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2015 Seasons Greetings from Suzanne and Rod:

Procrastination again. Rod has been feeling guilty as the cards and letters, both written and electronic, came in from early December. Not guilty enough to do anything about it, but mildly apprehensive about being able to remember enough about the preceding year to fill a page. The byproduct of web sites and social media is a "post and forget" approach to activities, so little more to tell at the end of the year.



COLD WINTER

A recurring theme in 2016 was trips by Suzanne into New York City to consult with the NAWBO chapter there. Rod became adept at timing the train times at Matawan station, becoming recognized as a honorary taxi driver and earning his spot in the taxi ranks loitering next to the tracks hoping to pick up a fare. Unfortunately, his passenger has not grasped the concept of tipping, so he plans on providing deteriorating service until comprehension arrives.

Trips into NYC can become dangerous to one's financial health. B&H Photo sells cameras. Expensive cameras. Cameras that can do things that the cell phone camera can't. Cameras that require their own backpack to carry. Cameras that then become justification for buying a new cell phone to match. Cameras that then become the reason for taking a cruise into the frozen north. Arctic circle type frozen north. Cause and effect.

Mid May saw us on the way to England for a week, getting over the jet lag and learning to use the camera and exploring Colchester. Then out of Harwich, 2 weeks on Holland America's Midnight Sun cruise to the northern tip of Norway and points in between. Rod liked the idea of a ship, generating lots of heat from the propulsion system. Suzanne liked the balcony and the ability to get up at 2 am and take photos in her PJs. Rod liked the heavy covers on the bed when the door opening to outside at 2 am let in a blast of cold air. Suzanne liked the fact that there was still snow on the mountains above the fjords, making for better contrast on her photos. Rod liked the fact that the snow was mostly melted off at the lower elevations where the walking tours took place. He also liked the unlimited bacon at breakfast, which kept other things from "melting off" during the hiking. A few post-cruise days in London allowed for some nature photography and more extensive walking around the city. The whole trip was a bust as far as animal photography went, but Suzanne managed to get a few interesting shots of strange old birds in London.



In June, Rod made a unusual visit to New York City with spouse and guests. A beautiful day, and a chance to walk the length of the High Line park there. Recommended if you get a chance.

As the annual NAWBO Conference was in San Antonio in 2015 at the end of September, the car was loaded for a road trip. Perhaps "loaded" was an understatement. This time Suzanne had not only her jewelry to sell, but scarves, gourds and boxes of books. The books were a new item - a NAWBO history. Together with the necessary structure for setting up a booth at the Conference and the required clothing for suitably presenting the vendor at each of the events at the conference, there was little room left for a second person in the car. Thankfully it was still warm and Rod did not actually need extra layers of clothing. Some "vacationing" was done on the way south, including a day along the Blue Ridge Parkway and visits in Chattanooga and Lafayette. As the car approached the Texas border, Suzanne decided that Rod would not be a positive contribution to the sales effort in



San Antonio, so she dumped him out of the car at the edge of a convenient swamp and promised to pick him up after the event was over. Thankfully her brother is OK with visitors, so Rod got his fill of boudin and cracklings before she got back. The plan was to return to NJ via a more scenic, easterly route, but flooding taking place in the east at that point altered the route. We did manage a nice morning at Harper's Ferry on the way back.

Suzanne has been doing more pure art in 2015 and less graphic design work. She put together the book and designed a scarf for the NAWBO 40th anniversary. The gourds continue to proliferate, as well as the beaded jewelry. A new technique using Shibori silk has been developed for jewelry, reducing both the construction time for a large piece and its weight. She taught classes in beading and the use of the Shibori silk in jewelry design at a local bead shop.



Rod has dramatically slowed down his purchases of paperback SF and is now looking for ways to reduce the inventory. He got one of the \$50 Kindle Fire tablets so that he will not be without reading material if the Kindle Paperwhite fails due to his heavy usage. He is still a Luddite on the PC front however, using one purchased in 2004 and running Ubuntu 12.04. Suzanne is the more advanced user, with exclamations of "148 points!" inserted into the audio track of the televised political debates as she uses her smart phone to check on the status of one of her current games of Words With Friends with son Kevin, as he thoroughly trounces her once again. Watching the debates was entertaining. That's probably the best one can expect from politics 2016.

We wish you a happy and prosperous 2016.

Suzanne and Rod