

News 2022 so far – August 2022

The last 12 months have been an adventure.

Ellen had knee replacement surgery in October for her arthritic left knee and made a rapid, record-setting recovery over the first six or seven months. But then developed increasing pain and stiffness that limited her walking (again). It is thought to simply be post operative scar tissue formation and probably will respond to physical therapy.

In January, we moved back to the “east bank” of New Orleans, to an apartment in a converted old mill building in the “Bywater” neighborhood. Living in the retirement community on the “west bank” had been fine during the time of the isolation and lockdown from the pandemic, but we missed the music, food, and entertainment that is part of the daily life in the city proper. And over our two years living there, about 70 % of the original residents had died or moved to more “advanced levels of care” or simply left to live a more active life elsewhere. New residents moving in tended to be older and more frail than those entering before, and the feeling and sense of the place became more and more like a nursing home than an “independent living” facility. So we decided to get back to the other side of the river where there is easy access to the things we love doing. With the knee replacement out of the way, we looked forward to plenty of walkabouts in our new lively neighborhood and were not disappointed. We made the move with our new cat, “Chappy”, one of the many feral kittens at the retirement community we had adopted and made into an inside cat. He likes the new place, too.

Our new place has a second bedroom converted to a combination print shop and ship model work shop. The large living room has two work areas for Ellen. One a desk for her office work and one an area for storage of her books and supplies for knitting and needlework and a needle work station much larger and better than before. And she also has about half the closet storage in the work shop closet for additional support. We both spend lots of time working on hobbies when not at coffee shops or out and about in the city. There are plenty of coffee shops and bars and music venues and artist studios and galleries and shops and a branch library, all within easy walking distance. We still do have to travel to the Symphony concerts, but now just use Uber.

And just this month, we had the best news of all when Rob married Cynthia. He had bought a lovely little house in Brownsville and we had been down there in the spring to visit him and help with the planned renovations of the place and preparation for moving in. We met Cynthia then and loved her as much as he. She has three children from a previous marriage, so the new little house will be full and lively from the start. Fortunately the renovations included construction of a small studio behind the house for Rob to use. A painter’s version of a “man cave”, but quieter. Our family could not make the wedding day but will assemble in Brownsville in October to party with Cynthia’s family and extended family and celebrate Gene’s 80<sup>th</sup> birthday.

All we are waiting for now is whether or not we have a hurricane this year. We have our evacuation plans and supplies at hand and hope we will not need to use any of them.