

# 2022 The Year In Review

## Stepping into Retirement

Wednesday, December 21, 2022

A retirement timestamp is frothy. Like the political boundary between Bern and Fribourg cantons, there are a bunch of [enclaves and exclaves](#) that make it difficult to pinpoint an actual date and time when retirement is in force. For me though, that pseudo-barrier was crossed at the end of business day 12.12.2022, when I satisfied all legal obligations to show up and actually do work, and had my exit interview. I still showed up in daily stand-ups to annoy people and show my support for their endeavors, but the contribution component is missing. My laptop and office key were returned 15.12.2022, so I'm now outside the airlock. The official retirement is on 31.12.2022, but I think I'm done.

This leads to maudlin thoughts when reviewing “should-have, could-have, would-have” items on the To-Do list. I assume everybody has a similar list of items pushed to the back-burner by exigencies in the moment. I guess that is life. Doing what matters most at the moment, and pushing other pressing issues to “later” clears the mind for concentration I find. Of course that means my To-Do list often runs into tens of pages. I don't know how other people handle it, maybe they just don't internalize all the stimuli that lead to a “I should...” thought, and just dismiss it immediately. For me though, these things have a way of returning because relationships and tasks are recurring, and this brings back the original thought with a small feeling of guilt that one might have changed things for the better by performing some act or task earlier on. This list making sort-of works for me to remember what's on my stack, but at the cusps of change – new job, new place, new situation – the old To-Do list is pushed on the stack as a bolus and a new list is started with the inevitable sorrow of what could have been.

So far, life is no less busy in retirement. For a birthday, the next day is pretty much the same, but with retirement there is the added dimension that there is no Monday coming. At the moment, I'm fleshing out the new web site (<https://9code.ch>) with all the old detritus from previous writing and art, following through on gift-cards and obligations from my retirement party, and getting through the paperwork and infrastructure changes associated with retirement. I will, eventually, get down to some serious art, writing and playing with technology; which is my plan for retirement, other than travelling.

We did our usual amount of travelling this year. The winter spirit was evident in a trip to Erlinbach im Simmental for some hiking, where we learned that the alps are pretty daunting when you are on the ground slogging through the snow. This was balanced by a trip to Bellinzona for some of the warm Italian flavoured winter weather available in Switzerland south of the mountains. The ancient historical side of things was covered by a long walk from Lake Murten to Avenches to see the ruins, as the Romans must have done before they were ruins. We caught up with more recent history (seventeenth and eighteenth century) with a trip to Évian-les-Bains in France, for a quick look at where the eponymous water comes from.

We traveled to Germany to meet up with friends and relatives in Wurzburg and Heidelberg, respectively, taking advantage of the €9 all-you-can-eat Deutsche Bahn train pass that was offered

this summer. Sipping white wine on a stone bridge in Germany with friends from forty-five years ago, was something that I would not have placed on my bingo card back in Uni. However, watching a rock concert (Boomtown Rats) with relatives might have been... but I would have expected it to occur more than once a decade.

There were two trips to Canada, one in April to see my mom and dad - she had decided that it wasn't worth fighting a fifth cancer - and a summer vacation trip for a family reunion and tour of cottage country and southern Ontario. We don't get back to Canada very often, so I tend to pack a lot of visits and schmoozing into them, much to Jackie's chagrin. She seems to think she would like to go camping, but as I recall she didn't like camping much even back then. So instead we couch-surf, bar-b-que, party and drink a lot. We did get to see some forests; like when we got lost on the Moon River, and when we went hiking along the Niagara River.

Mostly though, we're Swiss tourists, hitting the Saxon apricot festival, and the Mont-Vully wine festival as well as our favourite spots in Spiez, Luzern, Creux du Van and Bergenstock. Jacqueline had some women plumbing issues, which slowed up our usual travel itinerary in the latter part of this year, however we did take in some of the fall festivals like the Martigny wine festival, Toffen chabis-hoblete (cabbage chop) and the Fully fête de la châtaigne (chestnut festival) along with a number of smaller excursions.

I had a large party for my sixty-fifth birthday and retirement. I guess the cadence is once every five years, because the last one was for my sixtieth birthday. The venue was again the Villa Mettlen, and the weather was perfect to hang out in the back garden. Some sixty people attended. I should have said no gifts please; instead most of them brought wine - I wonder why - but there were also gifts around art and writing. Thank you everyone.

My mom died this year. It wasn't unexpected. My reaction is somewhat subdued; more aloof than sad. Everyone has their own reactions. We had been Skyping every week for some time, so we were in touch until the end. It's convenient that the pandemic forced everyone to learn how to do video calls. I wasn't at the funeral, but it was on Zoom. My siblings also set up and ran an online auction of mom's art to raise money for Visual Arts Mississauga - one of mom's passions.

Jacqueline has also had a brush with the big C this year. She's on the mend from surgery and I think nearly back to normal after a couple of months of not being allowed to lift anything. Still, she does pull that 'ol trump card when it's time to do laundry - funny that.

Samantha has purchased a property in Allesses with a few friends. It was a restaurant that was probably only barely viable before the pandemic. They hope to turn it into a combination retreat, education center, and meeting place. That should keep her busy for a while, because it's going to need a lot of work.

Alexandra is working two jobs at the same time before returning to medical school for her masters. That is apparently the normal route to becoming a doctor. What speciality she'll do is still indeterminate, but it will probably be around the sports injuries theme.

I haven't, and won't, get around to sending out Christmas cards this year - my card supplier isn't doing it this year because of a change in jobs - so my bulk wholesale cheap rate on cards is gone. My plan is to take some proper care and mail everyone nice letters, over time, in the new year. That's another item on the new To-Do list.