

2025 NEWS

Travel experiences | Enjoying life | Staying connected

Connections

Weekly coffee with friends, Astronomy Cafe on Monday evenings, and my 55th high school reunion in the Cowichan Valley this summer.

Home & neighbourhood

Three dog walks a day keep Rolly and I active and healthy. Seasonal flowers in local parks are beautiful. Music and events close by keep things interesting!

Astronomy

Observed and photographed a Total Lunar Eclipse this past Spring. I was honoured with an asteroid being named after me: (578249) Josephcarr = 2013 YY81.

Stuff happened

We had to replace 3 appliances this year: OTR microwave, refrigerator and stacked washer/dryer.

Politics - 'nuff said!



Travel

I cancelled this year's long cruise through Asia (too exhausting), and also the Alaska cruise (USA is a no-go). I wanted to stay in Canada, and found a local tour company's **Yukon and Northwest Territories** 13-day tour in the summer. It was terrific: sweeping landscapes, northern culture and wildlife, lots of friendly and interesting people, and a chance to go off the usual tourist path. Bonus was meeting a cousin from my birth family who lives in Whitehorse. Dipped into the Arctic Ocean and saw the beautiful Mackenzie River from the air.





Tech Trials

I'm a confirmed geek, so trying new mobile phones, smart watches, computers and photography keeps me learning.

- I have an Android phone and an Apple iPhone, and like them both, so one in each pocket and two mobile plans.
- Same goes for smart watches: OnePlus Watch 3 and Apple Watch 10.
- Tried several note taking apps this year, but stuck with Bear
 - **UpNote** - supports all platforms, and nice interface
 - **Bear** - my default, but only runs on Apple gear
 - **Notes** - Apple's own app that works well with lots of features
 - **my mind** - flashy interface and AI features, but expensive
- Upgraded to a **DJI Mini 5 Pro** drone - great camera and lots of new capabilities
- Trying out **AI**: ChatGPT, Gemini and Alexa

Norway and Canary Islands cruise

Departing from Rotterdam in September 2026, this Holland America cruise takes me to Norway's fjords, returns to Rotterdam, then sails south to the Canary Islands and back. These are all new ports-of-call for me, and we also call into Madeira, Lisbon and Dover for the bonus.

This cruise really appeals to me, since flights over the pole from Vancouver to the Netherlands are easy to handle, and I'm spending a few extra days in Rotterdam, since I love the Netherlands.



**Wishing you and your family
all the best for the coming
New Year!**

Joe, Kirk and Rolly