

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from Hugh & Becky

On one of our adventures – a visit to Seattle for the 4th of July



Wishing you happiness and health now and in the New Year

When we count our blessings we remember our friends and family. Thank you for the memories you have created with us, both those from long ago and the “freshly minted” ones. May you recall and create wonderful memories this holiday season.

One year ago we were packing in the last memories of our “Dutch life”. We savored the Thanksgiving service at the Pieterskerk in Leiden where some of the Puritans who became Pilgrims lived. We visited Santa's reindeer above the Arctic Circle in Lapland area of Finland. We were honored by several farewell parties. We celebrated our last Nederlands Oudejaaraavond with our Dokter van der Knaaplaan friends. We packed up our worldly goods, said “Tot Ziens” and, departed for the USA. Our flight was one of the last ones to depart Schiphol airport during one of the worst windstorms on record (many Youtube videos – search for “Netherlands Storm 18 January 2018” to see what it was like – quite the storm!).

Our six sets of friends who hosted us before we moved in to our Dublin house made our American repatriation much easier. Our first month in California was a whirlwind of activity, luckily, with no mishaps. New cars, new bed, new house appliances, window coverings, carpet, and paint (we are grateful the family who rented our house left it in great shape), unpacking the storage items, unpacking the items back from The Netherlands, new landscaping ... WHEW, tired just remembering it all.

Hugh went back to work to pay for all of this, and to ensure we had health insurance. He had gotten used to the relaxed life the last six months in The Netherlands, after his OPCW job ended, so 5 hours 4 days a weeks was about right! However, even that is more than he wants to do ... so ...

Hugh's last day of work is 27 December! Retirement time!

It has not all been hard work. Becky's close friends helped her celebrate her birthday on a gloriously warm February in San Francisco. We started sailing with friends. Hugh has his plane flying again. We have hosted a number of friends we met while in The Netherlands. Becky volunteers at the local Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, getting her kitty-lovin' fix!

We enjoy our Mount Diablo views and relaxing watching the wildlife from the back yard.

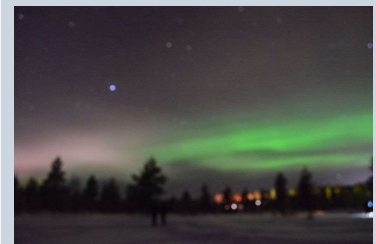


RUSH READ

- Settled back in Dublin, California
- Hugh is retiring! Last work day Dec. 27, 2018
- We bought a boat in France (details below)

Prettig Kerstdagen en een gelukkig nieuwe jaar

**Hugh Gregg
&
Becky Failor**



Some Northern Lights

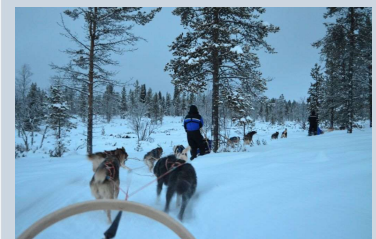
Finnish transportation:



Snow machine



Reindeer sleigh



Dog sled – the best!

Backyard refresh:



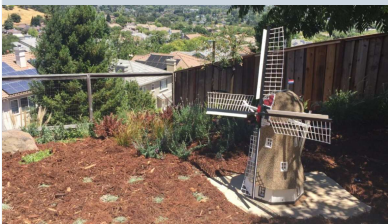
New lounging area



New path & gate out back



All plants replaced



Plus, an addition from the Netherlands!



Its not a large tuinmolen (garden windmill), but if makes us smile to see it turning in the breeze. Also, fairly unique to find one in Dublin California.

California transportation:



A flight to southern California for a friend's wedding,

and sailing on San Francisco bay.



As you might imagine, our travel has been reduced this year. We spent the 4th of July holiday in Seattle, and saw American fireworks for the first time in eight years! A couple weeks in and around Boston was fun, including reconnecting with Hugh's stepmom, his college roommate, and our close Netherlands friend on nearby Martha's Vineyard, as well as an American Chemical Society meeting for Hugh.



In September, almost three weeks in The



Netherlands was good for the soul. We

stayed on a houseboat in Leiden the first week. Reconnecting with dear friends, parties (including our old neighborhood, with Knaapie the hedgehog), some OPCW work for Hugh. Een gezellig tijd. And we realized that California is home once more.



We're back to America, and that means Turkey for Thanksgiving. Becky wanted leftovers, so we got an 18 pound turkey for the four of us! An excellent meal with good friends.



With Hugh's retirement coming soon, we decided to stay home for the Christmas holidays – which of course, means a tree, and we found a good one.

We know we want more time in Europe when we retire. How to do that? Friends have boats there and that seemed like it would be fun, but what to do with the boat when we are in California? Well, we now own a boat in the Le Boat charter system. We're able to use our boat or a another boat in the fleet – they have bases in canal boating in Canada, Netherlands, Ireland, England, Belgium, France, Germany and Italy. Interested in boating on a canal? Contact us.



Regardless how young you feel, certain milestones = aging! Becky now has a Medicare card, and Hugh will soon be a pensioner! Hugh has a special trip planned to celebrate Becky's 65th!

We hope to keep connected with friends and family. Lets keep in touch, and find ways to get together!

*Happy Holidays
Hugh & Becky*