

Hi Everyone,

December 2017

Greetings from India. Happy Holidays to everyone. As we have in previous years, we like to reach out at least once a year to say hello and update you on some of the things we have done.

We began the year in Germany and India and we are ending it in India. In between we spent six to seven months in Santa Fe, New Mexico. This year's letter brings more feeling and less words than previous years'. We bring you our 2017 as seen through images we captured during the year.



We were in Germany December 2016 and the first 11 days of 2017 with Petra's mother.



The rest of the month we were in Goa, based at the Villa Malibu in Benalim though we spent a lot of time on the Arabian Sea at Anthy's Restaurant and hangout.



In February we polished our yoga and revisited friends at Kaivalyadham in Lonavla, Maharashtra, India. Here we sit with Swami Anubhavananda, The Happy Swami, and others who took part in Swami's week-long seminar.



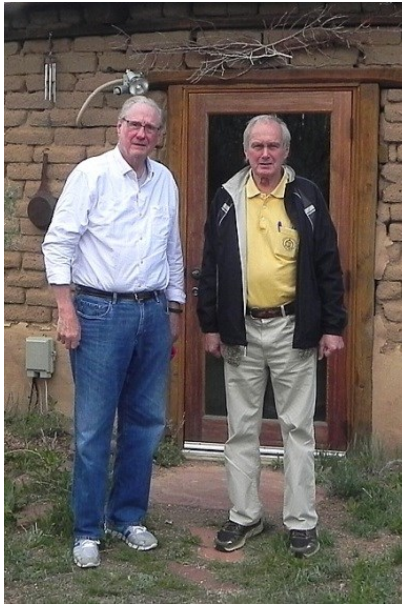
March and early April found us in Rishikesh at Sadhana Mandir to practice our yogic exercises, breathing, and meditation with Ganasan, our teacher there.



This was Mike's greeting the first morning after returning to Santa Fe at the end of April. It melted the next day when the temperature hit 79.



Only seven days later spring was here. Our roundhouse basked the bright sun unrestrained by the blue New Mexico sky. On her way back from India, Petra stopped for a month with her mother in Germany so Mike had the scooter and the place to himself for almost a month.



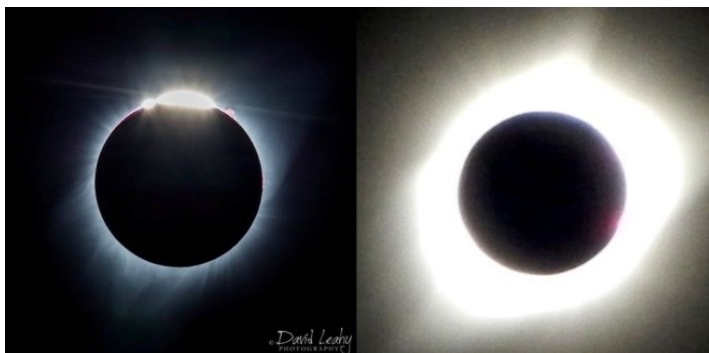
Mike's high school classmate Wally Stanwood stopped in to say hello and have a cup of tea on the 10th of May on his way through town. Also on that day Petra and Mike met 14 years earlier.



In May Kate and Petra planted the garden. By July 7 in this picture it has already a great start. Kate stands next to what became truly huge Sunflowers, though nowhere near the record 30-foot one in Nordwestfarland, Germany.



By July 25 the Garden and sunflowers were flourishing.



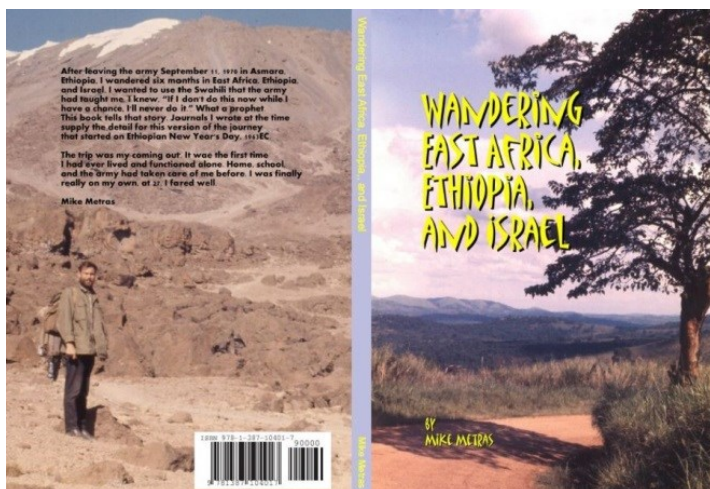
The astronomic event of the year was the August 18th eclipse. Mike road with Peter, a friend, 600+ miles north to western Nebraska to experience it. Mike's image (right) of the diamond-ring effect was nothing like the left one (taken from Facebook) of David Leahy The eclipse experience was a bit anti-climactic until the fullness began and then WOW! The corona was spectacular. When the sun reemerged from behind the moon it was like a jewel, like the wonders of the universe were pouring out of a rent in the sky. WOW!



Kate stands in front of the huge sunflowers at the end of August.



Kate and Petra show off the sunflower heads a few days later.



At the end of August Mike sent in the final copy of his newest book Wandering East Africa, Ethiopia, and Israel. You can read about it at <http://WalkingWithAwareness.com/ourbooks.htm>.



Friend Anna (back) sits with Kate as Anna celebrates at her 80th birthday party in early September.



In September Mike joined the New Mexico Book Association. That allowed Mike to sit several Tuesdays with them at the Santa Fe Farmers Market and sell his books at their "Homegrown Authors" table. It was a lot of fun and he sold some books.



On October 3rd Mike's Aunt Annie died a couple months after her 87th birthday. Though we talked every few months on the phone, this is the last time we saw her in March 2016. She was the last of Mike's dad's and mother's generation. We will miss her. She was in great spirits when we last talked with her on her birthday at the end of July this year.



Mike's brother Marty and Petra talk in Marty's van. He drove down from Woodstock, Illinois during the first week of October. We enjoyed visiting, Marty.



We had many hummingbirds this summer. Petra got this image of one of the last of the season on October 8. We saw only two or three more.



It's the end of October and Petra holds a basket of leeks, some of the last produce from the garden.



At the end of October Bob and Celine Stacy and Lou Madden spent the afternoon with us at the Teahouse and talked about the last 50 years. Bob and Lou were classmates with Mike when he learned Swahili. They graduated from that class in March 1967.



In November we had our first ride on the New Mexico Rail Runner, a train that runs between Santa Fe and south of Albuquerque. We had wanted to ride it as long as we had been in Santa Fe and an appointment in Albuquerque finally made it happen.



November brought the end of all non-evergreen green in Santa Fe and we got ready for India.



We spent a day in early December in Panaji, Goa, with Martin, a schoolmate of Petra. He has lived and worked there for 12 years.



In December, Petra watches the sun set into the Arabian Sea in Benalim, Goa.

So went our year. We'll spend the first four and a half months of the new year overseas before returning to Santa Fe in mid-May.

We wish you a wonderful holiday season and a great 2018.

Peace and Joy,

Petra and Mike

Thought for 2018: get rid of your daily monotony and boredom or you will die. This from the writer Anaïs Nin says a lot.

“You live like this, sheltered, in a delicate world, and you believe you are living. Then you read a book (Lady Chatterley, for instance), or you take a trip, or you talk with [someone], and you discover that you are not living, that you are hibernating. The symptoms of hibernating are easily detectable: first, restlessness. The second symptom (when hibernating becomes dangerous and might degenerate into death): absence of pleasure. That is all. It appears like an innocuous illness. Monotony, boredom, death. Millions live like this (or die like this) without knowing it. They work in offices. They drive a car. They picnic with their families. They raise children. And then some shock treatment takes place, a person, a book, a song, and it awakens them and saves them from death.

Some never awaken. They are like the people who go to sleep in the snow and never awaken. But I am not in danger because my home, my garden, my beautiful life do not lull me. I am aware of being in a beautiful prison, from which I can only escape by writing.” -- Anaïs Nin

Find your escape.