

## *Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year*

**H**ere it is Christmas again and time for sharing.

Just before Christmas last year I turn the big six oh. Yes, sixty year old! I thought about retiring from the work force and figured it was a doable thing. March 4th was my 22nd year at Knaack and the last day.

First I spent time gearing down from working for the last fifty years and deciding what kind of things I could do with all of this extra time.

April came around and I was ready to go to Europe and visiting Mike and Petra. They lived in Germany and had been talking about moving to the States. They talked me in to doing some walking in Spain. I committed to only walk 5 days. I spend the next few weeks getting ready.

In May I arrived at Mike and Petra's home in Kißlegg, Germany and visited a few days. Mike and I went to Roncesvalles, Spain to walk the Camino de Santiago. It is the main path from the east of Spain to the west coast. Mike was my guide for about 60 miles while I got my courage up to go it alone. The paths would be more than 500 miles to Santiago. Mike left to catch his ride home at Estella. Then I was on my own.

I had committed five day and had done six. Then commit to 100km(62 miles) and then 100 miles(160km).

At Nájera, 171km(106 miles) I lost my pilgrim's passport. The pilgrim's passport allows you stay at the albergue(dorms). (not my International Passport ) The albergue cost around \$10.00 and a hotels are \$50 and more. I did some back tracking and didn't find it. I found I could get a new pilgrim's passport but it was a 32 km(20 mile) hike.

**June 4th I got a new Pilgrim's Passport in Santo Domingo and then took a day off. I went on but became warn out in a few days**

**On Jun 8th I arrived at Burgos(200 miles) where I decide to stop walking. After a good night sleep I caught a train to Santiago.**

**I spend a couple days then took a plane to Germany and did some more visiting with Mike and Petra. On June 14th I took a couple trains, a subway, a couple planes back to Chicago and then a car back home.**

**There was one dumb thing I did while I was in Europe. After a while I didn't take my medication. After being home for two weeks I had a stroke and was in the hospital for a week. On July 2nd was back home learning how to be less stupid. I recovered very fast.**

**I am writing a book on my adventures in Europe and hope to have it published in January**

**I started writing my newsletter again. It is called "Marty's Random Thought". So most any thing could be found in the pages.**

**In November I started helping people with their technical computer issues. Most of this comes easy to me, so I am sharing some of my knowledge.**

**Since I retired I have made new friends and got a lot closer of family and friends. There is not enough space to put all of you in my Christmas letter. Last I heard my friends and family all are doing fine.**

**Merry Christmas**

**and a**

**Happy New Year to All**

**Marty Metras**

**Marty's Random Thoughts**  
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