

# XMAS 2020

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## Pandemic cancellations

2020 was the year my fellow classmates and I from Cowichan Senior Secondary School were planning to celebrate our **50th High School Reunion**. That didn't happen, but we're planning a 50+1 reunion for the summer of 2021.

My annual trek to the **Island Star Party** in the Cowichan Valley didn't happen either. My astronomy buddies didn't get to celebrate their 20th star party, but we'll try again for next summer!

## Photo & video

This was the year I upgraded to the Canon mirrorless system, with an EOS R body, and various new RF lenses, selling or trading in my older EF lenses. It's a new adventure, and an opportunity to embrace new features and capabilities for my photography. I also upgraded to a new DJI Mavic Air 2 drone to get new features and flight capabilities.



## Cruising around the Horn

Sailing from Buenos Aires, to Montevideo, the Falklands, and around Cape Horn, and then up the west coast of South America and through the Panama Canal to Fort Lauderdale was the planned 30-day cruise. We departed March 7th, enjoying wonderful Buenos Aires, Montevideo and the Falklands, but by the time we arrived in Magellan Strait, the COVID-19 pandemic was declared, and the cruise wasn't quite as much fun anymore! We ended up sailing aboard the *Zaandam* back to Fort Lauderdale on our planned route, but it turned into a 3-week mad dash to return home to the safety of Canada and our homes. We were



quarantined aboard the ship, evacuated on a charter to Toronto, and quarantined again when we returned to Canada on April 3rd.



## Astronomy

There were two exciting objects to see in the night sky this year:

### Comet C/2020 F3

(NEOWISE) made a spectacular appearance in the July skies, and I also managed to see noctilucent clouds on a couple of nights as well - a first for me!

**Mars** was at a close approach to Earth, allowing us to see many fascinating planetary details. My friends managed to take some impressive photos of Mars, but we all enjoyed observing it over several months this year.



## I connected with my birth family!

I was adopted as a baby, and through most of my life I had little desire to find my birth mother and father, however a couple of years ago I took a DNA test, and this was the year when it paid off. I was contacted by a second cousin with a lead on my birth mother Violet Wanda Robinson (Beasley) in Alberta, who unfortunately had recently died. Her obituary provided a wealth of information, as did two first cousins I connected with, so I now know about my father (Marvin Robinson), mother, five siblings, and countless aunts, uncles and cousins!

I'm still in the early stages of exploring all of this new information, and forging new relationships as they present themselves, which is quite exciting and challenging.



Violet Beasley in lower right (1947 with her sisters), and Violet Robinson (2019)



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