



Happy Holidays 2017



We started the year on Jan 3 with a fun visit with Gary and Linda then had lunch with The Gang, Eric, Benjie, Kristina, Joan, Linda and Gary, on the 6th. On Jan 8 we hosted the Chalice Keepers reception for the UU Foundation. I'd created a slide show on the history of our Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Phoenix for the congregations' 70th anniversary this year.



On Jan 22 we enjoyed the Rwandan cous-cous dinner at Dave & Nancy's that we'd won at the previous year's auction at UUCP. We went to Bert Gay's memorial service on Jan 28 and on the 29th we had lunch with friends Billye, Sandy, Ellie M, Julie and Marshal, at the Beatitudes. Smoot went to Sierra Vista to get the video teleconferencing ready for the UU Pacific Southwest District Assembly and on Jan 30 got to see Gary teach a class.



We went to another fun and tasty auction dinner, An Evening in Germany, on Feb 4 at Barbara and Dave's along with Barb & Paul, Jerry, Bonnie & Ed, Shoba & Jay, and Lynn. It included a slide show from Barbara and Dave's trip there. On Feb 16 we got together with Robert & Sandy, Gail and Brian, friends and colleagues from Smoot's time at Subimo. UUCP's family picnic was on Feb 25 at the Stillman Railroad Park again.



Rev Susan and Duke explained UUCP's combined stewardship and capital campaign at a kick-off party on Mar 4 at Bunny's. Smoot presided over his final HoA meeting as president on Mar 14. We went to Jenny and John's remodeling celebration on Mar 18.



We chatted with Megan, Tommie and Rudolf at Paw Placement's volunteer party on Mar 30. Smoot was at District Assembly so missed the dinner on Apr 1 with Frank & Beverly and Sonnie & Dan but he attended a worship service/protest at the horrible border wall at Nogales.



On Apr 4 we tried Taco Tues at Silverado golf course with Julia and John. The choir hosted a baby shower party for our pianist Mary Cota and her husband on Apr 8 at Bill and Joan's. On Apr 16, I officially premiered my History of UUCP and also showed my other research work and timeline.



On Apr 17 Darryl visited us and again worked through Lucienne's items deciding what he wanted. We had lunch with him and Robert and on the 24th Darryl met fellow Canadians, Lee and Bob, our seasonal next-door neighbors. Both Darryl and Lee & Bob have offered to sponsor us if we want to move to Canada to escape Trump Amerika!



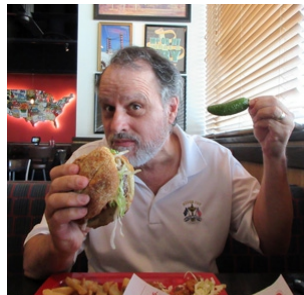
We attended a UU Foundation workshop at UUCP on ethical wills on May 6 and then celebrated Dale's 60th birthday at a party at Bunny's. Toni & Simon experienced my collection studio on May 7 after we saw Guardians of the Galaxy 2. They share our sci-fi passion!



Smoot's sister, Suzanne came to visit us and on May 11 we went to Odysea Aquarium and digitally frolicked with penguins. We had lunch at and toured the Musical Instrument Museum on May 12



On May 20 we went to the Unicare lunch and Heidi's housewarming party. There we saw her fancy exploding Death Star light! Smoot gave his final report as president of the UU Foundation on Jun 4.



We went to Lois' memorial service on June 10. Smoot spoke about how touched he was by her support of him from the beginning of our time at UUCP. We celebrated Smoot's 67th birthday on June 20 with our now traditional free breakfast at Denny's and free burger at Red Robin and then cake and gifts including books on WWII, Groot and minions!



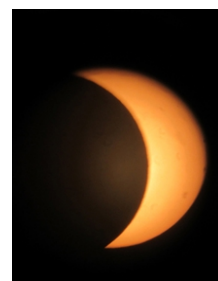
On July 2 we had a New Orleans style parade and party after Rev Susan's final service at UUCP then the Gang went to lunch. On July 4th we had our now traditional milkshakes at Red Robin with Julie, Joan, Linda, Dale, us, Marshal, Gary and Eric.



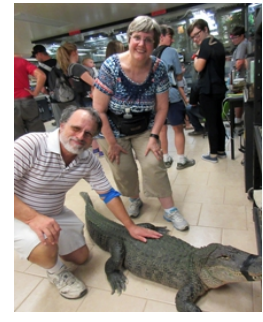
We had dressed for the 4th and got red, white and blue cake too. On July 22 we, Jesse, Sharon, Jean and Cathy attended the concert that UUCP choir members, Debbie, Ginny and Jerry sang in.



We celebrated our 44th anniversary on Aug 4 with a tour of the Phoenix Herpetological Society in Scottsdale, something I'd wanted to do for a long time. Then that evening we had a tasty dinner at Ruth's Chris Steakhouse. We went to Robert's surprise 70th party on Aug 5.



On Aug 19 we got the candy the Leungs sent us in belated honor of Smoot's June birthday and in early celebration of mine. On Aug 21 John joined us to look at the solar eclipse through Smoot's telescope. Smoot had to buy a special filter to make it safe for us to view. We took a kewl picture of the eclipse through the scope. On Aug 22, I got a new MacBook Pro as an early birthday gift.



I continued early b'day celebrating on Aug 24 with my free burger at Red Robin. On my actual birthday, Aug 26, I had my usual free breakfast at Denny's and then got a free sandwich at Schlotzsky's in front of a picture of the original store in Austin that we went to in the 70s. That evening we took the requested supplies as a gift to the Phoenix Herpetological Society when we went on their Croc Walk.



I got some really cute Itty Bitty's including the Enterprise with Picard and Worf and Luke in his X-wing. Smoot took part in the PSWD board retreat at the Franciscan Center that included this group photo on Sept 2. The choir retreat was held on Sept 16.



Jency came to visit us after her trip to Alaska. She arrived on her birthday, Sept 18, so we had flowers, gifts, cake and a crown for her! We went to Odysea again, this time when no school children were there. Later, she took a pic of us in our usual places, at our computers, with cats.



The choir dressed in black for our Day of the Dead service on Oct 29 (appropriate for me since I'd been suffering from Plantar Faciitis since early Oct; took almost 2 months to start to heal). We brought photos of our parents and the Rusconis to the service. On Nov 4 we saw Thor Ragnarok then had dinner with Simon and Toni. They let us play with their amazing VR system. I got one just like it!



Joan had lost her beloved cat, Maisey, and wanted some cat time so she came over on Nov 13. Bagheera made himself at home in her lap. Mary Katherine, the UUA development officer, took us out to dinner on Nov 19 to tell us about the President's Council. Smoot again smoked a turkey for UUCP's Thanksgiving potluck.



The potluck was well attended and tasty! On Nov 26, we got together with Fredi and Paul who were visiting his family in the Valley for the holidays. Always fun to catch up. On Nov 30, we got the sad news that my cousin, Bill Rugeley had died. He was only 73. I compiled photos for the slideshow at his memorial. We got to see Linda and Gary on Dec 2, back at our old haunt, Sweet Tomatoes.



The only supermoon of 2017 occurred on Sun, Dec 3. I got this dramatic pic from our backyard. The Paw Placement holiday party was Dec 4. Lee went with us. Met a couple from Austin. We went to Sam DeLillo's funeral on Dec 7. On Dec 12, Norma gave a dinner for those who had helped her with cat sitting during her remodeling.



We had our monthly lunch with Julie and Marshal on Dec 14. They found a place with pretty holiday decorations, unlike last year! We saw The Last Jedi on Dec 15.



That evening, after getting caught in a terrible traffic jam, we went to the combined Scottsdale/Fountain Hills Democratic holiday party in Fountain Hills. It was much more upbeat than last year! On Dec 18 we flew to Burbank and picked up the Coastal Starlight Amtrak train, 34 hours to Seattle where we visited and toured with Smoot's sister Suzanne and bro-in-law Rob, nephew Theron and his family, Monika, Kiera and Natalie. We saw lots of fun sites around Seattle.



We flew back on Sat Dec 23 in time to sing with our choir on Christmas eve. We hosted the choir party on Dec 27.



There were 32 of us 'Tetris-ed' into our space. Rev Margret and Choir Dir Benjie unleashed their inner Jedi! On Dec 28 John came by to position and attach the owl house he'd made for us. We ended the year by going to a fun and tasty new year's eve party at Jack and Laura's.

Our Pets and Other Animals and My Fosters

We started 2017 with five cats, four indoor – Gheer, Rocky, Jack and Tiggy and in/outdoor Bobbie.



Tiggie was our most recent addition and the oldest. She was 20 when we got her from Robert in 2015. She had belonged to his legal assistant who had died. We fostered Tiggie who found an adopter through Paw Placement but was given back so we adopted her. Laura, the professional photographer that volunteers with PP came to take pictures of our current fosters on Feb 20. That wasn't successful so they offered to take some portraits of Tiggie. She was our diva. She might have been 22 and only weigh 5 pounds but that didn't stop her. When Jack and Rocky were close to a fight, Tiggie walked right between them, startling them so much, the fight was avoided. Sadly her health deteriorated. Dr. Remen thought it was a mouth sore but when that was treated she didn't get any better and on Nov 2 we took her to Desert Tails to be put to sleep. Smoot held her until time for the procedure. The office had displayed a poster and candle letting people know someone was saying goodbye to a beloved pet.



It was interesting to see how Jack, Rocky and Gheer responded to Tiggie's loss. They all found different places to sleep. Tiggie was gone but black Bagheera, aka Gheer, even suffering from the fatal cat disease FIP was still alive and amazingly had adapted to the Prednisone we have to give him every day.



Bobbie just likes being inside in his favorite bed or outside where he can show his fluffiness. He's FIV+, not a death sentence but he could pass it to other cats so he's kept separate in the laundry room and kitchen when our other cats aren't using them.

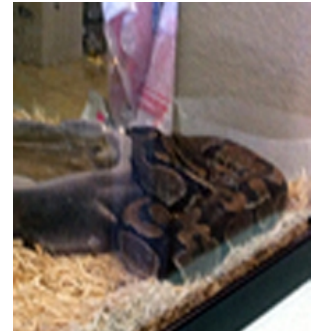


We lost another beloved pet this year, Cici, our Cockatiel. We'd gotten Cici in 2001 when his then-owner, Sharon M, Smoot's colleague at Clear Data, had to leave the state for a new job. She had had him for 12 years and her daughter had him before that so by this year he was pushing 30, the usual age span for his species. In 2016 he was starting to show his age but his happy squawks and whistles still

entertained us and our cats including Bobbie. But on Mar 22, I let him out of his cage so I could clean it, leaving him to enjoy the breeze through the screen door, a favorite spot. I stepped away and when I came back, he was gone. Julie took a picture we had of Cici and made a commemorative frame for it. It now sits on his cage, covered with a sheet with flying birds on it. I thought about giving his cage away, but couldn't.



My Red-eared Slider turtles got a new pond in 2016 and continue to enjoy it. The bathtub babies are getting big enough to soon join their parents and sibs outside.



My fish tank is down to just a few Mollies and two catfish. Moving outside, it's always fun when the Peach-faced Lovebirds come to visit and add a bit of color to our desert landscape. This photo is from July 17. This isn't ours, inside or out, but for a long time Desert Tails had a pet Ball Python named Brian. He seemingly freaked out some customers so he was adopted out. I miss getting to say hi to Brian! I took this picture of him on June 27.

I'd been feeding what I thought was a stray cat on our front porch. One evening when I went to put the dry food and water out, a raccoon was waiting patiently for his meal. I couldn't risk the diseases a raccoon could bring so I stopped the feeding. But that didn't stop the wildlife. Smoot put cameras covering the front door and part of the back yard. The very first night the back yard one was functional, July 12 we caught this a coyote strolling across our back deck. Then on Oct 9 we caught visual proof that the raccoon was still around

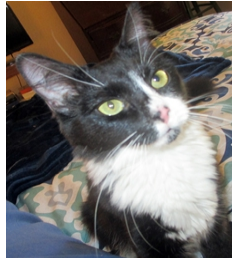
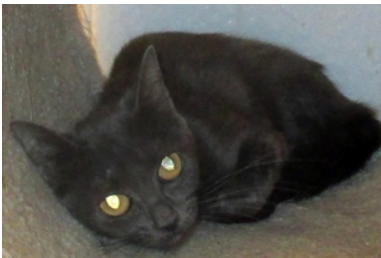


My Fosters

We have a guest room and a guest bath that I can use to foster kitties. That means I can sometimes have two sets at the same time.



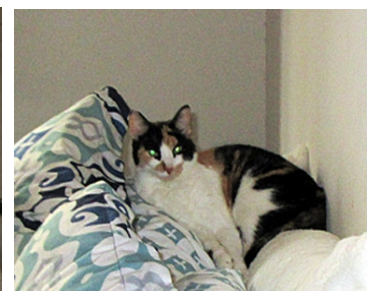
In Dec 2016 I got Copper, an Ocicat and his buddy, Skooter. I had them in our guest room until Mar 11, 2017. I got black and white Eclair by mistake on Mar 1. She was in the bathroom.



But then got Mimsy who was recovering from foot surgery. On Mar 15, I got tuxedo Beatrix for a short term foster. On Mar 21, I got Bambi and Dandelion, both from a terrible hoarding situation.



On Apr 6, I got Mouse to give him a break from his cage at the Promenade. He got to go nose-to-nose with Rocky and Jack. On Apr 24, I got four tiny kittens that came from the Humane Society, Bear, Coulter, Marlowe and Aslan. Sadly Bear and Aslan died. Tommie took Coulter who died and Marlowe



later MacMuffin. I got four older, healthier kittens on May 21, Baxter, Brody, Misty and Quinn. On Jun 1, I got Molly. She hid under the comforter in the guest room for days but eventually came out

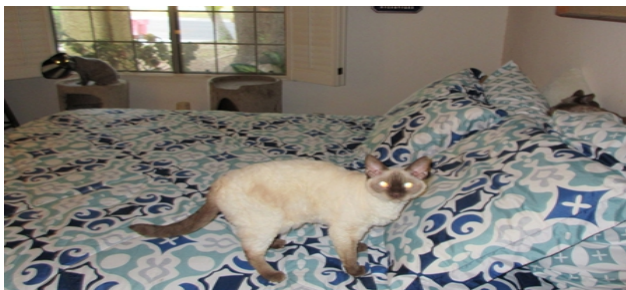
and laid claim to her special places in the house. I had her until Sept 13.



On June 3, I got Slate and Sundae. On July 13, I got four more kittens, Brioche, Harley, Mr. Biggles and MacMuffin formerly Marlowe who had been the only kitten among my Humane Society group to survive. He's in the middle in the group photo with the polydactyl feet. Juli saw this photo I posted on Facebook and decided to adopt him on the spot. That's the goal with all my fosters, to get them adopted and they all have been.



On Oct 3, I got three kittens, Fudge, Smudge and Boots then two days later I got two more kittens from another litter, Smokey and Bandit and the remaining sibling from the first, fluffy set, eventually named Kala. Tragically Boots, the front kitten in the left photo, died and Bandit seemed ill. Tommie took Bandit. He survived and Smokey, Kala and Bandit got their portraits taken by Laura.



All the cats shown so far have been fosters for Paw Placement but on Oct 12, I got three Rex queens, Sheba, Cleopatra and Isabelle. Their owner, Norma, was a friend of a friend and needed a place to stay until their home was finished. I had them until Oct 23. They bring my total fostered to 208 since 2010.