

So where did 2008 go? It was a good year, a busy year...but it's gone. The economic woes reduced Jan's business travel, no Tokyo or London this year, but we still got out of town a fair bit. We went to Rhinebeck in February and visited the Roosevelt estate at Hyde Park (Eleanor's house was the best!), then dropped in on Philadelphia's Flower Show in March (this had been on Jan's wish list for years). In April we were in Boston in for Jan's swan song as two-term president of the International Ombudsman Association (I got to hang out with my old friend Tony who introduced me to the Harvard Museum's spectacular glass sculptures of plants and animals) and on the way home we stopped to visit our friends Karen and Olivia on Cape Cod.

My big trip came in May when I had a unique opportunity to visit Vienna for the first time, my mother's home town. Our friend Lydia, a close friend of my parents since we arrived in New York in 1947, had left Vienna as a teenager at the start of the war. She was invited back by the city as part of a group of holocaust survivors to talk with high school students. I joined her there for a week and had a wonderful time touring the city with her and her international fan club, an assortment of friends from Austria, the US and France. I also took the opportunity to stop off in France for a week to visit Domme (my home town) and the extended Fageolle/Guichard family.

June brought us to Chicago where the daughter of Jan's junior high school friend Kathy was getting married. I stayed an extra week to join nephew Ray and grandnephew John for a drive up to the family shed on Lake Vermilion in northern Minnesota. In addition to the pleasure of our being able to spend some time together we did a lot of overdue maintenance work on the property, filling up a large dumpster with a century's worth of trash ranging from rusted-out animal traps to an 11-foot satellite dish. Jan and I went back up to the cabin together at the end of August for two uninterrupted weeks of communing with the loons and the sunsets.

Dan is progressing through what should be his final year as a history/business major at Brooklyn College. He did a bit of traveling on his own, returning to Orange County to attend a wedding and see old friends. Then at the end of spring semester he got to spend a week in one of his favorite places in the world, Switzerland's Lauterbrunnen Valley, with a side trip to Zermatt.

Elizabeth graduated in August as a certified pastry chef from the French Culinary Institute, her final project (inspired by Magritte) was beautiful and delicious. She works as an assistant chocolatière at Roni-Sue's Chocolates (Google it!) in the Essex Street Market, and has been creating her own delicious new goodies. Her beer and pretzel caramels have been a big hit and were added to the dessert menu at nearby Spitzer's Restaurant,

Back in New York, this was my year to learn sausage-making (I must be channeling my Uncle Arthur!). I made a passable batch with venison I got from cousin Dan in New Jersey. My next attempt will, of course, be better, and we're all wishing Dan good luck in this year's hunt.

And in September I returned to UCI for ten weeks to teach my immunology course for the first-year medical students one more time - it's good to be (or at least *thought* to be) indispensable. The final exam was given the Monday before Thanksgiving, in time for me to return to New York on Tuesday's redeye and for all of us to join cousins Leon and Rita in New Jersey for a terrific three-generation family Thanksgiving feast and celebration (that's where the photo was taken, the four of us together with Elizabeth's boy friend André).

We've had pretty mild weather so far this winter (apart from a few days' cold snap), and disappointingly little snow - it's strange to see the lawns in Central Park remaining so green, and a few trees still stubbornly hanging on to their leaves. But the days are getting noticeably longer, and we're already looking forward to spring.

*Warmest wishes from all of us for  
a wonderful New Year!*

*Jan, George,  
Dan and Elizabeth*

*You can see some of this year's travel photos at:  
<http://www.janandgeorge.com/2008>  
...and continuing work on the family archives at:  
<http://www.gutmanfamily.org>*

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