

7 Harbor Road  
Morganville, NJ 07751-2622  
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2017 Seasons Greetings from Suzanne and Rod:

2017 was another year of discovery. Early in the year, we discovered that our aging eyeballs were not working as well as we hoped and our proofreading skills had declined, at the start of our 7th decade.



We discovered that there was an alternative to the cold in NJ in January - Costa Rica. Although it involved needles to avoid serious illness and pills for the minor ones, we took 2 weeks out of winter and turned it into summer. Turning snow into sunshine was only partially successful. Costa Rica met us halfway, with several days of rain that completely obscured the volcano (theoretically) towering over one of the hotels. We did get to walk through tropical gardens watered by the heated water from Mt. Arenal - in our rain gear. Other parts of our visit were less damp, scenic, and quite interesting, although gastrointestinal problems struck after the first week, in spite of our precautions.

In late March Rod's sister visited just in time to witness the joys of a leaky basement, something few houses in Lafayette have. Reports of that visit must have influenced his niece's selection of time to visit NJ, thinking August would be dryer and definitely warmer.

In May Rod finally realized that his lumberjack days were over when a cherry tree on the back property line fell directly toward the house, stopped only by a mulberry from hitting the house. That realization was perhaps aided by explicit instructions from "she who must be obeyed" that he was not to be climbing and using his chain saw while she wasn't there to call for an ambulance. Her scheduled trip to CA to consult with a NAWBO chapter in Sacramento was in jeopardy unless he agreed. He called a tree service and had an enjoyable time watching someone else use a crane to lift pieces of the cherry off the mulberry.

Rod discovered that the Civic could hold all his camping gear for a road trip with Suzanne. All that was needed was to limit the time she spent in the car. This was achieved in June on a trip to NC by the expedient of just dropping her off in Asheville before he went camping by himself. There was some mention of picking her up again later somewhere before the trip back to NJ, but the important part was lots of room in the car.

Suzanne discovered etching. She and a friend took a class at the John C. Campbell Folk School in Brasstown, NC that would teach them how to etch metal. By meeting in Asheville, they could tour the arts scene in Asheville without the moderating influence of spouses for a few days, then go on to a couple of days of class at the school. While Suzanne spent her nights on one of Asheville's high end hotels, Rod provided economic balance by sleeping on the ground in a tent and eating granola bars.



Rod discovered that saving money by camping just allowed Suzanne to book a room at a spa in Alexandria, VA on the way back from NC. She claimed that there was some type of NAWBO meeting there, but Rod discovered that she actually spent her time lobbying in downtown Washington, DC. Rod did manage to find a couple of good places to eat while acting as taxi driver. He also discovered once again that avoiding venues where sports are being played was a good personal decision, as this was the same day as the shooting at the ball field in Alexandria.

As soon as Suzanne returned to NJ, she dropped felting and started etching. Various solutions of noxious chemicals required for etching metal left Rod nostalgic for the overwhelming smell of vinegar permeating the house during the felting period. Several stockpiled transformers from obsolete electronic devices were sacrificed on the alter to the etching gods before the proper combination of battery and recharger were obtained. More results can be viewed on [suzannepeace.com](http://suzannepeace.com) under Jewelry.

In late September Suzanne discovered that the "smart" in "smart phone" doesn't necessarily extend to warning the owner that the phone isn't water proof. Rod maintains that she just wanted a newer phone and that is why she "accidentally" lost control. Instead of getting her old phone when she upgrades, this time all he got was a good story to tell. He is giving odds that nothing but the bare outline of the event will survive the edit phase of this document by the in-house graphic design expert.

The NAWBO convention this year was in Minneapolis in mid October. The Corolla was again loaded with tables and misc. display elements to set up a booth for sales of Suzanne's art work during the event. Rod was allowed a small volume for a change of clothing in return for his services as driver. We took additional days on the road to allow for potential good weather along the way for hiking. "Potential". It did stop raining after we got to Minneapolis, so Rod enjoyed his few days walking around inside and outside of downtown. Suzanne had fun selling her stuff and meeting old friends. We did manage some time for walking and visiting relatives on the way back to NJ.

In November, Rod discovered that his mild observations about the loading of the Corolla during the MN trip had produced an unintended reaction. Unable to take even a tiny amount of constructive criticism, Suzanne found that she was able to get more room in her car with one simple solution. Rod thought that the garage wouldn't hold a bigger vehicle, but Suzanne proved him wrong. She now owns both a Toyota Corolla and a Honda CRV. Rod is slightly consoled by still being allowed to house his poor little 2005 Honda Civic in the garage, where it can be found cowering next to the brutish SUV. It does lead to a potential for more road trips in 2018 if Rod is allowed a change of clothing while traveling. Rod is somewhat concerned about the CRV moon roof, as Suzanne has mentioned opening it for extra ventilation if he does not take the hint about using the extra room for a change of clothing.

Suzanne discovered that a new car was like a new smart phone - another front in the war of technological change against the aging brain. It's tough when more and more of your devices are smarter than you. It's really tough when they have the ability to decide to take you out if you don't follow their rules. All your smart phone can do is turn into an incendiary device and burn a hole in your pocket. A SUV that decides you are not properly paying attention to it can do far worse. Rod the Luddite is happy with fewer ways for his 2005 car to take over control, even if it doesn't have heated seats.

We wish you a happy and prosperous 2018.

Suzanne and Rod

web pages:

Rod's personal home page at [www.rodpease.com](http://www.rodpease.com)

Suzanne's art home page at [www.suzannepease.com](http://www.suzannepease.com)

Suzanne's graphic design home page at [www.ampersandgraphics.com](http://www.ampersandgraphics.com)

Kevin's business home page at [www.ceruleanstimuli.com](http://www.ceruleanstimuli.com) or [www.cerulean.st](http://www.cerulean.st)

email:

Rod's email: [rodpease@rodpease.com](mailto:rodpease@rodpease.com)

Suzanne's email: [spease@suzannepease.com](mailto:spease@suzannepease.com)

Kevin's email: [kwpease@comcast.net](mailto:kwpease@comcast.net)