

2022 Holiday Greetings from the Bryant Family

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2022 has been the year of varied experiences with weather. Dave enjoyed wintery desert weather when he attended the SHOT Show (a firearms and law enforcement event) in Las Vegas in January. We experienced snow for the first time in several years during a spring break trip to upstate New York. Ranger found the snow especially invigorating. We suffered through crushing heat and humidity in Venice, Rome, and Pompeii over the summer (more on that below). We emerged unscathed from two hurricanes this fall that affected the west coast of Florida (more on that below, too). We are now looking forward to more seasonally appropriate Florida winter weather with lower humidity and temperatures.

Our European adventure was motivated by Judy being selected to teach Developmental Psychology in Florence, Italy, for the University of South Florida's Study Abroad program. We began the trip in June with a wonderful week and excellent dry weather in London. Dodging any impact of the rail strike, we enjoyed Westminster Abbey, saw parading horses and bands at Buckingham Palace, toured the Tower of London, took a boat cruise on the Thames, marveled at the goods in Harrod's, braved the London Eye, watched mass at St. Paul's Cathedral, and even had a dinner invitation to the Reform Club on Pall Mall, among other experiences. Dave had the opportunity to speak with London bobbies and a guard at Buckingham Palace. We did a lot of walking there and, of course, sampled traditional local cuisine as we did throughout this trip.

Next, we took the high-speed rail under the English Channel to Paris. After a few quick days exploring the Louvre and hopping on and off a boat on the Seine to see the Eiffel Tower and other sites, we continued to Montreux, Switzerland, on the Lake Geneva shoreline. The following day, we took a scenic train through the Alps to Zermatt with perfect views of the Matterhorn.

Another train took us from Switzerland to our new home for the six-week summer term in Florence. The host university, located in the historic center of the city, gave us a comfortable, air-conditioned apartment in the same complex as Judy's classroom. That was our Tuscan base as we explored Italy. Florence has remarkably rich history with monuments, museums, and palaces showcasing Etruscan, Greek, Roman, and Renaissance culture. Churches and cathedrals house moving artwork and intriguing reliquaries. Judy attempted to recreate photos taken when her family visited in 1964, posing with Michelangelo's David at the Academia, Neptune at his Fountain, and sculptures near the Uffizi Gallery. Of course, we sampled pizzas, pastries, the famous Florentine steak, fried zucchini flowers, caprese salad, wines, and numerous varieties of gelato (including heavenly lavender flavor) at restaurants and cafes. Since we had our own kitchen, we frequented nearby markets and grocery stores where we found flavorful vegetables and fruits and remarkably inexpensive staples. Judy became an expert at booking train journeys. Pisa and Siena were easy day trips. Venice required an overnight stay. Rome involved several days with a side trip to explore the ruins of Pompeii. Rome featured the Pantheon, Trevi Fountain, Colosseum, and of course the Vatican Museums and St. Peter's Basilica. Lest you think that we were only tourists, Judy *did* work hard in teaching her intensive course. Dave also gave a guest lecture for a Forensic Psychology course taught by another USF faculty member. We documented our trip with a huge number of photos, a fraction of which we posted to Facebook. As much as we did this summer, there is lots more to do when we get the chance to travel to Europe again.

While we were away, Ben and Kate took care of Ranger and the house. Kate continues her career as a Registered Nurse at Advent Hospital. Ben is finishing his master's degree at USF. The last part of his program is a teaching internship, but that is taken care of because he was hired by the Patel High School in August. This charter school emphasizes project-based learning rather than more traditional approaches. Even though the school needed to replace a chemistry teacher, the principal was so impressed with Ben that she changed the position to physics to attract him. He also teaches a few sections of marine science. Ben has devised hands-on projects involving egg drops and Nerf guns, entertains his students with his original science-themed memes, and has started an e-sports team.

Sam and Elizabeth live 140 miles south in Naples where Sam is in his second year of law school. One of his professors holds him up as a model because he is always well prepared to discuss cases in class. This fall he discovered a talent for litigation in moot court competition. He still makes time to work out at the gym and stay up to date on politics. Elizabeth is in an MBA program, so they both are quite busy.

We are always happy when we can get together with the boys and their girlfriends and can engage with them as adults. One recent occasion was when Hurricane Ian hit our state. The original forecast was for it to make landfall in Tampa. Our house is far inland, so we hosted some friends and their dog who live on the water in Apollo Beach. The storm hit well south, and Sam and Elizabeth lost electricity. They outran the eye of the hurricane on I-75 just before the interstate was closed and arrived safely. Having a full house was great fun for Ranger, and we humans enjoyed conversation and lots of cooking. No damage here, just lots of wind and rain.

Neither Judy nor Dave has immediate plans to retire. Judy still enjoys teaching, zooming monthly with her Iowa City friends, and connecting with her Yale class, having co-chaired her 45th reunion last June. Dave's polygraph business is doing well. His calendar is packed with activities of the Sons of the American Revolution, Shriner's Provost Guard, Corvette Club, and other organizations. Our lives are indeed full. We look forward to 2023 and the adventures it will bring.