

Dec. 1, 2024

### The First Sunday in Advent

Well, we've retired – again. We started the year working as co-general managers of Raven Radio and are ending the year anticipating Christmas with kids and grandkids here in Sitka. Raven hired a new manager in July, and we hung around for two months to answer questions and ease the transition. In September we took off on a two-month cruise to Japan, giving the new manager space to make the job her own. We think our work was successful.



We increased fundraising, cut expenses and brought the budget more into balance. After we left two major grants came through that will move Raven forward. We have spent much of our lives working together and it was good to be back as a working team. The work helped bind us even more tightly together and tied us closer to our community.

Near the beginning of the year, we made a sad trip to Minnesota for the funeral of our



mentor, friend and the minister who presided at our wedding. Paul Peterson was Manager at WCAL and we got a chance to meet up with many old St. Olaf and radio friends and to visit family.

In April we took a cruise off the coast of Mexico to watch a total eclipse of the sun. We had clear skies overhead and experienced an indescribable phenomenon. We got pictures.

Son Brian and granddaughter Fiona came up and son Kevin, daughter-in-law Shannon and grandson Elias came down for July 4<sup>th</sup>. Grandson Liam was in Taiwan on a trip with his Mandarin immersion school and Liz had to stay in Minnesota for work. Brian and Kevin came back this fall to help with home repairs in preparation for everyone gathering at Christmas.

Our Japan cruise called at the four major islands. On the way to Japan, we stopped in Dutch Harbor in the Aleutians. Picking blueberries on the tundra with an Alaska friend without fear of encountering bears was a cruise highlight. We came home by way of Iwo Jima and Hawaii. One theme of the cruise was World War II history. We had excellent lectures. Other highlights included making washi paper in Koci, seeing the mix of Chinese and Japanese cultures on Taketomi Island, closer to Taipei than to Tokyo, and meditating at a Kyoto temple after riding the bullet train to get there. Read more on Rich's blog

<https://rich.mcclear.net>.





Speaking of bears, in June Rich had a close encounter with a sow and two cubs on the Mosquito Cove Trail. He stood his ground and did not have to fire off the bear spray.

Suzi is on the board of the local community foundation, enjoying giving out money rather than asking for it. She spends time knitting and crocheting. Rich is on the Music

Festival Foundation Board and spends time with his cameras, including shots of bears taken at a respectful distance with a long lens. We both still volunteer at Raven Radio.

We start 2025 happy for the love of family and friends. We have a renewed commitment to community and a strong belief that positive change begins with local action. May your holidays be full of joy and the coming year full of promise. Merry Christmas!



Suzi and Rich M<sup>c</sup>Clear

