Passages, the movement from one stage to another, filled the latter part of our 2012.

In late November, Malcolm’s father, Tommy Aurednick, died at age 90. At the independent retirement community in Lawrence, where he and Malcolm’s mother, Marge, lived, many of those who loved and knew him celebrated his life at a memorial service. “He was special because he picked us, and we picked him,” Malcolm told the gathering. Officially his step-dad, Tommy was, as Malcolm said, “always just ‘Dad’ or ‘Papa’ to me. He was never a ‘step.’” (For those with an interest, his obituary can be found at ljworld.com. Just go to obituaries and search for “Aurednick.”)

Not too long after Malcolm’s Dad’s passing, Malcolm and Joyce got word of great friend Charlie Robin’s death. Malcolm and Joyce flew to Tampa for Charlie’s memorial at a favorite eating spot, the Colomonde on Bay Shore Boulevard, that reminded a lot of former cohorts from the Tampa Times, where Charlie had been a columnist, and Tampa Tribune.

Whenever Malcolm and Joyce made one of their frequent sojourns south, they would always stay a night or two with Charlie and his wife, Carol. Part of the regular itineraries (and fun) were their frequent outings to Tampa’s thrift stores (Goodwill, Salvation Army, St. Vincent de Paul, et al.). Once, while the treasure hunters were stowing this hose and that, Malcolm stumbled upon a giraffe lamp (that now sits prominently in the living room). Malcolm’s find came much to Charlie’s dismay because Charlie had prided himself in finding such treasures first (then, usually, passing them along). At Charlie’s memorial, Carol said, “Don’t be surprised if it’s not there when you get back home” because Charlie might have swapped down to lie might have swopped down to lie before heading off to wherever he was headed to.

During the trip to Charlie’s memorial, Malcolm and Joyce, of course, had to pay tribute by making “the Tour,” where Malcolm found $4 sunglasses (better than any at the Sunglass Hut) and Joyce discovered — Charlie would be proud — a wall clock in the shape of a toilet seat that made flushing sounds on the hour. (That find, by the way, which cost more to mail than it was to buy, sounds on the hour. (That find, by the way, which cost more to mail than it was to buy.)

No more “poop chute.” No more RV.

With thoughts of “how it was” back in the 70s when Malcolm and Joyce owned a mini-motor home and spent many wonderful hours RV-ing next to the beach in St. Augustine, the intrepid couple said, “Why not again now that retirement looms?”

They quickly found the perfect one, and a Mercedes-Benz, at that. It had everything they desired: a queen-sized bed, nice kitchen and bath, a dinette (that, with the push of a button, “hid out” when parked to make the living quarters quite spacious), and a digital TV with programming sucked in by a tech directional antenna.

It was wonderful.

Malcolm and Joyce hated it.

A diesel, it got relatively good (and steadily improving) m.p.g.; a Mercedes, it drove and rode wonderfully well. So, that wasn’t the issue.

To break it in, they spent one night at a lake in western Kansas, which was beautiful and serene, and, a couple of hours, at America’s Best Campground (it wasn’t) in Denver, Colorado.

It was back to the Miata, top down, of course, at a loss (to us, not the dealer). With no hesitation, they took it back to the dealer, who sold it almost immediately… of course, at a loss (to us, not the dealer).

Malcolm affectionately (a bit of sarcasm, folks!) dubbed it the “poop chute.”

On the way back home, Malcolm and Joyce didn’t have to say a word when collectively asking themselves: “What the hell were we thinking?”

With no hesitation, they took it back to the dealer, who sold it almost immediately… of course, at a loss (to us, not the dealer).

It’s back to the Miata and B&Bs, where someone else can make the bed and serve breakfast and clean the toilet.

No more RV.

Branson, Mo. (a town Malcolm had vowed to avoid and wished he hadn’t).

On the Sunday as they prepared to head home, Joyce took care of the inside, making the bed, washing the dishes, and stowing this and that; Malcolm spent that hour or so taking care of the outside, unhooking this line and that and flushing, sanitizing and stowing the four-inch rubberized tube connecting the RV’s septic tank (that had to be flushed, too) to the campground’s septic system.

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The Gibson Gazette

December 2012

Great Dad, great friend, great expectations

Is it RV, or is it ‘are we, crazy?’

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Annual Holiday Greetings from the Gibsons

Volume 17

“Good words, good spirits, good friends make for a good life.”
China, Niagara, ‘Oh, no, Canada’

Continued from Page One

take the full semester off (to work on some writing projects) before likely becoming an adjunct professor in Spring 2014.

One of them, as with Ms. Garmin, again led to some unplanned consequences by sending Malcolm and Joyce through a wall (happening with two of his very special rehab specialists from the hospital: Catlin (nee Newkirk) Brown and her companion, Steve Miller, both great journalists. (Malcolm and Andrea are working on an oral history project.)

Ms. Garmin, again, led to some unplanned consequences by sending Malcolm and Joyce through Canada, the shortest route to Andrea and Steve’s Michigan home. That led to the possibility that they, had they not chosen to take the detour through Utah (they both loved the beautiful ever-changing vistas on that trip), before turning east to Kansas.

In July, it was a road trip interrupted by a month because Joyce stayed there to help Jennifer. Chris and Adam get settled into their new home in Nashua, N.H. Malcolm and Joyce had driven the HHR (stopping at the “always spectacular” Niagara Falls, which the family had visited about 30 years ago). Malcolm flew home, alone, to teach his summer class; Joyce stayed to paint rooms and do yard work with grandson Adam’s help. (stopping at the “always spectacular” Niagara Falls, which the family had visited about 30 years ago).

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