

Seth's and Joan's 2024 Adventures

2024 began with Seth (& sister Erica & kids Ben and Eva) being invited to Bratislava, Slovakia to obtain Permanent Residency cards (good across EU). Our quick trip included brief stays in Vienna and Prague. Seth has learned more about Central Europe than he had ever imagined (“Too much history!”). Joan’s enjoyment was limited by hotel-room sequestration for her first case of COVID-19 ☹️ from which she enjoyed full recovery. We’ve been invited to swear into citizenship as of year’s end.



Bratislava. L: old town square with castle on R (site ≈ continuously occupied since 3500BC – by Baden, Kalenderberg, Celtic, Roman, Moravian, Slavic, Hungarian, Bohemian, Holy Roman, Habsburg, liberal republic, Nazi & Soviet cultures & resisted Mongol and Turkish invasions) and on L the lovingly-despised Soviet-era brutalist SNP bridge (flying saucer). M: Main town gate. R: Golden hour illuminates castle and SNP along the Danube.

On our return we found mothers and infants sleeping in the Denver bus terminal, and learned a hotelful of refugees bussed from Texas were about to be turned into the February streets. Seth reached out to old emergency management contacts and was connected to a young Venezuelan family that had arrived after walking the dangerous Darien Gap, riding “The Beast”, and being waylaid for bribes along the way. They are staying in our guest house as they (hopefully) await work permits. Their 3- and 5-year-old girls have been a constant joy; Joan and I attended our “first day of school” for the first time in 25 years! Their future is darkly complicated by the US presidential election as well as the still-contested Venezuelan one.



In March & April we braved blizzards, windstorms, and earthquakes driving to Cincinnati, NYC & Illinois to enjoy time with Joan’s siblings & nieces, our NYC kids, Seth’s extended family, and the Brown-Ringolds up from Oaxaca, while getting our fix of museums and shows (and a New Orleans-style crawfish boil!).



Then in May another loop to California to join a multi-generational gathering of Stanford activists (Vietnam to present), visiting old friends, Joshua Tree, and Wovoka’s grave (receiver of the Ghost Dance vision) along the way.



Travel slowed down in summer, with Seth finishing work on his last International Joint Commission report (“Monitoring Human Health Consequences of Climate Change in the Great Lakes”), chairing a CDC informatics effort, serving as part-time Chief Medical Officer for Jefferson County Public Health and distributing toys, games and coffee on the Pediatric ward at Denver Health. Joan kept snuggling premature infants, digging and weeding at the Botanical Garden, quilting and helping run the local Modern Quilt Guild. Visits from Cleveland & Milwaukee friends and Seth’s siblings helped catapult us into the local mountains.



Seth repeated his annual August pilgrimage to Montana, protesting a Trump visit (with Mary in Bozeman using Joan’s protest quilts), hanging out with friends in E. Glacier, visiting the traditional Blackfeet Heart Butte gathering, and lifting (and returning) cutthroats from an undisclosed location with Henry from Wisconsin. Joan’s Freedom Flag quilt was also featured in a Cape Cod show and on postcards printed by Massachusetts activists (artpeacemakers.org).



In October we travelled to Page, AZ (Glen Canyon and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monuments) with local friends to enjoy red rock slot canyons and Colorado River kayaking (and marvel at the ubiquitous Instagrammers).



Note
 → petroglyph

Then Seth spent a week canvassing for the Dems in Milwaukee, driving home to bad news about the outcome. Shortly thereafter, Joan travelled to Boston to memorialize her mentor Laurie Crumpacker, and visiting old Boston, Milwaukee and Chicago friends and colleagues before we all landed at daughter Eva’s new home in Richmond, VA for a family Thanksgiving. The holiday included her new partner Danilo, our son Ben and his new partner Frankie, our Virginia cousins, and various artists. Eva is studying (and teaching) painting in the Virginia Commonwealth University MFA program. She will be featured as one of America’s top new painters with a four-page spread in New American Painters magazine. Ben is taking a leave from the Wall Street Journal to complete his book about activist short sellers. His stories on failing tech banks earned the National Press Club’s Breaking News Award (print) and was a finalist (again) for a Loeb award. This week, Joan is enjoying an active tour of Costa Rica with friend Monica and has sent some eye candy for you all.



In short, another amazing year, enjoying the West, our friends, and family. Visitors remain welcome (in our smaller in-house guest room). We hope everyone will have a lively, lovely New Year, with courage and stamina for all that is yet to come!