

Presidents Message March 2023

Iris and I were able to take our first vacation together since the pandemic began in January. Since I retired, one of my dreams is to travel the country and the world with Iris.

We chose a bird photography tour in Costa Rica as our destination. One of the things that I feel very strongly about is not complaining on a vacation. Sure things will not go as planned. And when that happens, you can either complain or make the best of the situation.

Our trip started with an hour and a half delay out of the 2 day old terminal A in Newark. That is not usually a very long delay, but it made us miss our connection from Miami to Costa Rica. We were not able to get another flight until 2 days later. We managed to get a hotel room by the airport, where we got to experience an ANIME convention. It felt like we were on another planet with all the costumes that people were wearing. We then were able to have dinner with my aunt, who was in Fort Lauderdale for a few days. And I called up a man I had done a photo shoot with last year in Utah and asked if he wanted to go take pictures of birds with us. He said he couldn't but suggested a wetlands an hour north of Miami.

So on our stranded day, we went to see the birds. There was a boardwalk into the marsh, and as we started on the boardwalk, there was a man with a large camera and his wife. I started talking to him. Where are you from? He said he is from Florida but originally from New Jersey. I said, we live in Hackettstown. He said, "I grew up in Somerset". I said, "I grew up in Somerset". He said, "I graduated from Rutgers Prep". I said: I graduated from Rutgers Prep". I asked what year did you graduate?". He replied "1974". I replied "1973, what's your name?" When he told me his name, I knew who he was right away. We knew each other casually in high school, but were not particularly close. But when I told my brother, he said the man drove him home from lacrosse practice when he was a freshman.

We ended up spending the day with this couple, and had a wonderful time. In addition to the first wetlands, they took us to two more , and then took us out for a Cuban lunch.

Had we made our connection or been able to fly the next day, this encounter never would have happened. We considered this a good omen for the rest of the trip.

I am beginning to post pictures of the trip on Instagram and Facebook, if you would like to see them.

Shalom,
Howie