



May 2015

Issue No: 291

Cruising Europe... 6 Countries, in 17 Days!



Euro Cruise 2015



By now most of you know that Karla and I took a trip in March to cruise the Western Mediterranean. Karla has long wanted to see some of the sights from Europe and I have been somewhat reluctant to go, preferring the “see America First” route. But Karla has waited long enough so about a year ago we made plans to visit Europe along with our friends Jim and Lorelee.

We decided upon a cruise so that we would not have to worry about moving from hotel to hotel and the transportation issues associated with them. Being the first time for all of us, we decided on a more structured trip with accommodations and travel already taken care of. So a cruise seemed to fit these requirements well and we booked an 11 night cruise for March of 2015.

Lots of planning and research went into the next several months including the selection of off ship tours we were going to take. Also what we would do in Rome as we were arriving three days early and had a few days to spend seeing the sights. Soon months became weeks, weeks became just a few days and the next thing you know it was March 3rd and time to go!

Since we booked our air travel over nine months in advance it's not surprising that the flights would be changed.

Our flight was originally a non-stop directly to Rome but it was changed to a one stop (London) and then to Rome. We left at about 8:00pm so it really wasn't a bad flight, we slept and the next thing we knew we were in London. We had a short layover and soon we were in Rome, 4:30 pm local time. Next... Transportation to the hotel.

The one thing about Italy is there are taxies, and then there are the real taxies. In my research for this trip I learned that there are a lot of less than honest taxi services that will want to charge you a flat rate which is always higher



than what an official taxi would cost. So you should always look for the white taxis with real meters in them. But leaving the airport you are accosted by a gauntlet of drivers telling you they are a taxi service and will take you anywhere you want to go. The trick is just ignoring them or making sure the price they charge is not too high.

Since it was raining and I didn't feel like waiting in line I made a deal with one and we were at our hotel in less than 15 minutes. I probably paid 10 Euro more but it was worth it after a long flight almost half way across the world. We stayed in a wonderful hotel about 15 minutes outside of Rome. Once checked in we had a late dinner then off to bed because we had an early tour of the coliseum the next morning (Thursday).



Unfortunately when Thursday came it was raining really hard, but undeterred we donned our ponchos and took off for our tour. We used a company called "Walks of Italy" and I highly recommend them. Our guide was very upbeat even though she had to take us in the rain. We were the only people that signed up for the tour so it was like we had our own private guide. Honestly, it really was great to have someone who could explain things to you. Not only did she tell us about the area but she had artist renderings that showed how the coliseum might have looked back in the day. Even with all the rain, this tour was a great start to our trip.

Friday saw the rain disappear but a cold wind with plenty of sunshine was the order of the day. We had booked another tour with Walks of Italy, call the Pristine Sistine, which got

us into the chapel before the rest of the tour groups. I am told that normally it's wall to wall people in the Sistine Chapel but we had less than 50 so it was a very pleasant experience. We also toured the rest of the Vatican and Saint Peter's basilica. After our tour we had a great lunch at a local restaurant then toured a castle that was close by. All in all, another great day!

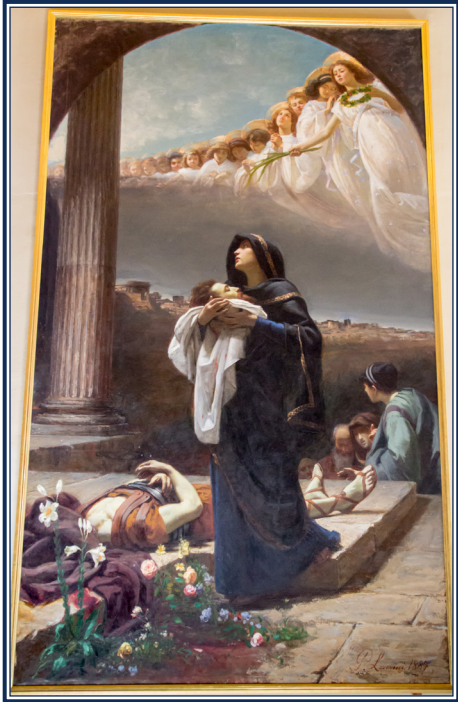


Saturday we were off to the cruise terminal which is about 50 miles away. But we had also arraigned for travel from Walks of Italy so getting there was easy. I will say Norwegian cruise certainly has its act together for boarding. It took less than 30 minutes from the time we arrived to the point where we were in our cabins. We had booked cabins with balconies and that were also located mid ship to keep the motion of the seas down. This proved to be a good decision as that night while traveling up to Livorno (the port for Florence) we had 14' seas with winds to 45 mph!

Florence was magnificent! Lots of things to see and the food was great. We enjoyed a nice bottle of wine that was recommended to us by the tour guide. Although when I say tour guide she was really just someone who told us about the area while we traveled there on the bus. This tour was called Florence on your own and once we got there we had 5 hours to explore the area. I don't think I need to go into detail about the area as many of you know it first-hand. But the one thing that struck me the most was all the art. It seemed that everywhere we went there were elaborate paintings and sculptures. Mostly of naked men and women. Someone



want to tell me why just about every statue has male parts just “hanging” out there? And don’t get me started about the statues of Hercules in the home of Medici, really? If you haven’t been there google “Hercules statues in home of Medici” and you will get the picture... vividly! On the other hand, the paintings, especially in the churches, were very beautiful and you could easily spend hours looking at all the details.



Now I never had anyone tell me this, but I think I am correct in assuming that back during the time these paintings were made, the majority of the people were illiterate. My assumption is that these paintings were, in a sense, a way to immortalize a story in such a way that the populous at the time could understand. Also, since the church was the main point of social contact and learning, this would be the most logical place

to have them. Today, only a person who has spent a great deal of time studying these paintings can fully appreciate the symbolism and “the story” behind them. But I believe that back then the stories were told over and over again and even the youngest child that visited the churches would have a basic understanding of the paintings within.

Leaving Florence behind and after a night cruise, we arrived at Monte Carlo, Monaco, the second smallest country in the world (the Vatican is the smallest). There we visited the Royal Palace grounds and Saint Nicholas Cathedral where Prince Rainer and Grace Kelly were married and ultimately buried. We also visited the Monte Carlo Casino that was made fa-



mous by all the James Bond movies. It is still a very exclusive place and judging by the many \$100k+ cars that were parked outside still a favorite spot of the rich and famous.

The next day we were in Toulon, France. Here we did not take any tours and just walked the streets of the town to pick up the local vibe. Most all the streets not only here but just about everywhere we went, were very narrow and either brick or cobblestone. I guess that is just how they built them and things don’t change much over the years. We visited/ saw a Church or two, the opera house, an impressive fountain, the mental prison (from the outside) and even a ship plowing through concrete... Onward and forward we go.



Next up, Barcelona, Spain. We started our tour on the hill overlooking Barcelona next to the old Olympic Village. We had a wonderful view of the whole city including the construction of the La Sagrada Familia (the Holy Family) church.

This church is expected to take about 200 years to complete and is scheduled to be done sometime in the 2020’s. This project is funded completely by the tourist dollars spent there. With Spain’s unemployment running around 25%, it is a real shot in the arm for the local economy. The design of the church was inspired by the rocks around the Montserrat Monastery which just so happened, to be the next stop on our tour.



The Monastery sits high atop a mountain surrounded by finger shaped rocks. The monks there still take in boys from a very young age until they turn 18. We got there in time to hear the choir sing a few songs in, yes another Church. This basilica (church) also housed the black virgin Madonna which according to legend was discovered in a grotto a millennia ago. Over the centuries the image has darkened by the smoke of millions of candles lit to honor her and this is how she got named the Black Virgin.



Being up high above the city amongst the trees and blue sky it is easy to see why the monks decided to build on this mountain top. Barcelona is a very large city and I'm fairly certain that it has been one for a long time. So to be able

to escape the crowds and come to a very quiet and serene place must have felt like you were close to heaven.



Next, it was back on the ship for a short, overnight cruise to Valencia, Spain. After a nice breakfast aboard ship we joined our tour group and set off for Sagunto which is a village that was settled in the 5th century BC. It was

interesting to see how structures merged the old with the new. In some places walls that pre dated Christ were joined to modern masonry walls to create a mosaic like effect taking you from old to new.

We visited a museum that had uncovered an old Roman road with dwelling structures close by. Say what you will about the "olden days" and their primitive ways of life. But



it was truly apparent that the Romans and Greeks were an advance society. Even though their technology was truly mortar and bricks, it was amazing what they accomplished. The road we visited had a sewer trough running below the road (covered by flat stones) and the homes had small stone lined trenches to carry the waste to the sewer.

After we left the museum we had about an hour to shop and look around the town then it was back to the bus for the next part of our tour. Because we had a nice breakfast and there wasn't a lot of time, we decided to forgo lunch and just roam the area for a bit. The one thing you don't want to do is be late for the bus as they are very clear that they will leave you and you are on your own from that point forward. Well... At least that's what they said but in reality we waited almost 40 minutes because one lady didn't show up. In the end we left without her but later found out she had gotten on another bus.



This left us short of time for our next tour which was taking a boat down an underground river in the caves of St. Joseph. But we managed to make it there in time to be rushed into small row boats that held about 10 people each. Most of the time we spent ducking our heads down to our laps as the caves were very low. In some places I'd doubt there was 3' from the top of the boat to the rocks above. There was no photography allowed in the caves so I don't have any pictures. However, to be honest, there wasn't much worth shooting as the formations were few and far between. Having a river flowing through the cave was interesting but if you want to see big caves with lots of formations, stick to the ones in America!

By the time we got back on the boat we were all fairly hungry so we decided that the buffet would be the quickest way to get something to eat. After passing the "washy washy" guy (he always says washy washy as he sprays a germicide on your hands before entering the area) we sat down to an eclectic assortment of food. I had beef stew, hot dogs, a large salad, and a few other things I can't remember. But it was all good.

After dinner, we sat out on the back of the ship and were treated to an exceptional sunset. As you can see from the

photo below it was truly spectacular and we just sat there and enjoyed the sun setting into the Mediterranean.



Then it was time for a show at the Starlight Theater which featured a kind of singing talent show which was very entertaining. Then off to bed for what should have been a nice night's sleep with the ability to sleep in the next day because we were to be "at sea" all day.

Unfortunately, and I won't go into a lot of details here, but around midnight, I got what can best be described as food poisoning. Needless to say I didn't get much sleep that night and in fact was sick for the next 3 days. Being sick was bad enough but being cooped up in a state room that is smaller than our motorhome and with a TV that only had 3 channels of English speaking programming will drive you crazy. Fortunately, Karla took good care of me and by the second day I started to feel better. But not well enough to leave the ship when it arrived in Cagliari, Sardinia, Italy. But at least Karla, Jim and Lorelee got to visit the area.



The next day was also an "at sea" day but I was starting to feel well enough to try and eat some things. The good news in all of this, was that I lost 10 lbs. during this vacation, most people will gain that much on a cruise!

The following day we were in Palermo, Sicily, and our tour took us to see many of the sights of the city including a visit to Monreale and its cathedral. This cathedral is said to be one

of the most outstanding Norman structures in the world. It's a classic blend of Norman art with Arabic, northern, classic and Byzantine elements. Inside there is over 68,000 square feet of rich golden mosaics that depict biblical events. One side of the cathedral showed the Old Testament while the other side, displayed the new.



We then spent some time touring the city and visited a few more churches along the way (there are a lot of them everywhere). Like I mentioned before, the church was the center of life for many of the "common" people back then. Therefore it stands to reason that they would be built very large and ornate, not only to be impressive but also as a matter of civic pride. I believe that by being built so tall it intentionally gives the visitor a feeling of grandeur and awe just to walk into the place. More so in the days where most people lived in small homes, occupied by many people. To them, the church must have really felt like you were in heaven and in the presence of God.

The last port of call in our cruise was Naples, Italy where we toured the rediscovered city of Pompeii. Buried in ash during a 79AD eruption from nearby Mount Vesuvius it laid forgotten until found in the late 1600's. It has been, and still is being, excavated and restored to give the visitors an ideal of life back then. It was very interesting and again, gave you the feeling of how advanced civilization was for the time.





As we boarded the ship for the last time, we were greeted by members of the crew who danced to music being played on the dock, alongside of the ship. It was very entertaining and we could watch the whole show from the balcony of our stateroom. Then it was time to pack up and get ready to leave the ship as it was due to arrive in Rome the next day.



We disembarked after a really nice breakfast served in one of the main dining rooms to a beautiful sunny day and a nice ride back to our hotel. The very same one that we stayed in when we first arrived. Since we were back by noon and our flight didn't leave until the next day we spent one more day in Rome enjoying the sights and doing some last minute shopping before the trip home.



It was a wonderful vacation and we all enjoyed it very much. OK so maybe I enjoyed it slightly less than the rest. But still, I am glad to have seen all the sights that I have heard so much about. I have gained an appreciation for the society that existed so long ago but most importantly I was able to give Karla a trip she has always wanted to go on. Lord knows she has put up with enough trips of mine to the wilds of America, it was about time she got to do something she has always wanted to do!



Final Cut
Hair Studio
&

*Tranquility
Lounge*

Skin Care
Menu of
Services

7841 Balboa Ave, Ste 101
San Diego, CA 92111
(858) 565-2015

10 YEARS

*Transforming
a Dream*





Hey Everyone,

As I look back to April 21 2005, 10 years ago, it's hard to believe that so much time has gone by. It seems like just a couple of years have passed, but when I look at all the changes that have been made since then, it is easy to see how I have lost track of so much time.



It started with an ad in the paper next to the crossword puzzle. I remember the day I walked in and saw the animal head on the wall, it was a far stretch to where we are today.



My son Brett offered the name, in his video editing he says, the final cut is always the best. Over the last 10 years we have worked hard to bring to all of you the very best in haircare and we hope you have enjoyed the journey as much as we have.



I humbly thank all of you for your support and friendship along the way, our business has grown successfully, but not as much as all of us have grown personally. You are all a part of it and it is the reason, after 45 years in the business, I still love my job.



Below are some milestone dates that particularly stand out in my mind:

- April 21st, 2005 our first day in a lovely new home. Many friends and family members worked long hours to make it happen, thanks to all of you!!
- Two years later, in August of 2007, the Tranquility Lounge became a reality as we moved "south" for more space.
- In April of 2012 we moved "west" across the hall opening the inspiration lounge, a beautiful space for consultations.
- March of 2014 the facial room becomes dedicated to haircare and in April of 2014 we expanded our retail space for a roomier feel.



We will continue to grow with our great staff and hope you will all continue with us as well!

Francie Sorem



Bruce Hartman's

Bet 'ya didn't know!

Curtis Hartman

This edition of "Bet 'Ya Didn't Know" is all about Curtis. I was able to put him through the interview process while he was staying at our house for one of the many family gatherings. I have been trying to get ahead on my interviews as of late but finding it difficult to line up schedules with the many different family members...we are all busy for one reason or another...imagine that! I felt lucky to have the opportunity to just sit and chat with Curtis and let him tell his story. I so badly want to do this with all the 2nd gen's.

As many of you know Curtis is a classroom teacher at St. John Bosco (Catholic) High School in Long Beach California. He teaches grade levels 10, 11, & 12 and covers World History, AP art History, AP Comparative Government & Politics and Psychology. He has been at Bosco for two years and loves what he does! The path to getting there was challenging and circuitous when you include three years in the Republic of Korea and a year in Iraq in counterintelligence for the US Army.

When Curtis graduated high school he made a half-hearted effort to continue his education at SD State. His grades were in the toilet and his heart just wasn't in it! Some of you may recall the BOMBSHELL he dropped on us when he announced he was dropping out of State and had already been to a recruiter and was nearly 90% through the process of enlisting. We were all frightened of the possibilities of what all that could mean. I even went with him to meet the recruiter hoping to get him to back off and we all tried extremely hard to dissuade him. Fat chance! Curtis had made up his mind and was deeply entrenched in the idea! Off to boot camp he went with a five year commitment which he had negotiated up from a four year gig in trade for a lower signing bonus and...wait for it... wait for it... Seventy-five thousand dollars worth of additional college education funds! It was as if he had a crystal ball!

Over time, the one thing the Army taught Curtis was that he didn't want to be in the Army for the rest of his life. The thought of furthering his education was now his idea and not something to do simply because "you should" or "your parents want you to." He had burnt some bridges, so-to-speak, by not exiting SD State correctly which limited his options and made finding a college a bit challenging. He spent endless hours in a tent in the 120 degree summer heat of the Iraq desert applying to colleges. When he made it back stateside to Fort Hood in Texas he was bombarded with many letters of rejection from Colleges and Universities all over the US. In that stack of bad news there were a couple acceptance letters, the most desirable being from Catholic University in Washington DC. They were willing to take a chance on Curtis...and he didn't let them down!



Curtis had a new perspective on life and a desire to accomplish something! He graduated from Catholic University 16th in his class of approximately 1,200 with a cumulative GPA of 3.88. His honors included Magna Cum Laude, Phi Alpha Theta and Phi Beta Kapa. Today he is only a few months away from completing his masters of arts in history and plans to gain a second masters in education or an EdD (Doctor of Education). There is no intention or desire today to leave the classroom but Curtis wants to open future opportunities and remove obstacles to any prospective possibilities for an administrative role later down the road.

When I asked Curtis what the best part of his job was, he simply answered; what truly makes me happy is taking a historically unsuccessful student into the world of being successful. When I asked him about the worst part of his job I was surprised by his answer. A large part of his role as a teacher is to turn boys into men, a role Curtis takes seriously! “Parents have proven all too often to be a disappointment.” “They often tend to be an impediment to independence.”

I asked Curtis what his dream job might be and that answer came swiftly...”This is it!” “Secondary, all boys’ school is awesome!” I followed that question with “Are you good at what you do?” and the answer made me laugh. He said, “On my worst day I’m phenomenal, and if you don’t feel that way you probably shouldn’t be teaching!”

Curtis has his eye on a five year plan that includes History Department Chair. This however involves another teachers retirement plans so is not completely in Curtis’ control. His career goals fit well with the life plan he shares with Lauren. Lauren is so supportive and positive. Growing up with a teacher mom opened Curtis’ eyes to teaching as a career and Lauren supports that on every front. He also loves being off on school breaks because it works so well with raising a family of his own.

Curtis’ five years in the U.S. Army Corps of Military Intelligence as a Counterintelligence Special Agent changed him, but in a good way. While in Iraq he spent part of his time with a small group of Marines. As the counter intelligence sergeant as well as the driver of the M.R.A.P. (armored truck) he delivered the special team into Iraqi villages in the middle of the night where he had an up-front view to some of the truly ugly side of war. Doors of homes kicked in, flash-bangs going off and families held at gunpoint by over-adrenaline, overzealous Marines while Curtis gathered intelligence and questioned family members. Those activities hardened Curtis a bit and sharpened his (matter of fact) way of thinking. He gained a new and different perspective on our human existence in general and the fragility of life. All of that helped to transform him into what he has become in his personal life and his career.

Summed up, I think it fair to say that Curtis is a loving hard-ass that remains soft enough around the edges to connect incredibly well with his students. In his short time at Bosco he has become that “popular teacher.” Stu-

dents (and parents) fight for a seat in one of his classes. He holds his students accountable and to a very high standard. He calls them on their BS and, because he too was a very lazy high school student, seems to know instinctively when to challenge them and push them. His matter-of-fact attitude that was sharpened in Iraq carries over well in an all boys’ high school environment. Curtis has found his place! ...And this is just some of the stuff that I bet ‘ya didn’t know!

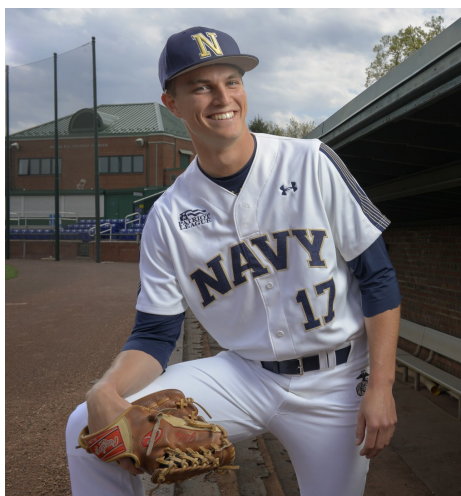


FAMILY SHORTS

News From Scott

Things are dandy! Karen's parents are arriving tomorrow and we will be going to Italy with them. Later in the month Thomas is coming and our friend Patrick from Germany and we are all going to Croatia. Then in June all the serious traveling begins with a tour from Portugal through Spain, France, Belgium, and the Netherlands. Then we will meet Karen's cousin Dan in Vienna and tour Greece, Hungary and Serbia. I'll send you some pictures soon. It is finally pretty again now that spring is here. We visited a really cool Gothic basilica last weekend and went to Prague zoo the week before (which was not great but I guess I'm spoiled for zoos because the locals think it's fantastic)

Karen and I are in Tuscany right now with her dad, step mom, brother and his sort-of-girlfriend. We are staying in the most gorgeous 15th century stone Villa way up in the mountains surrounded by nothing but tiny stone villages and wineries. Bob's extremely wealthy friend owns it among his dozen or so properties around the world. Karen and I are staying in the cabana which is a full 2 bedroom 2 full bathroom house in itself, and the main house has another 6 or 7 bedrooms, multiple kitchens and so on. We visited Siena yesterday and are heading to Florence today. The bad news is, I forgot my camera, Love you.



Bob's Nephew is in the News!

(reprinted from the Washington Post)

Navy's Luke Gillingham doesn't exactly match the profile of a strikeout pitcher. His fastball tops out at 88 mph, according to Midshipmen pitching Coach Bobby Applegate, and the junior left-hander can be more prone to leaning on his off-speed repertoire to wriggle out of jams than trying to overpower hitters.

But Gillingham's season stat line tells an entirely different story. The Midshipmen's No. 1 starter is the only player in Division I with triple-digit strikeouts (103), ahead of his closest pursuer by 13. Gillingham has registered double-digit strikeouts in half of his 10 starts, including 11 in his most recent outing that yielded a complete-game, 4-0 victory over Lehigh.

The numbers are that much more startling considering that Gillingham has one fewer strikeout this season over 73 / innings than in his previous two seasons combined, over which he logged 120 / innings. Gillingham's arsenal — comprising fastball, curveball and change-up — has baffled opposing hitters, to the tune of a .135 batting average. "Nothing shakes him," said sophomore catcher Adrian Chinnery, who will be behind the plate Saturday afternoon when Gillingham starts Game 1 of a doubleheader against Army in West Point, N.Y.

Winning once in the four-game series would give Navy 30 victories for the sixth time in Coach Paul Kostacopoulos's nine seasons. A series triumph would grant the Midshipmen bragging rights in the all-important Star Game competition between the service-academy rivals.

Navy (29-16, 10-6) has already secured a berth in the Patriot League tournament and remains in the hunt for the regular season title, trailing first-place Holy Cross by one game with less than a week to go. The Crusaders play fifth-place Bucknell in a four-game homestand. Army (19-20, 5-11) sits in last place out of six teams in the Patriot League.

"The Army series, you've got something special running through you," Gillingham said. "I think the great players are able to harness that kind of energy, that kind of motivation — not let it overcome them but use it to their advantage. Hopefully I'll do that this weekend." Gillingham (7-1, 0.98 earned run average) has given no indication otherwise over his first 10 starts. He's tossed three shutouts during that time, allowed more than one run twice and ranks second in the country in walks and hits allowed per nine innings (0.61) and third in both hits allowed per nine innings (4.15) and complete games (five). His ERA is fifth overall and second among starting pitchers.

The No. 3 starter last year, Gillingham didn't overhaul his mechanics or, as he puts it, "do anything too dramatic" on a physical level entering this season. He instead credits his rise into the company of the country's most reliable starters to a more aggressive thought process on the mound that's been cultivated, in large part, under Applegate's tutelage. In the fall, Gillingham worked extensively with Applegate on getting ahead of hitters early in the count. They also concentrated on ridding Gillingham of flawed tendencies when he would encounter trouble. These days there's no panic in Gillingham during such heated moments, just quiet assurance he'll execute the right pitch to record an out. "Sometimes the game can get fast on some guys," said Applegate, who's in his first season at Navy. "He's done a great job of trying to slow it down and being more effective. We work on that as a staff. It's a pitch-by-pitch process that we talk about, and just making sure that guys stay in the moment and understand each situation as it presents itself." Gillingham has designs on perhaps pursuing a career in the big leagues, but as the son of an admiral, his priorities to the Navy upon graduation are unwavering.