

2020 Quietude of Quarantine

Wow...a year to remember!

Bears in Yosemite in lieu of selfie sticks; virtual wine tastings; evening sing-alongs from balconies; learning that 6 feet means either 1 moose antler, 3 baguettes, 4 Galapagos penguins, or 6 Chihuahuas; working in your PJs (or less); butt

bumps; bringing fashion to a whole new level by accessorizing with masks; TP hoarding; the return of blue skies; and quality time in the "Home Office" with a glass of wine.

As you recall, Germar rung in 2020 with a ruptured Achilles tendon. We left behind the ski slopes of Mammoth and had to change gears, from feet to arms. We kayaked most reservoirs that San Diego has to offer, enjoying the quietude, deer, burning biceps, golden eagles, blue skies, bald eagles, geese, screaming triceps, and silly coots while giving the tendon healing time.

Aspen was still on the schedule for February. It was beary welcoming and Germar practiced working in his PJs. Annie zipped down the funnest slopes ever with Jeannie, inclusive of black diamonds...Germar was proud of Annie's progress!! Thank you, Betsy and John, for inviting us!



While skiing was out for Germar, biking was in! We started racking up the miles with the foot in a boot, and the Achilles just kept healing nicely.





Kelly popped in at the beginning of March. Covid had just hit, so we zipped to our beloved Anza-Borrego desert before the world started to end. Kelly helped Annie whip up a costume for Germar to once again take part in the Peg Leg Liars contest. He found gold at the end of rainbows guarded by a nasty Leprechaun, while suffering from pegalitis. Of course, he repeated his success from 2012 and won 1st place prevaricator once again! ^



Soon thereafter, Annie's brother, Michael and his family flew in from NY. The kids stayed a few days longer and we were off to monzogranitic boulders and Dr. Guess trees of Joshua Tree NP. The wide-eyed NYers were smacked into reality when cell coverage returned at Keys View, overlooking the San Andreas Fault. The awe was quickly overtaken with "come home, NY is closing down". Back to Alpine, bags packed, and they were on the plane the next day. It seems so long ago, but Covid is still here.

Germar was soon deemed a non-essential worker and retirement teased him. Leisurely breakfasts on the porch as the birds awoke soon became a ritual as we planned our day. Quarantine needed a goal. We decided on 100,000 feet elevation gain and 1000 miles on our bikes before the lock-down's end. Away we went. Each day, a new route and then home to a Zoom happy hour. March slipped into April. Our 2nd anniversary was our favorite ride through the Lagunas and Cuyamaca and then we made our first-ever paella. Quarantine was romantic after all.



April crept into May. With tables 2 moose antlers apart and mask-adorned, we enjoyed a quaint birthday celebration with Alpine and Guateque pals in shifts, with the Alpine sunset as our finale.

Back on our bikes and on Memorial Day we rode our 1114th mile and reached 108,198 ft. Now what??? We just kept riding but have lost track of miles.





June elated us with campgrounds opening. Off to Big Bear with Cookie, Ute & Ron. We kept one bear-length distance apart and celebrated the summer solstice. Sitting around a campfire is where we lose ourselves under the big starry night sky and it was so revitalizing!

Our Tahquitz fire tower opened too. No visitors were allowed, so we became one with the big starry night sky at 8848' in our romantic mountaintop hide-a-way.



Thank goodness we had two weddings!! Since our Alpine anniversary was in lockdown, we were more audacious for our Bavarian anniversary. We ventured



to our virtual Tuscany: quaint Sutter Creek area in the heart of Motherlode country. We biked to wine tastings behind plexiglass, bagged Thunder Mountain for our special day and marveled at Mark Twain's celebrated jumping frogs in Angels Camp.



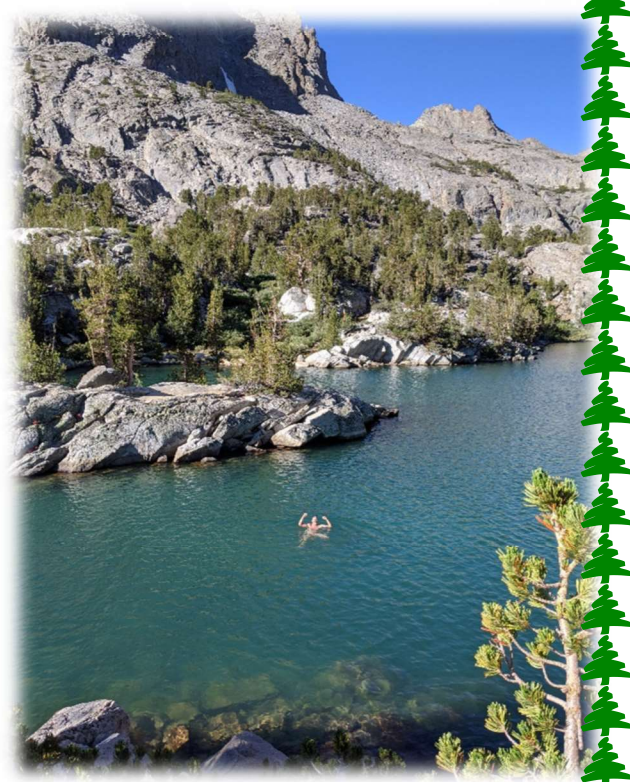
We then imagined the Bavarian Alps and savored the Yosemite of yesteryear instead. As it was devoid of foreign tourists with selfie sticks, we mingled with bears in the meadows, and relaxed on private beaches below El Capitan.





The coast was calling us as August heated up. Boogie boarding with Stephen & Autumn, biking with Ellie & Carlos, kayaking with Mydung & Dominic cooled us off as we kept our 3 baguette distance. Finally, Germar just decided to hang out in our spanking new wine cellar to cool off.

September had us dreaming of the Swiss Alps...thus the Sierras filled our imaginations. We drove above the smoke of the California wildfires to blue skies. The smoke settled in on us the next day, but we were prepared! We had masks!!



Properly adorned we hiked to overlook the Palisades glacier resting in its cirque at 12,300'. It descends from four 14,000 ft peaks. We pitied our dear friends in the blistering lowlands while enduring a fierce snowball fight. We zipped down to our final camp of turquoise splendor. The glacial powder suspended in the water creates one of the most beautiful areas in the Sierra. The wind changed course and delighted us with blue skies & a refreshed Bavarian.

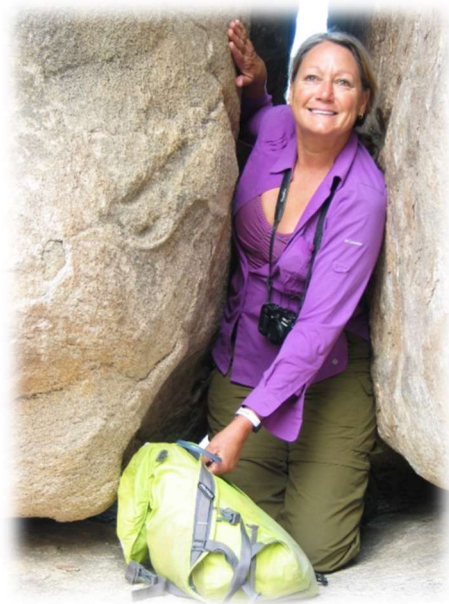




Obviously, Germar's annual UNEP meeting was virtual. Coordinating 40 people from around the globe was a challenge. Guess who got the short straw for time? He was Zooming at 4 a.m. for two weeks. To rejuvenate from sleep deprivation and puzzler soreness, October found us on a Greek Isle. Well, Catalina Island, that is, but we were a million miles from SoCal. We backpacked the Trans Catalina Trail, mingled with Bison (left there and forgotten after a 1926 Hollywood movie), and dove into the ocean waves on empty pristine beaches. It was delicious!!



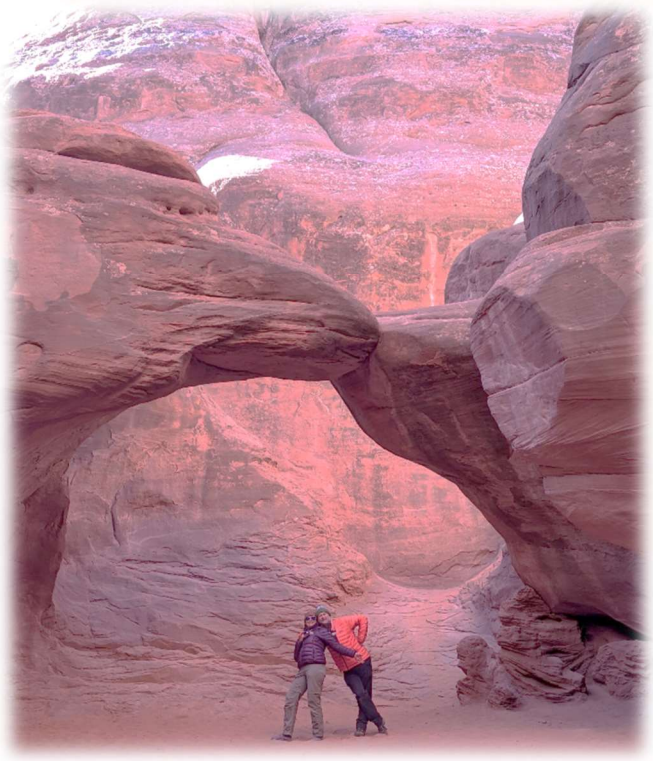
A quick trip to Joshua Tree started off November with Cookie, Ron & Maureen, Janet & Martin and Kirk. Our initial hike ended with the natives spying on us to our utmost delight. We then traversed the Wonderland of Rocks and found the Oh-B-Y-Yo-Yo cabin. OMG...the traverse was a blast, crawling in, over, under & through monzogranite boulders!!





The red rock and arches of South Africa were calling for our 144th kissaversary. For some reason we ended up in Utah. We hiked around Thor's hammer in Bryce Canyon NP. We squeezed through Spooky, a slot canyon in which Germar almost got stuck with his Buddha belly.

Four fords through the thigh-deep Escalante River brought us to the Golden Cathedral. This awe-inspiring triple pothole blows your mind thinking of the millions of years of water trickling through.



Arches NP treated us to a reenactment of our 1st kiss under a private arch behind our campsite.





We marveled at the erosion that sculpted the Colorado River and the hoodoos of Canyonlands NP (many resembling shapes not suitable for children's eyes). The red rock splendor, deep sandstone canyons, pinnacles and silent grandeur made us sit back, appreciate life and 144 months together in love.



Working from home has been a real joy for us. After enjoying coffee with the birds, on the front porch each morning, Germar had the most productive year ever. He published 4 first-author and 3 co-authored papers (a list is [here](#)). Amongst others, he reported on trends of UV radiation in Antarctica and exceptional large increases in UV radiation over the Arctic in the spring of 2020. Also working with the [UNEP panel](#) to assess the environmental effects of ozone depletion is quite rewarding. It seems the whopping ozone hole of 2020 will keep him busy next year too!



While Germar was writing, Annie slayed 30 gophers and soon started a vegetable garden. Our latest project for this year is replacing the muddy mess behind our house with shiny new concrete. A new place for BBQs with pals is around the corner.



We wish you and your family great health. Always enjoy the bright side of life and dream of real hugs in 2021!

Love ya!!! Germar, Annie, Chinquapin & Juniper