

## Happy New Year Everyone!

2018 was a year of weirdness, fun, and change.

The weirdness need not be described. You couldn't turn on your TV without hearing about it. Our government and, at times, our whole country, seem to be running completely amok. I've nearly become numb to it all and almost reclusive on social media because I often just cannot find words. Stating your opinion on Facebook is like putting your own head in the guillotine. I just stay out of it. It's become a volatile, hostile environment I've given frequent thought to abandoning. Enough said.



View of Times Square from Our Crowne Plaza Room

Eileen's family gathered for a Memorial Day weekend reunion in NYC which was a great opportunity to see them. We decided to forego I-95 and take Amtrak. We both agreed that was the best way to get to NYC; low-stress, actually faster, and no need to deal with a car once there. Instead we explored the streets of Manhattan, took the subway and had a fantastic time. Eileen's status with several hotel chains yielded us an awesome room at the Crowne Plaza right in Times Square.

October marked our 35-year anniversary. We'd wanted to go on a European river cruise for decades, so we finally did! With superb help from sis-in-law Kirsi Kiviranta, a Danube River cruise was booked with Ama Waterways aboard the AmaSonata, a fairly new addition their fleet. The photo below is only about the front 1/3 of the boat.



The AmaSonata – Our Home for a Week on the Danube

The highlights included visits to Budapest, Vienna, Bratislava and Nuremberg. Being in Germany during Oktoberfest was a cool experience!

### Eileen

She continues to enjoy working for AFPM, now in her 6<sup>th</sup> year there. Her frequent travel earned miles and points that made a pretty good dent in the cost of the Danube cruise. One of her trips took her to Minneapolis, where Bruce joined her to visit with



Eileen at Minnehaha Falls



Sue, Al, and Eileen in NYC

her cousins Mona and Patrick Dewayne, who live there. Another was a girls' weekend adventure with her dear friend Deb that was dubbed their Thelma and Louise trip! They both needed to cross a few states off their lists to complete visits to all 50. Iowa and Nebraska were some of the remaining unvisited states. Since those were a bit unlikely to be on either of their itineraries anytime soon, they decided to make it a destination. They were caught in a winter squall, ate at Warren Buffett's favorite local steak house, almost got tattoos and were pleasantly surprised how cool Des Moines was (who woulda thought)! The good news is that they didn't drive over a cliff and made it home safely.



Eileen & Warren Buffett

### Bruce



Bruce Donning a New Look

It's that time again for planning another high school class reunion set for August 2019. Bruce volunteered to build a website to organize the planning and also to lead the outreach committee. The effort began in April and will extend into mid-2019.

Orbital ATK was acquired by Northrop Grumman in June, making that the second "merger" in less than 5 years. The only readily-apparent changes are crappier, costlier benefits and better carry-forward for unused PTO. The rest has yet to be felt.

Mastering the flip-flop, Bruce transferred back from Systems to Software Engineering, an unplanned reversion.

During the Danube cruise, Bruce had a lot of issues with arthritic pain. It was so bad he sought the advice of an orthopedist upon return home. The result was full replacement of his left hip in early November. He spent the rest of the year recovering (and still is).



Bruce's New Hip



David and Brie

**David**

David is doing extremely well at Google, now for nearly two years. He and Brie had been planning a 2019 wedding, but instead decided to elope in early December. Andrew joined Eileen on a work trip to CA in hopes of attending their somewhat impromptu wedding, but ultimately could not. We don't hear from them often, but we know they are doing well.



Budapest Parliament (Hungary)



Melk Abbey (Austria)

**Rachel**

Rachel continues doing well at Albero House. This year we discovered GrubHub and UberEats to deliver her a dinner she truly enjoys once every Friday. Her new favorite is chicken curry! Of course we bring her Eileen's gourmet cooking which the staff gives her during the week when the cafeteria food seems uh, weak.



Rachel Loves Birthday Cake

Rachel still participates in "cooking classes", but also has been going out more. She's got a real taste for culture, such as symphony, performing arts, and cinema.

Fortunately, there have been no medical incidents in a while (knock on wood).

**Andrew**

Andrew is in between jobs and is considering a career in IT. He has been studying for his first certification. He enjoys playing Magic (a popular card game) with some of his local friends as well as online games. He also still plays his drums on occasion and is writing music.

Andrew has made several trips with us to visit Rachel, which makes her especially happy.



Bruce's Birthday at Bonefish Grill



Andrew Helps Rachel Enjoy a Krispy Kreme Doughnut

Be sure to visit our family website at <https://scherzinger.org> where you can read all our past newsletters and see a lot more photos.



**Happy New Year!**  
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*Bruce, Eileen, David, Andrew, & Rachel*