



# July 4<sup>th</sup> Greetings, 2010



Dear

5 July 2010

Greetings again from New Mexico. This year brought us a lot of moisture in New Mexico throughout winter and spring. The mountains received much snowfall in spite of the fact that Albuquerque saw little snow. The melting snow pack in the Rockies will help give us relief from the drought conditions that have been prevalent in recent years. June is usually our hottest month and this year is certainly no exception. We seemed to have gone from winter to summer very rapidly. We have made three trips so far this year. In April we went to Washington DC and Baltimore, Maryland, for Robert's 50-year high school reunion. In May we went to Las Cruces and Truth or Consequences, New Mexico, for our niece's graduation. June saw us in Colorado for an Air Force reunion.

### FMCA WINTER CONVENTION

The winter convention of the Family Motor Coach Association was held in Albuquerque. We, along with our local chapter (of which Linda is treasurer) served several thousand doughnuts and coffee early in the mornings.

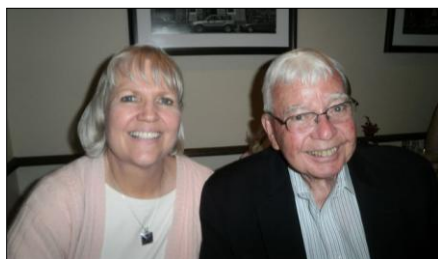
### REUNION IN BALTIMORE

Robert graduated from his high school (Baltimore City College) on 9 February 1960. This year the 50-year reunion was held on 11 April. We flew to Washington on 5 April so that we could have some time to visit the city. The first couple nights we stayed in Clinton, Maryland, and rode the Metro into the city. We spent some time there in the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) library. From previous DAR membership applications, Linda was able to extract some information about her Baxter ancestors. The same day we also walked around the Tidal Basin and saw the Japanese Cherry trees in bloom. The peak time for blooms had passed, but the trees were still beautiful to see.



Jefferson Memorial framed by cherry tree.

We stopped at the Franklin D. Roosevelt memorial and the Jefferson Memorial. We also spent a couple days with Linda's cousin, Tom Fitzgerald, in Alexandria, VA. From there we visited the National Air and Space Museum's Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center near Dulles airport, and a couple other destinations in Washington.



Linda and Tom.



Robert with an AGM-76A Falcon Missile.

We visited the National Museum of Natural History and the National Archives. At the Archives we photographed Revolutionary War service records and Civil War pension applications for some of our ancestors.



The Hope Diamond at the Natural History Museum.

After our time in Washington, we went over to Towson, Maryland, where we stayed with Robert's cousin, Jan, and visited several of Robert's relatives.



Linda and Jan.



Robert and cousin, John Oettl.



With nephews' families.

On Sunday we attended Robert's 50-year reunion of the February 1960 class of his high school, Baltimore City College. City is the third oldest high school in the United States. There were seven classmates present who had not only gone through three years (10, 11, 12) (1957-1960) of high school together, but had also gone through the three years (7, 8, 9) of junior high school together in an accelerated 2-year program (1955-1957).



Classmates 1955-1960.

The current principal was at the reunion, and he invited anyone to come to the school for a tour. The next day we went to the school and got a great tour. We were also taken to the top of the tower where we got a panoramic view of the city. (Only graduating seniors get to go up in the tower.)



Baltimore City College.  
Robert's high school.





Looking toward the harbor from the tower.

We toured some sites in the city. One was the house where Mary Pickersgill sewed the "Star-Spangled Banner" that flew over Ft. McHenry during the battle of Baltimore on 13-14 Sep 1814.



Star-Spangled Banner Flag House in Baltimore.

When our business was completed in Baltimore, we drove over to Cambridge on the Eastern Shore of the Chesapeake Bay. There we met Melanie Young who had contacted Robert a couple months earlier. She has a collection of letters written (between 1891 and 1935) to her ancestors by the James Malseed family of Tullybeg and Moyagh, County Donegal, Ireland. We spent the day scanning the letters, photos, and postcards. We are very grateful to have the opportunity to see this collection.



Chesapeake Bay from Melanie's home.

### GRADUATION IN LAS CRUCES

In early May we took the motor home to Las Cruces, New Mexico. Our primary purpose was to attend our niece, Stacy's, graduation from New Mexico State University.



With Stacy, an honor graduate of NMSU.

This summer she is moving to The University of Pittsburgh to attend graduate school. While in southern New Mexico we spent a few days enjoying the area. We went to see Kilbourne Hole and Hunt's Hole. They are two maar volcanoes out in a desolate area near the Mexican border. When Robert was stationed in Germany, he was close to maar volcanoes there, but they were filled with water. You can see that our volcanoes are dry.



Linda and Derry on edge of Kilbourne Hole.



Linda, Robert, and Derry on edge of Kilbourne Hole. New Mexico State University has what is probably the most extensive collection of petrified wood. It was amazing to see the hundreds of pieces on display.



A small portion of the petrified wood collection.

While in Las Cruces we went to old Mesilla to have dinner in the La Posta restaurant.



La Posta in old Mesilla.

Since Derry had never been to White Sands National Monument, we took him there one day.



Claret Cup cactus at White Sands.



Derry with Linda as wind blows white sands away.



Coming down from a dune.

We left Las Cruces and then stayed at Leasburg Dam State Park for a night.



In the motor home at Leasburg Dam with Derry.

The park is next to the ruins of Fort Selden. In 1884-86, future general Douglas MacArthur lived there since his father was in the army also.



MacArthur home at Fort Selden.



Our next stop was Truth or Consequences, New Mexico. We were there for a rally of our Chaparral Chapter of the Family Motor Coach Association. While there, we took a tour of Spaceport America which is being built in the Jornada del Muerto, southeast of T or C. The 10,000 x 200 foot runway is nearly finished. Richard Branson's Virgin Galactic airline will be taking tourists on sub-orbital rides into space aboard a combination airplane first stage and rocket second stage.



In front of the spaceport terminal building.

The tour also included a look at some historic sites and ranches. The Jornada del Muerto (route of the dead man) is a desolate section of the Camino Real (royal road) that connected Mexico City and Santa Fe. One of the largest ranches in the area is Ted Turner's Armendaris ranch. These are some of bison herd on the ranch.



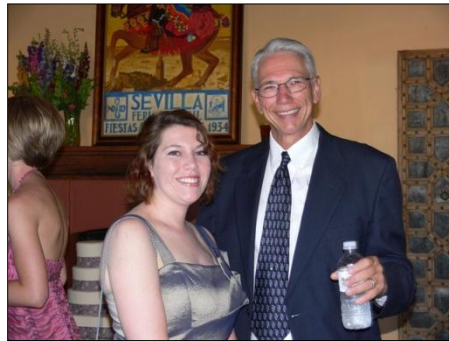
No roller skating here.

### WEDDING BELLS

A month after our niece, Stacy, graduated from college, her step-brother, Matt, got married. We attended the wedding of Matt and Rose which was in a beautiful location in the Rio Grande valley. Rose has just graduated from The University of New Mexico where she got a teaching degree. In fact she did her student teaching in Linda's brother James' classroom.



Mathew & Rose with wedding party.



James and daughter, Stacy, at the wedding.

### AIR FORCE REUNION

Forty-five years ago Robert was sent to Bitburg, Germany, as a missile maintenance technician for the 525th Fighter-Interceptor Squadron. In June, the 525th FIS held a reunion in Colorado Springs. We packed up the motor home and headed up there. We stopped on the way at Sugarite Canyon State Park in Raton, New Mexico.



At Sugarite Canyon State Park.



Inside our Trek motor home.

We had a good time at the reunion swapping stories and pictures and enjoying some meals together. We also went to the museum at Peterson AFB for a reunion with an F-102 aircraft - the type we had in Germany. (The 525th is now flying F-22s at Anchorage, Alaska. One of the young pilots came down from there for the reunion.)



Gathering around the F-102.

Robert enjoyed his own reunion with a Falcon missile just like ones we had in Germany.



AIM-4D Falcon missile.

Linda has cousins in Colorado Springs and we enjoyed visiting with Sally and Robert & Gilda.



Robert with Linda's cousins.

We also visited Uncle Fremont and Aunt Barbara's graves.

After the reunion, we rode the cog train to the summit of Pike's Peak. (Altitude 14,110 feet – 4,300 meters) It was a cold, partly cloudy day. There was fresh snow on the summit with a temperature of 25 F. (-4C).



Linda at the freezing summit.

Our campsite was by Fountain Creek in Manitou Springs. We enjoyed looking around Manitou Springs and touring the Miramont Castle there.

### RETURN TO DENVER

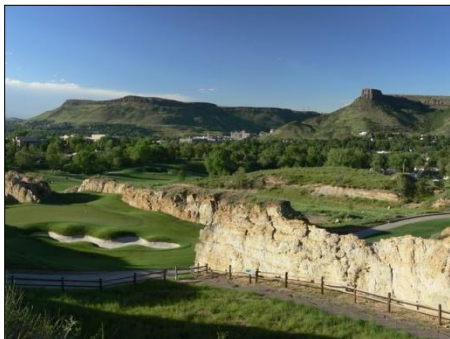
We continued north to Denver and camped in Golden, Colorado for a few days. While there, we visited nearby Morrison, Colorado. Morrison is famous for its geological and paleontological attributes. A layer of rock formation present throughout the southwest is named for the town. The Red Rocks Amphitheater is located here. The area is also rich in fossils. We visited Dinosaur Ridge and its fossil trackway. Cousins of Linda (the Rooneys) used to own most of the area, but now have only a small ranch by Dinosaur Ridge. Many years ago they gave Linda's parents a collection of gastroliths (dinosaur gizzard stones) that were found there. We have those interesting stones that have an oily smooth feel.





Footprints on Dinosaur Ridge.

We also stopped at the Morrison Natural History Museum and we hiked on Triceratops Trail which is partly on the Golden golf course.



The sandstone fin in the foreground is full of fossils. In Denver we went to the "Wings Over The Rockies" air museum. It is located in an old hangar that used to be part of Lowery Air Force Base. The base has been closed for a while and there is little evidence of its existence except for a few old buildings. Fifty years ago Robert was stationed there from 1 April to 22 November going to Falcon Missile school. He was happy to see the F-102 in the museum loaded with old GAR-1 (AIM 4) Falcons.



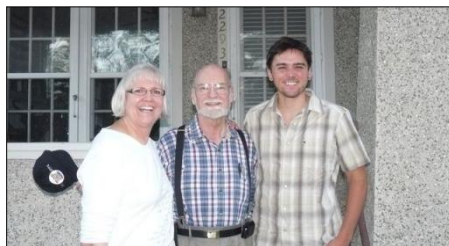
Under an F-102 with missiles from early 1950s.

On the final day in Denver we spent most of the day at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science. There is a great view from the museum of the Rocky Mountains towering over Denver.



Snow capped Rockies over Denver skyline.

That evening we met up with Chris, Matt's brother. (Chris is second from left in the back of the wedding photo.) Chris lives in Denver and plays percussion in a band.



After dinner with Chris.

### OTHER HAPPENINGS

Derry continues to amuse us.



I smell toes.

Robert gave his presentation on Stars to the Valencia County Association of Educational Retirees in January and then to James' 4<sup>th</sup> grade class at Petroglyph Elementary School in May.



Looking at sunspots.

He also spoke about aerospace engineering to middle school students at the annual School-to-World exhibition at the Albuquerque Convention Center.



Showing students how a Falcon Missile worked.

As we mentioned in our Christmas newsletter, our newer tablet PC had been taken when our house was burglarized. We now have two new computers – a powerful desktop and a small mini notebook. Both go with us in the motor home, but only the mini for airplane travel.



Computer room.

This summer we will be taking a 7-week trip to Montana, British Columbia, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Utah, and Colorado. In the autumn we are taking a cruise from New York up the coast of New England as far as Halifax, Nova Scotia.

### NEW TELEPHONES

For several years we have had a TracFone cell phone that we only used when traveling. This year we decided to get a second TracFone and a MagicJack phone that we could connect through our computer. Doing away with our land line paid for all this, and we now have caller ID. Our old cell phone number is now Linda's phone, our old home phone number is now Robert's cell phone, and the MagicJack now serves the 4 wireless phones around our house when we are home. We take the MagicJack on trips with us where we can use it if we have a good internet connection anywhere in the world. This internet phone gives us unlimited US and Canada phoning for \$18/year. All phone numbers have voice mail, and MagicJack sends us the voice mail recording as an e-mail attachment. Since MagicJack is so much cheaper than the pre-paid cell phones it is our preferred phone to use. Please take note of our new numbers listed below.

### THE BOTTOM LINE

We continue to be thankful for the Lord's provision for us. We trust in Him, and pray that you will do likewise and enjoy a wonderful summer of 2010.

Love,

*Robert + Linda*

and Derry



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