

THE KAVANAGH GAZETTE

Volume 28

December 2021

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Welcome to the 2021 edition of *The Kavanagh Gazette*. The purpose of this newsletter is to give you an update on the family out here in Oregon.

2021: Lemonade out of Lemons

2021 was another strange year. Business travel was zero, but did get in some great vacations. Here is what you find in this year's edition

- Kansas City Road trip, ticking off bucket lists
- East Coast Ramble—Planes, Trains and Automobiles
- Main floor house remodel

Mark & Cyn in Silverton, CO



Home Remodel

Many upgrades were made for the old 1911 Colonial. The Kavanagh's have lived in this house longer than any prior residents by far.

The original main bath remodel was completed and has been dubbed the Executive washroom as with Mark working primarily from home; it is the closest bathroom to his office.

Contractors were hired to install new luxury vinyl plank flooring in the foyer, living, and dining rooms. A new built-in cabinet with marble top and shelves was installed in the dining room, now the "beer bar." The most significant change was having the front door replaced. The old door had too much glass, even though it was probably original to the home. It was replaced with a solid wood door and sidelights with smaller windows higher up, all in keeping with the colonial style of the house.

The Valentine's Weekend ice storm created new urgent projects. We had major limbs on all our trees coming crashing down. Our Maple out front started to catch fire on the power line before the power line snapped. We lost power for 3+ days. That was pretty scary throughout Salem. We had a lot of clean-up to get the limbs cut down taken away, thanks to neighbors and St. Paul's Woodcutters guild. Contractors installed a new perimeter fence and replaced portions of the house and garage roofs that were less than five years old. Mark replaced a new sidewalk light fixture and one new banister.

The kitchen received new upgrades with a new over the range microwave (lowered) and a new range with an induction cooktop, and it has the air fry option. The washer/dryer in the basement was also replaced with an LG Washtower.

The current project moves Cyn's sewing room to the basement and converts the old sewing room into a second guestroom. That should be done in Q1'2022.

Probably in two years, the next major project is a kitchen remodel (flooring and cabinets).

Kansas City Road Trip

With cruising and overseas trips not possible, The decision was made to make an epic roadtrip and bring Dylan, the dog. The loop route included 11 states and eight state capitals. For Mark, three of those states were new to him, with five states being added to his geocaching map. The eastern point of the trip was Kansas City!

After a night in Boise and another night in Salt Lake City, Arches National Park in Utah was the first significant stop. It is a beautiful park, and we highly recommend it. A tip is to go early in the morning or late afternoon as the park entrance is often closed if the park gets to capacity (we did not have the problem but did see the closure when exiting the park).

The next destination was Durango, Colorado. Along the way, we stopped at Mesa Verde National Park to see the ancient ruins there. The Durango stop, of course, was all about the famous Durango & Silverton train. We rode in the train's last car in "Presidential Class" It was fantastic to have an open platform on this car. We had an enjoyable lunch stop in Silverton.

After Silverton, we headed into New Mexico. Our best meal of the trip with Dylan was at a great New Mexican restaurant, La Choza. They had a dog-friendly patio and was worth the 70-minute wait. The food was delicious and not expensive. They even brought out a small dish of shredded chicken for Dylan (free). We highly recommend this place!!

The following day was spent driving along I-40/US66 across NM and the Texas Panhandle towards Oklahoma City, our next major stop. We did stop at some Rt66 touristy stops along the way. I had left my GPS at a geocache site but did not realize it until we were 45 minutes out. I turned around, and it was right where I left it (baking in the hot Texas sun). But this meant we got into Oklahoma City pretty late. Why OKC? They are the Capital City, but more importantly, they have a new streetcar system that needs to be checked out! We ate at bar for dinner the second night that allowed Dylan inside, which he was super happy about, especially with the heat outside!

Next, we were off to Kansas City. We went via Topeka to visit the capital. We had lunch at a railroad-themed brewery downtown with shaded patio seating. Our next stop was in Lawrence for another brewery in an old Interurban station. We finally arrived at our hotel for 3-nights in Kansas City. Why KC? They have a great Union Station and a modern streetcar line. We also visited a museum about the salvage Arabia Steamboat which was interesting. One dinner was at a KC BBQ place (with Dylan). Another dinner (without Dylan) was at a great KC steak house, which you could order by size and cut and grass-fed or grain-fed. We ordered one of each feed type, and I found out I prefer grass-fed and Cyn grain-fed.

We left KC to start heading back west. We drove across Kansas with a brief stop in Abilene, but the main stop was for the world's oldest geocache in continuous use called MINGO. The day ended late, arriving in Denver. The next day, it was scorching in Denver, so we went up to Georgetown to ride the Georgetown and Silver Plume RR. It was much cooler there. The following day was going around Denver, and Mark rode the commuter and light rail lines.

After Denver, we headed north, stopped briefly in Fort Collins, then we headed up to Cheyenne with a slight detour to barely touch the State of Nebraska for a geocache and a new state. We ate dinner at a brewery in the old Cheyenne train station with a dog-friendly patio facing the UP rail yards. We got to see crew changes in action.

After staying the night in a historic hotel in Cheyenne, we headed west. After a long drive, we ended in Pocatello. Mark spent a lot of time here in the 1990s, and a lot has changed since then. The next day was the last day taking a long drive from Pocky to Home. The total trip was over 5,000 miles and was well worth it! Dylan even had a great time!

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CYN'S UPDATE

Cyn's stamina in walking on her new knee has much improved. She had no problems walking in NYC or anywhere else. She is very happy with her progress.

She is looking forward to setting up her new sewing room in the basement in the coming months.

2022 PLANS

It has been hard to plan the past two years, but that doesn't stop Mark from trying. There is a plan to go on a Star Trek Cruise in late February. This summer, a San Diego Trip and a British Columbia trip. In October, the hope is to take the twice-delayed Mediterranean cruise from Barcelona with stops in Italy. Crossing fingers, this will all work.

EAST COAST RAMBLE

Mark needed to take another two weeks off, the idea of doing a NY/DC/Florida was established. After a suggestion from Cyn and looking at the cost, the best method was to fly to NY, visit family, take an overnight train from NY to Jacksonville, visit family, and then drive up to DC. The purpose of the drive was to add three more geocaching states and see the light rail lines in Charlotte and Norfolk.

In NY, Mark's Mom and sister were visited, along with Cyn's brother George and sister-in-law, in addition, to nephew George and his family. One night was spent in NYC enjoying a no-cover comedy show. We boarded the Amtrak Silver Meteor the next day, riding in our private bedroom. We were running on time until we got to southern Georgia. We got stuck in the middle of a freight train bottleneck. We arrived in JAX 3 hours late. It could have been worse; the Amtrak Silver Star, which left NY 4 hours before us, arrived at JAX right in front of us (about 6 hours late and delayed us by 20 more minutes). We visited Cyn's sister and took a tour of their new house under construction in Daytona. We also got a chance to see Cyn's Brother, William.

The drive back north was fun, with a brief stop in Columbia, SC, and the first overnight in Charlotte, NC. We had some great Carolina BBQ (and rode the Light Rail). The next day we headed towards Norfolk. We made an unplanned stop at Spencer to visit the large Railroad/Transportation Museum. Next was Durham to visit the famous YouTube can-opener bridge. The day ended in Norfolk (& light rail).

We headed north to drive across the famous Chesapeake Bridge-Tunnel the following day, a true engineering marvel! We stopped in Annapolis and had dinner with Mark's High School friend Chris. Then we ended the day at our AirBnB in DC.

The following two days in DC were spent visiting museums, seeing more of Chris, and riding the metro. The third day we drove up to Maryland to see the "farm" that my wife's family lived at one time north of Baltimore. The trip then came to an end with a flight home from DCA. Another great trip!

MARK'S WIERDNESS

No business travel for 2021, and working from home 95% of the time sums it up. Although he is one of the few allowed to go into the office, it is hard to justify when hardly anyone is there to collaborate face-to-face.

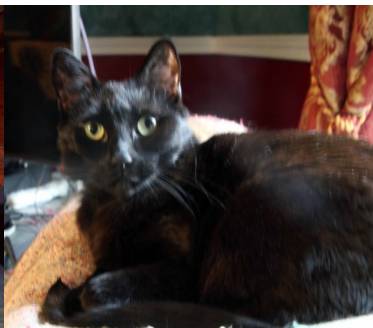
Mark fell off a ladder in the garage on Thanksgiving, getting Christmas decorations down from the rafters. After blacking out, he managed to get back to the house despite the gash on the back of his head. Cyn drove him to the ER. 4 hours later he was released with 12 staples in his noggin and only a minor concussion.

Mark is still compiling virtual choir videos for St. Paul's. The hope was to phase out in the autumn, but it looks like it will continue into at least January 2022. In October, he also played a pirate at the Trolley Museum as part of Halloween events.

PET UPDATE

Dylan has become a great dog, and he loves to travel and sleep in hotels!

The two cats still tolerate each other. Nori still thinks she is the queen, and Minion is a bratty brother to her, and still can be a fart gun.



Top row: In front of the Utah State Capitol in SLC; Welcome to Kansas; Welcome to New Mexico

Bottom Row: Minion; Nori, Ice storm aftermath in front of our house; The front of our house for Halloween