

Dear Reader,

The date September 19, 2022, has been at the forefront of my life-plans for about 3 years and now it's here. I am so blessed to be able to have a time-away, a sabbatical, in which there will be opportunities to explore various interests that have been important in my life over many decades and, in particular, this twilight time of living on this side of eternity.

Planning a 30-day trip including 8 countries can be a great undertaking, yet easy to do when the reasons and activities are so clear. The following pages are but a framework that will be filled in with so much more, especially with my rodent travel companions, pictured below.

Thank you, people of St. Joseph's Episcopal Church in Boynton Beach, for your love and support in granting this incredibly special time away.

Pictured below is the 300-year old organ at St. Bavo's Church in Haarlem, just a few miles from Amsterdam, and is one of 2 special highlights of this trip. Read on to find out more . . .

Blessings,

David



Larry and the gang loading up the Fairlane to head across the Great Pond.

*September 19 – October 18
2022*

a time for

Renewal

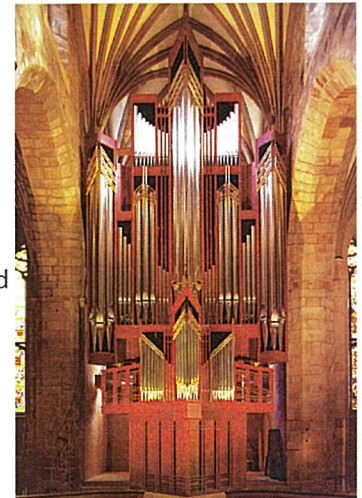
Re-creation

Rest

Reflection



- 09-19 MON Fly to London
A hop, skip and an Uber-jump to the Tri-Rail station in Cypress Creek will take me to the first of many trains of this incredible 30-day journey. It only takes an hour to get to Miami Airport where a British Airways A-380 will be waiting for me to climb aboard and claim my window seat on the upper level, which faces backward and goes almost completely flat.
- 09-20 TUE Day in London
Still dazed and tired from staying up most of the night on the plane, due to excitement, I'll patiently await for the adjustment to being in a different time zone. The London Tube is an efficient way to get from Heathrow Airport to the Assembly Hotel in London, for a 2-night stay.
- 09-21 WED Day in London
After having breakfast with my rodent travel companions, at least 7 mice, with Larry in his 1958 Ford Fairlane, we'll head over to The Wild Table of Love at Paternoster Square, then head off to the London Eye, Falkiner's Fine Papers and various churches with great Willis organs.
- 09-22 THU Train to Scotland
A 5-hour train ride will be a restful way to sightsee while en route to the fabulous city of Edinburgh, where my hotel overlooks the Princes Street Gardens and the old city on the hill. A stop at St. Giles' Cathedral will bring back memories of having performed there with choirs, but today I'll see the new Rieger organ installed in 1992. It's a magnificent blend of old and new, considering some of the stones from previous St. Giles' structures date back 1,000 years and were incorporated into the present imposing and breathtaking edifice.
- 09-23 FRI Day in Edinburgh
The steep Royal Mile guarantees a slow hike to the top and a fast slide to the bottom, if the street is wet. The evening offers "A Night at the Opera by Candlelight" back at St. Giles' Cathedral, a thrilling end to a short stay in Scotland.
- 09-24 SAT Train back to London, on to Canterbury
The early morning train and connection in London are already booked to assure arrival at Canterbury Cathedral in time for the 5 p.m. Evensong. The night will be spent at Cathedral Gate Hotel, across the green from the magnificent Cathedral.
- 09-25 SUN Day in Canterbury
It will be an early morning, awaiting Helen Lipton to pick me up and take me to her church, St. Mary's in Elham, where I am honored to preach the morning sermon. Then back to London!
- 09-26 MON Day Trip to ???
All of England will be poised and waiting for me to decide what to do today – the options are many: an excursion out to Bath, or Bristol to see the incredible Willis organ at St. Mary Redcliffe Church, or head out to St. Alban's Cathedral at Sumpter Yard, or just stay in London for an extra ride on a double-decker bus with stops to explore Harrod's, Fortnum & Mason, or look for any of the mice that might have wandered off, in which case Larry, in his 1958 Fairlane, will be in charge of the search.

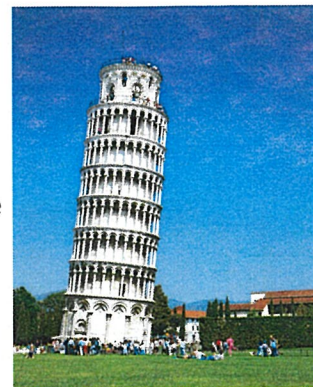


09-27

TUE

Fly to Italy

What's this? A flight all the way to Pisa from London? Shirley, this must be a mistake! But, oh no! On a trip intended to include as many organ recitals and worship services as possible, certain destination cities need to be visited on weekends with other locations squeezed between. So off to Pisa it is, with the hope of somehow meeting Fibonacci (literally means *son of Bonacci*), a 13th century mathematician. In my quest for deeper knowledge about how his life's endeavors sought to change the world, which it did, I am hoping he might put in some kind of appearance – doesn't matter to me how, when or where. Who am I to doubt that with God all things are possible – and don't forget, *the impossible only takes a little longer!*

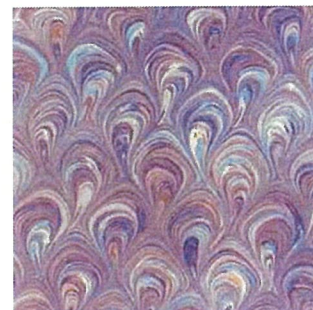


09-28

WED

Day in Pisa

Refreshed from a night at the Grand Hotel Duomo, the mice and I will set out on foot (Larry will probably be in his Fairlane) to explore the Cathedral, the hugely famous Leaning Tower and whatever else the city offers, which includes statues of Fibonacci and, of course, stores with beautiful handmade paper.



09-29

THU

Fly to France

It only takes about two hours to fly from Pisa to Paris, but probably twice as long to get into the city center, where the mice will invade the Hotel Royal Opera. Hopefully, we'll squeeze in a cathedral or two on this first day, targeting organs that were "sampled" for the magnificent Allen Organ at St. Joe's in Boynton Beach. It may take some kind of trickery to keep the mice from heading to Montmatre for a wild evening, but I'll vote for a quiet dinner and much rest.



09-30

FRI

Day in Paris

After repacking the suitcase for 1- and 2-day stays in other cities, we finally get to settle in for several nights, which will be such a welcome thing given the amount of walking Paris requires. Friday will include stops in several cathedrals and picking out which patisserie to have breakfast in on Sunday before going to church. The Allen Organ Company sampled pipe organs built by the 19th century Aristede Cavaillé-Coll, who designed, built and oversaw the installation of over 600 instruments. Almost all of the major organs in Paris and around France were built by his company. Pictured to the right is the case and console at St. Sulpice.



10-01

SAT

Day in Paris

Can you imagine a mouse going to Paris and not scampering up the Eiffel Tower? No, I can't either, and given that I'll be with at least seven, I may have to make them hold hands the entire time. The only thing they'll care about is finding berets that fit. No trip to Paris would be complete without stopping by Cathédrale Notre-Dame, even though it has not been reopened since the fire in 2019. All the more reason to go back again next year! *N'est ce pas?*

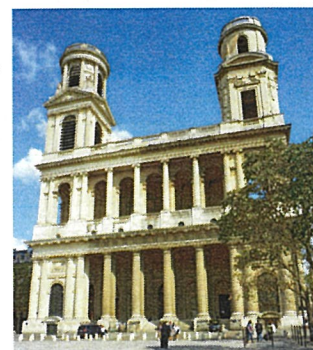


10-02

SUN

Day in Paris

A Croque Monsieur may be in order at the beginning of the day to have enough energy for a truly amazing experience at two magnificent churches: St. Sulpice for the 11 a.m. Mass, followed by a short organ recital, and a 5 p.m. organ recital at St. Eustache. If for any reason I don't come back to Florida, look first in Paris.



10-03

MON

Train to Switzerland

All of you must know how much I would have loved to have taken Koko on this once-in-a-lifetime sabbatical journey. For now, the mice will have to be the ones to create the mischief and memories. As Koko looks forward to the possibility of writing books for children (aren't we all?), she has had her heart set on making sure we would include a stop in Lucerne, Switzerland, where we would have a 2-night stay in a hopefully-haunted hotel, which sits high above the city. Lucerne is considered to be one of the most picturesque places in the world. The attraction for Koko, and the big surprise for the mice, is that the Hotel Gütsch is accessed by a funicular that was built in 1881. Can you think of a better kind of thing to include in a children's book. I thought you would agree.



10-04

TUE

Day in Lucerne

A fun-filled day that will hopefully include seeing a Cavaliè-Coll organ and maybe go to the top of Mt. Pilatus – an alp!



10-05

WED

Train to Gunsbach, France

Since I was 12 years old I have wanted to visit the birthplace of Albert Schweitzer and to see the village church where he learned to play the organ. Today it happens!



10-06

THU

Train to Freiburg, Germany

If I'm allowed any pun, it would not be to say that I'm pulling out all the stops, but that I've planned on several Bach stops: Freiburg, Leipzig and Hamburg. These are cities where he either lived or have organs that are relevant to the time in which he lived, excellent examples of how he heard his own music.



10-07

FRI

Train to Leipzig, Germany

Johann Sebastian Bach, 1685-1750, lived in several German cities, moving from one job to another. In 1724, he was appointed music director of Thomaskirche, a Lutheran church, and city music director, positions he held until his death in 1750. His remains are buried in the church.

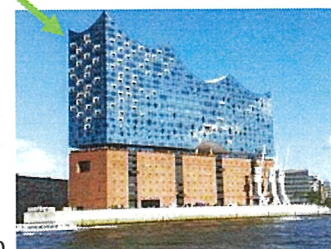


10-08

SAT

Train to Hamburg, Germany

It's time for a visit to Germany's largest city and, of course, home to Steinway & Sons, the original makers of the famous pianos. If the showroom is open and I still have room in my suitcase . . . The evening will include a concert at the Elbphilharmonie Haal performed by Regensburger Domspatzen, the men and boys choir from Regensburg Cathedral, Regensburg, Bavaria.

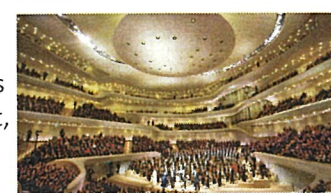


10-09

SUN

Day in Hamburg

In my first year of studying organ at the Hartt College of Music in West Hartford, my organ professor, John Holtz, had just returned from Hamburg where he said he had the most moving experience of his life, which was hearing all of the city bells ringing at the same time on Sunday morning, filling the streets. Spending time in this amazing city was specifically positioned during the trip so I could finally hear those bells for myself. After an afternoon of poking around the city, I'll head back to the philharmonic hall to hear a performance of 2 Schubert symphonies. Like many stops along this amazing 30-day trip, the one in Hamburg is all too short, but will just be an enticement for coming back – maybe bringing some of YOU along – maybe pick out a Steinway or two, or three.



10-10

MON

Train to Zwolle, the Netherlands

For many years I've heard about something called the Dutch Organ Tour, which traditionally takes place each October and accommodates about 15 people for a 5-day tour of historic organs in the Netherlands. Initially, this entire trip was planned so that I would connect with the 2022 tour, but, as with many things, the pandemic displaced this offering. However, the organizer of those tours offered to put together a private one and, as the saying goes, the rest is history. This morning I bid farewell to Hamburg and board a train – and change twice – arriving in Zwolle where I will meet my host, Johan Stolk. The afternoon will include a visit to the National Organ Museum as well as Nicolaaskerk in Elburg, pictured top right. After dinner at his home with his wife, I'll check into the Hotel Elburg – where the mice will undoubtedly roam all night long.



10-11

TUE

Groningen Area

Johan has planned a full day, along with 2 other guests from the United States. The morning will have stops at 2 churches in the Groningen area: Zeerijp and Jacobuskerk. The afternoon will also have 2 stops: Leens and Petruskerk – AND – the evening will have a stop at Martinikerk, pictured right, in Groningen. WOW!!



10-12

WED

Delft and The Hague

Our day will include the Oude Kerk in Delft (pictured right) and, after lunch, one or two instruments in The Hague, and after dinner, another instrument in The Hague. I will say good-bye to Johan as he heads back home to Elburg and I stay in Haarlem, for a night in which I may not sleep a wink . . . Read on to find out why . . .



10-13

THU

Haarlem and Amsterdam

In initially planning this trip, there were 2 things I wanted to do more than anything else. First, to visit Albert Schweitzer's birthplace, and second, to see the organ at St. Bavo's in Haarlem. When I was 12 years old I got a book that was filled with pictures of organs from all over the world, including St. Bavo's. I knew then – without knowing why – that I wanted to someday see this 300-year old organ. Even someone who does not generally get excited about organ music could probably agree that the casework (pictured to the right) is completely stunning. Johan was somehow able to organize for me to be able to have 90 minutes, alone, to play this instrument, unless I'm crying too much and can't even see to play! And, if that's not enough, I'll get to see the organ at Ronde Lutherse Kerk in Amsterdam. Double WOW!



10-14

FRI

Fly to Spain

There's so much that could be written about Barcelona, so I'll keep this brief. My main focus will be to see as many of the Antoni Gaudi buildings as I can and attend worship at La Familia Sagrada, an amazing cathedral, pictured right and below. Construction began in 1882 and it has not been completed yet!



10-15

SAT

Day in Barcelona

10-16

SUN

Day in Barcelona

10-17

MON

Fly to Heathrow

10-18

TUE

Fly to Florida



Follow the itinerary by going from number to number, city to city, arrow by arrow.

