to Decorah Iowa. The last hour we were too tired to be safe – we won't try that again. The schedule was based on participating in **Jenny's 50<sup>th</sup> high school reunion** in LaCrosse Wisconsin (also see Jenny's step-father **Dallas Doss**), then on to Medford Wisconsin (the **Julians**), Cambridge Minnesota (**Joe and Kim Ott**), back to Decorah Iowa (**John and Jim Ott families**), a stop in Cedar Rapids (**Katie Ott**), and then home – a total of 3,168 miles in 10 days.

In March 2011 we were scheduled to visit **Tokyo**, as it turned out, just after the 9.0 magnitude earthquake, tsunami, and reactor melt-down. Our friends strongly advised that we not come – not because of the danger, but the lack of services (no food deliveries, trains not running, etc.). We have been watching



Historic town Kawagoe, near Tokyo

for a bargain flight ever since, and finally took that trip October 16-23. We had a great time, including a full day with our internet friends **Stuart and Emiko Ablett**. The travelogue is not yet put together, but is planned.



Charlie, Jenny, Emiko, Stu

Would anybody take a flight just to collect the airline miles? Last year we answered yes, with our brief trip to Hawaii (we enjoyed several days there), and the resulting Platinum status repaid us royally on the Peru and Alaska trips. So we were just short of Platinum again this year. Yes, another "mileage run." The cheapest flight (\$231) was to **Portland Oregon** and back on the same day, November 16. The

people in front of us on the plane were doing the same thing, but they were going to spend several days in Portland, not just our 20 minutes. Mission accomplished - we will be Platinum again next year.

**Jenny** continues to work as much as she wants, as contract CFO for 20-25 small companies, half of the time working from home. She is an active quilter, machine embroidery enthusiast, and loves planning our trips.

After 8 years with a continuous backlog of work (sometimes as much as 6 months backlog), Charlie's furniture business went dry for much of this year. Jenny was delighted, since her Grandmother's cedar chest finally got refinished, the dining room table got new veneer, **Charlie** built a small entertainment center (to replace the K-Mart embarrassment in our living room), and other home projects. Work finally seems to be resuming, with November and December full.

Our son **Mark**'s company was sold this year. Most of the employees were walked out the day of the sale, but Mark continued for a few weeks to help with transition, before his job was gone too. He found a new job, but it has a long commute. His wife **Stacey** moved from "Director of business Travel" (corporate sales) at Intercontinental Hotels in Dallas to a comparable position with Hilton in Dallas, and loves her new job. Their daughter **Chelsea** is a second year student at Collin College.



Jenny's Grandmother's chest, refinished

***We wish you health and happiness this Christmas season and pray that you have a very Happy New Year.***

***Jenny and Charlie***