



YIKES! IS IT DECEMBER ALREADY?

It feels like we just unpacked from summer vacation! Hope the cooler weather is making you feel festive. Here's our news . . .

MATT RETIRES AT LAST

The big news for us this year was Matt's retirement in June after the funding for his position finally ran out. At his going-away party, Matt performed his version of *My Way* with Holly accompanying on the ukulele: (<http://www.cs.utexas.edu/users/kaufmann/retirement/index.html>).

Matt is much better at being retired than Holly feared. He's playing pickleball and ping pong on a regular basis, having lunch with friends, eating at his favorite Vietnamese restaurant, playing Sudoku, following politics (e.g., on electoral-vote.com), watching sports on TV, and reading mysteries. Oh, and some consulting (he's still improving ACL2). He's even made noises about cleaning the storage room.

December 2019

HOLLY KEEPS BUSY. . .ISH

In January, both of Holly's writing groups dissolved. Without deadlines, she's doing less writing, but was recently accepted into a memoir workshop. She's been making quilts for Project Linus and she volunteered at a Tax Preparation Center (NOT preparing taxes – that would be a disaster) for low-income clients. She has been attending a group called Undoing White Supremacy with friend Lydia that focuses on how white culture harms white people and people of color. This fall, she and two friends have been seeing a movie every Wednesday afternoon. The rest of the time she reads, sews, quilts, listens to podcasts, and messes around with art supplies.

Travel

Holly visited her friend Marion in San Diego in April, and in June, her friend Freida organized a quilting retreat in Oregon. In March, we drove to Boerne, Texas to hear The Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain. The acoustics in the high school auditorium were dreadful, but we got to meet the band, one of our favorites!

In May, we flew to New York City, where Matt gave an invited talk at a math conference. We also reconnected with friends Sue and Jim. It was fun to visit places we've seen on TV and eat real New York pizza.

We left for the UK in mid-July to escape the heat. But first, Matt broke his ankle, a potential disaster since walking is part of the fun. However, Matt diligently did the exercises his PT recommended and though he had to wear a brace, his ankle never kept us from doing what we wanted.

Our first stop was Stroud and a one-room apartment described on Airbnb as "The Shack." It was basic but did the job as we enjoyed a Cotswold town that was not overrun with Americans. Then we met up with English friends Rob and Judith in Hay-on-Wye in Wales, who drove us around (lovely scenery) and were great company.



Finally we headed to Cambridge, just missing a record temperature (101 degrees). We stayed a month and enjoyed the usual low-risk novelty: long walks, shopping at the market, visiting our favorite churchyard, Sunday roasts, Thai food at our favorite pub, and sticky toffee

pudding. The highlight was a magical evening of Irish pub music. We also enjoyed visiting friends Lissy and Anuj and their daughters. Once again our landlords, Roger and Kate, invited us to Lincolnshire, where they fed us amazing food and tried to explain Brexit. Plus, we had a wonderful day of faffing (British slang for useless activity) around with Holly's friend, Stephanie.



It was lovely to be in a cooler climate in a country whose politics were temporarily more screwed up than ours. Then we returned home to the hottest September on record in Austin. And the impeachment . . .

IN CONCLUSION

Overall, we're content and grateful for our health, our friends, and each other. Besides the pitiful state of our democracy, the threat of climate apocalypse, and the disappointing ending to *Game of Thrones*, it's been a good year.

BEST WISHES IN 2020 –
WHATEVER HAPPENS!