

W

e forgot to mention in last year's

holiday letter that the solar eclipse on August 21, 2107 fell on Ruth's 70th birthday. The center of the totality belt crossing the southwestern tip of North Carolina was only 32 miles south of us, but because of mountains, some 50 miles by road.

We got to Perry's Water Garden in Franklin NC in only about an hour and three quarters, and had superb viewing with no crowd, for the full nearly 4 minutes of totality. The trip back took nearly 7 hours because of both the heavy traffic and some accidents blocking roads. Still, it was a beautiful, awe-inspiring sight and well worth the trip. What you see in the photo is the sun's corona around the moon, neither visible to the naked eye. To our eyes, the sun vanished and it seemed to be a totally dark moonless night, and we could see stars and the planets Jupiter, Venus and Mars.



We had a wonderful vacation in 2018, spending a total of 28 days abroad in Rome for five days (with a visit to Vatican City) and touring Sicily for 23 days. Here's a slide show link:



<http://www.dan-ruth-tanner.com/Travel/Italy/Italy.html>

Over the Independence Day weekend, we enjoyed a visit resulting from an amazing reunion. As



a boy, I spent half my school vacations with my father in Glen Oaks Village, Long Island, NY. In the years when I was eight to eleven years old living there at the same time was a boy of my age, Mel Comstock. We quickly became fast friends. But both families moved away at the same time and we lost touch. I looked Mel up on Facebook a few years ago and found him, but Mel doesn't use Facebook much and my message lay unseen for about three years. Then Mel found it and called!

He and Amanda live near Phoenix AZ now, but visited us on a trip "back East". We had a great time and we'll go see them in 2019, after a stop at the Grand Canyon.



We did a major construction project in 2018, converting our garage into a pottery studio for Mathilda. She's so popular as a teacher at both the Black Mountain Center for the Arts and the Arrowhead Gallery in Old Fort NC that neither place left her with room in the kilns or on the shelves for her own works, with which to stock the co-op Morningsky Gallery, her wholesale gallery customers, bring to shows and festival for sale, or ship as her direct sales. Now she'll no longer have that problem. You

can follow the useless, eyesore garage to lovely pottery studio at <http://dantanner.jalbum.net/Garage%20to%20Pottery%20Studio/>. And 2018 wouldn't be complete without Mathilda's selfie compilation. See those photos at <http://dantanner.jalbum.net/Mathilda%202018%20Selfies/>.

My band, the Fairview Flyers went through enormous changes in the past year. I'm now the



only founding member left. Bad health took banjoist/vocalist Bobby "Banjo" Anderson from us. Then we lost bassist Will "Doc" Hamilton because of his wife's illness. At year-end we lost guitarist/vocalist James Kamp (in the photo), who needs to devote full-time attention to his solo musical singing, performing, & songwriting career. We had added Helen Charbonneau (in the photo) on fiddle and vocals, but she secured a full-time job at the Asheville Art Museum and had to leave the band. George Montgomery joined the band to play bass (in the photo), tambourine and

spoons, and will be staying on as we rebuild. At this link is video of a full 2-hour show we did before a dancing and concert audience in September at Feed & Seed, Fletcher NC:

<https://livestream.com/feedandseedlive/events/8362002>.



Just before Thanksgiving, Robert Dungan joined us. He's a terrific guitar picker, plays some banjo, and is our new lead vocalist. Here's the new Fairview Flyers (l-r: George, Dan, Robert) in a photo Ruth took at our first rehearsal. Robert brings more songs to our folk, country, bluegrass, Cajun and blues repertoire, plus some of his originals. A semi-retired attorney, Robert was first a language teacher with a

master's degree in French. He sings in English, French, Spanish, and Russian (learned from his wife).



For Thanksgiving this year Ruth and I joined Mathilda and her beau Carl for a gala Thanksgiving dinner at the home of Carl's sister Shelly (pink & white blouse), an ob/gyn in Orlando FL (I took the photo above and so am not in it. Carl's sister is on her right. His brother Chris is between them (black shirt with orange lettering). Carl is smiling over Ruth's left shoulder.

And then the four of us took a four-day holiday in St. Augustine FL. Here's slides from that. Slides are from around St. Augustine, including beaches, nature preserves, the Alligator Farm, the old fort, and cathedral.

<http://dantanner.ialbum.net/Florida/>



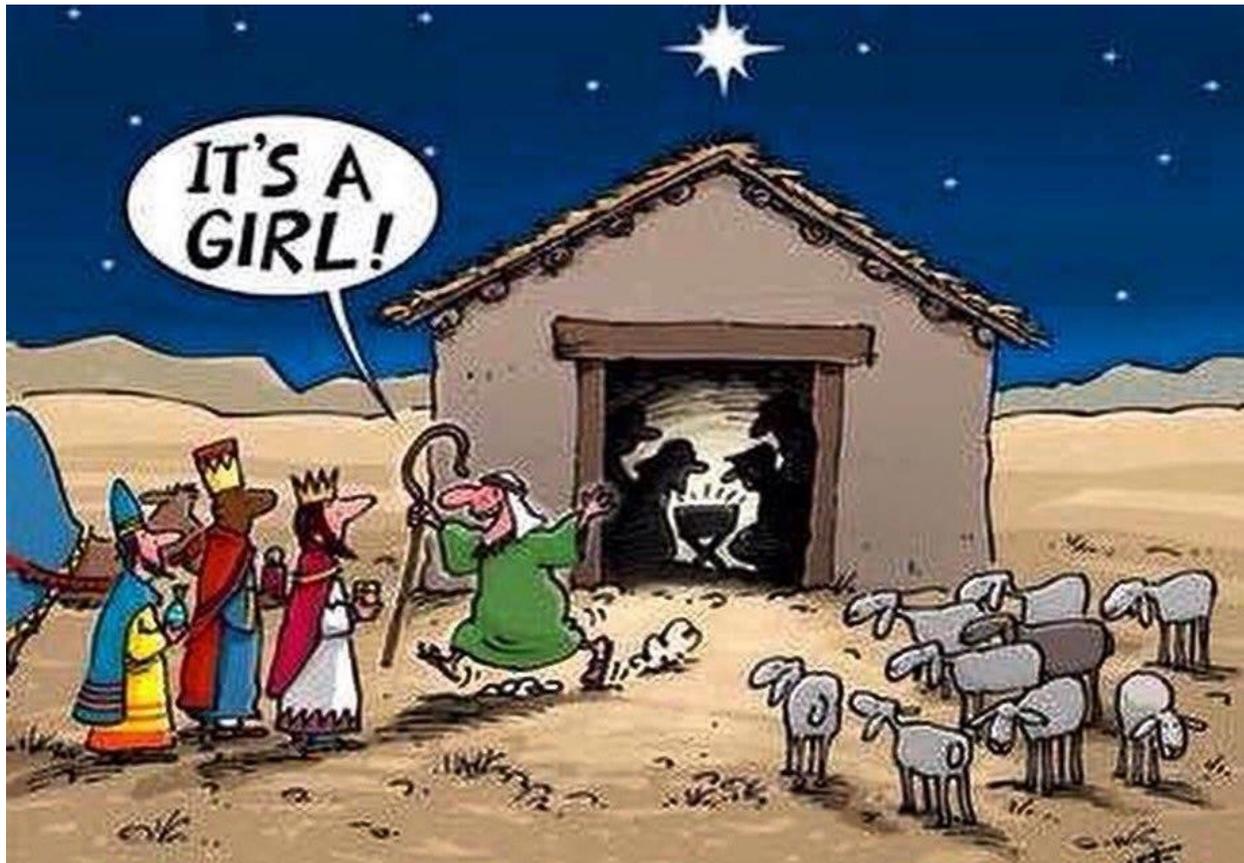
Last Christmas I gave Ruth and Mathilda the gift of a ring-making class. Mathilda liked it so much that she gave Carl the same gift for his November birthday. Results shown below. (A snowstorm delayed his class, so the photo of his ring will be in next year's letter.)

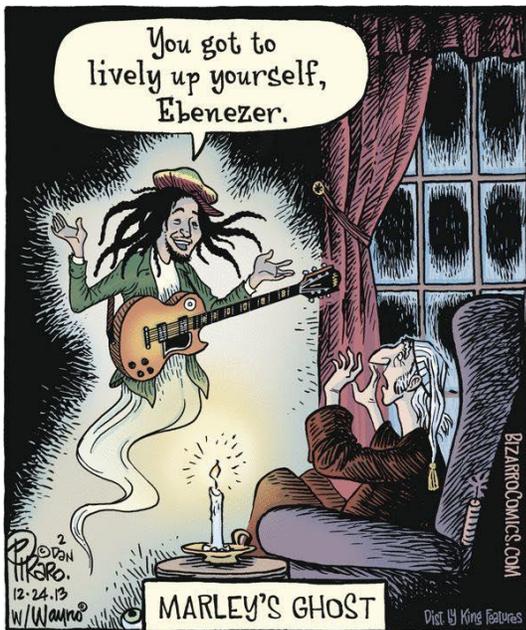


We hope you and yours had a very, very happy holiday season! And will have a healthy, joyful 2019 too. Enjoy some cartoons.

SANTA'S HELPERS







Until next year...