

Dear Family and Friends,

December, 2023

A couple of years ago Geoff looked in the mirror and suddenly realized that what was left of his hair had turned gray. From that, he concluded that he might be getting older. You might think he would have already figured that out, given the number of birthdays he has celebrated, but arithmetic was never one of his strong points. (To be fair, he doesn't *have* a lot of strong points, but Pat puts up with him anyway, out of pity.)

Anyway, having achieved a somewhat distinguished look (as long as you ignore the goofy grin), he decided that he should adopt a distinguished title to go along with the gray hair. "Nobel Prize winner" and "King of England" were already taken, but he soon discovered that there was a path to becoming a "Professor Emeritus." That sounded pretty good, so he gave the title a try, printing it on his business cards and telling everyone that from now on they had to address him as "Herr Professor Doktor *Emeritus* Kuenning" instead of his old moniker of "Prof K" or (more commonly) "Weirdo." That went pretty well for a while, but then he found out that you have to actually retire to earn that particular title.

Never to be discouraged by bureaucracy, Geoff promptly marched over to the Dean's office and announced his exit. The Dean, who had been waiting for this moment for 43 years (pretty impressive, given that Geoff had only worked there for 25) opened his desk drawer and produced a dusty long-prepared agreement for him to sign, stating that he could start using the fancy new title as long as he promised to never, ever, again inflict his bad jokes on an unsuspecting class of innocent frosh (or sophomores, juniors, or seniors, just to be safe).

And so it happened. Effective June 30<sup>th</sup>, Geoff was no longer employed by Harvey Mudd College. The school gave him a very nice sendoff, involving hors d'oeuvres, balloons, a flyover by the Blue Angels, and a parade of students and faculty chanting "Free at last, free at last, thank the Dean, we're free at last." They also presented him (this is true) with a handsome wooden chair that has a plaque with his name engraved on it.

So... what to do with his newly free time? There was only one possible way to solve *that* problem: copy Pat. After all, she had retired a few years earlier and had found a way to fill her days with Fun Things. Here's what her typical week looks like nowadays (all of this is true): Monday morning she meets with a charitable committee; Monday evening she has orchestra rehearsal. On Tuesday she teaches a journaling class followed by going to a folk group rehearsal; Wednesday has art class and a string quartet rehearsal. On Thursday she joins *another* folk group "just for fun." On Friday she theoretically rests, but spends a lot of time practicing the cello. And in between all of that, she always seems to be taking online art classes—sometimes all day on Saturday.

So Geoff quickly volunteered for a charitable committee. That went well until they held their first tea; he was summarily ejected for failing to hold his little finger in the air while raising his cup. (Spiking the punch didn't get him any brownie points, either.) Music went no better; in the orchestra he pretended to be an oboist and squawked so loudly that a local goose immediately flew in and tried to start a fight. And the quartet members all panicked when he brought the wrong viola case and pulled out an AK-47 instead of a Stradivarius.

Art promised to be a lot more fun, though. Pat has been busily painting things like birds and lizards; Geoff figured that was pretty easy and what could go wrong? Little did he know that birds are not cooperative models. An unfortunate encounter with a woodpecker led to him running off into the sunset, screaming something about not having a wooden leg. Or at least not any more.

Having exhausted his Pat-copying options, Geoff climbed on his bike and went for a long, long ride—two whole blocks!—to think about his choices. But the ride itself was so much fun that the next day he went out and tried a "century" (100 miles). Several hours later, Pat's phone rang. "Honey, I'm all worn out. Can you come and get me?"

"Where are you?"

"I made it to the microbrewery just down the street from our house."

Nevertheless, he stuck with it and soon developed a pattern of riding several times a week. Since he no longer calls Pat to pick him up, she still hasn't figured out that he isn't doing the 40-mile rides he claims to be on.

Meanwhile, Xandie continued working on her Master's degree. We helped out by meeting up with her and her partner for a two-week vacation somewhere "near" Scotland (we're not sure exactly where because we couldn't figure out the electronic window shades on the airplane and so we never saw where we landed, but we know it was warm and had lots of pizza). This was our first chance to meet Callum in person, so we were on our best behavior. He got along famously with Pat (they're both royalists) and has forgiven Geoff for all the wrong turns (although eventually he demanded the car keys and we started getting to the places we intended to go instead of the scenic garbage dumps that Geoff was so good at finding).

When we got back to California, we settled into a nice routine. Geoff is still doing a bit of research just to keep his hand in things, and is "riding his bike" as much as he can. Pat keeps adding classes and commitments to her schedule. Xandie is now writing her thesis, and Callum has returned to maritime school to become a First Officer. They both expect to finish in the spring.

Oh, and the microbrewery is doing great business.

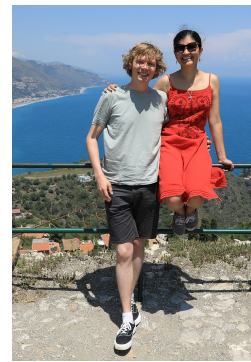
Love,  
*Geoff Pat*



Retirement Day!



Prof. Emeritus



Near Sicilian  
Pizza



Not a Tortoise



Journaling Kit



Near Tortoises