



Dan & Linda in San Diego preparing for the 2019 WAI 30th Year Anniversary Reunion

In the last *Saturday Report* I promised to give you an update on the 2026 schedule.

My announcement is likely not what you were expecting.

My wife, Linda, and I have decided it is time to retire at the end of 2025.

In 2026, WAI will be offering one, and only one, special tour: the **WAI Farewell Adventure**. We hope you'll consider joining us in January someplace warm, probably South Florida, as we commemorate 37 years of Walking Adventures and travel memories. This festive gathering will be similar to reunion tours we've held at 5-year intervals with four to five days set aside for celebration, reminiscing, fellowship, and of course walking!

More details will be available in the coming weeks. Meanwhile, all pre-registrations for 2026 will be cancelled and refunds issued over the next two weeks.

### **Why a Farewell Adventure in 2026?**

Like many of you, Linda and I have been contemplating retirement for several years. Health surprises have accelerated that decision and we have concluded that this is the year; we will officially retire at the end of 2025.

Rest assured, WAI is financially solid. All 2025 tours will continue as planned, including

almost 100 travelers participating in the IVV Olympiad tour through Scandinavia and the Baltics in August and our first and final Adventure in Bhutan in October.

### **A 37-Year Passion**

WAI has been our passion for 37 years. During that time, we've shepherded the company through the challenges of September 11, the 2008 financial crisis, COVID and an assortment of other global disruptions. We couldn't have done this without the loyalty of our WAI clients and for this we will be forever grateful!

### **Providential Protection**

The WAI travel model is not passive; we often prioritize cultural connection and authenticity over comfort and convenience. We approach travel and walking as a pathway to open minds and hearts to the wonderful truths of life and our planet. This travel philosophy has led us all over the globe into situations that are often far from the predictable, sanitized, and orderly norms we've grown up with in North America.

Often during this 37-year period, WAI has experienced unforeseen protection from outcomes that could have been less than pleasant. Examples are too numerous to cite, but one that comes to mind is finishing our Egypt & Jordan tour in 2010 just prior to the Arab Spring that chilled travel into Egypt for years afterwards. For this protection, we thank God and acknowledge his hand upon us, safeguarding us, sometimes in ways we recognized such as Egypt, more often likely in ways to which we remained blissfully oblivious.

### **Thanks, Dad!**

When my father first invited me to join him in the early 90s, I had no expectation of how my life would be changed, how radically my worldview would be altered, and how deeply I would come to appreciate the joys of exploring our world. This is such a rich, amazing, diverse orb of cultural and natural wonders, with storylines endlessly available to mine for drama, intrigue, and priceless life lessons.

St. Augustine is famously quoted as saying "The world is a book, and those who do not travel read only one page." I am so grateful that my family and I have had the rare privilege of reading much of the "book of this world," and that gratitude extends to you for making it possible.

Thank you for being a part of Walking Adventures International!

Dan & Linda Friesen

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**POSTSCRIPT:** Possibilities remain of resurrecting WAI in some form at some future date. Discussions with various parties are ongoing but have not produced results capable of preserving a 2026 schedule. Any form a future version of WAI might take would be quite different from the current WAI, would likely require a pause of at least one season to formulate, and would not include me in any leadership role.