

1/29/12

## California Journey 2011-12 -- Part VIII

On the way off the breakwater we looked west to see the beach boys and probably the beach girls trying to catch a wave with their surf boards. We watched for a while but it must have been a quiet day. No



wave seemed to get them up. Waiting for a wave must be a lot like fishing. Hope you can see the dots in the water.

We actually explored the “yacht club”/restaurant area on the way back. While we were there, we received a call on our cell phone. How exciting!!! It really was nice. Dawn called us from Cincinnati!

As Bev talked, I took a shot of our view from the club.

I probably mentioned before that the hallway walls of this club were covered with old photos and historical explanations of the creation of the harbor, the wharf, and the geology of the harbor. One map which I will not include marked the occurrences of natural gas and oil seeps offshore and onshore in the Santa Barbara area. It seemed like an old picture – not like some recent effort or exploration for oil. The map extended offshore far enough to include the Channel Islands -- Anacapa, San Miguel, Santa Rosa, and Santa Cruz. Those four islands and the neighboring islands are preserved as a National Marine Sanctuary. Beverly and I took a boat out there several years ago to Anacapa which has a visitor center and some trails.



Back at the hotel, we dressed for our second bike ride. This time I think we knew more about the streets than on the previous ride yesterday. Our route north was mostly up Bath Street. On the map that I provided with Part VII, Bath is designated by an arrow where the “faint” white line was supposed to belong. Just understand that Bath is a street that parallels State Street about three blocks to the west. It also passes by the Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital on the northeast side. This route was much more forgiving. It was relatively flat. We took it north to Alamar Avenue. Then we headed toward the west

on streets like Las Positas Road. US101 was a barrier, but we knew of a bike bridge over that thoroughfare. Here is one of the couple pictures I took on that tour. Beverly is trying to plan the next step of the trip. As I recall, we went to Modoc Road which is on the map and then back to Las Positas.



The route was great. Las Positas provided a great downhill. Downhill! Whoops! Had I mentioned an uphill? No As biking teaches, the downhill first means that an uphill will follow. We reached Cliff Drive and there was the uphill. I tried to start biking it, but was not used to the low gear range of this mountain bike. In retrospect, I might have been able to do it. But... Beverly was walking and I started walking also. It was really long even walking. On the map, you can see it. Our right turn off of Cliff was Miegs Road.

Again Miegs emptied into Shoreline; and, in that travel, we gave up all the altitude we had gained walking up Cliff. No problem. We enjoyed a swift return to the shore. On the way, there was another cell phone call. I was getting pretty fast at pulling the phone out of my camera pouch. It was Chris phoning. So we stopped and talked for about twenty minutes on the top of a rise where those surfers parked their cars to descend<sup>2</sup> to the ocean with their boards. After the call, we had only a short jaunt to the motel.

We probably showered. I can't remember. It had been longer and more strenuous ride than the day before.

We were still not certain what was open in the evening. We might have walked back to the Yacht Club just in case. However, those two restaurants were shut up tight. We walked all the way back to the wharf. The wharf was hopping. It looks like most of the places were open.

We stopped at the Harbor Restaurant. If you didn't have a reservation it was no-go in the main restaurant. However, upstairs was another restaurant and bar. Needless to say that was cheaper too. We walked up and were able to sit outside along the side of the porch with a view of the harbor. Now there was no roof on this porch; and, when we got there, quite a few tables were occupied. Peanut shells were all over the floor. It was just after 5:30 or so and the sun set quickly. Most of the people deserted us. The view of the harbor was lost through the glass or plastic beside the table. It was still great. We had our coats. We were from Minnesota. It was not too cool and the fish and chips I had were fine. It was a nice Christmas dinner. Nothing fancy.

After eating we walked out to the end of the wharf where a few hearty souls were fishing. (If you caught a fish, how would you get it up to the wharf? Maybe the fish were small.) On the way back, the other shops were either closed or closing. The Harbor Restaurant was doing very well.

Here is a little history of Stearns Wharf.

*Stearns Wharf was built in 1872 to serve cargo and passenger ships. In the 1930s, gamblers boarded floating casinos at the pier, and during World War II it was turned into a naval installation. Now, the wharf has numerous shops and restaurants and gets 5 million visitors a year, making it Santa Barbara's No. 1 tourist attraction.*

*On November 18, 1998 was seriously damaged by a fire that was fed by the specially treated timbers from which the wharf is built. It took firefighters 3 1/2 hours to put out the fire and regular crews were joined by fireboats.*

There is also a museum out there. Something for "next time."

*The Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History Ty Warner Sea Center is a fun, engaging, interactive marine education facility located on Stearns Wharf. Owned and operated by the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, the Ty Warner Sea Center fulfills the mission of the Museum to inspire a passion for the natural world.*

So ends Christmas Day 2011

I know we got up on December 26, but right now it escapes me what we did in the morning. It was probably a very low-key morning with breakfast and prayer. We had been communicating with Frank and Pat Kastama about going to eat in the evening. So relatively early, we took a bike ride up and down the shore line with our bikes and then turned them in early. It had been nice. We got our use out of them.

In the afternoon, we hopped in the car and drove up along the coast to Solvang, CA. If the name should sound slightly Scandinavian, you are right!! Here is a rundown on this unique little tourist trap.

*Solvang was founded in 1911 on almost 9,000 acres (3,600 ha) of the [Rancho San Carlos de Jonata](#) Mexican land grant, by a group of Danes who traveled west to establish a Danish colony far from the midwestern winters. The city is home to a number of bakeries, restaurants, and merchants offering a taste of [Denmark](#) in California. The architecture of many of the facades and buildings reflects traditional Danish style. There is a copy of the famous [Little Mermaid](#) statue **from Copenhagen**, as well as one featuring the bust of famed Danish fable writer [Hans Christian Andersen](#). A replica of Copenhagen's Round Tower or [Rundetårn](#) in the scale 1:3 was finished in 1991 and can be seen in the city centre.*



It took a little driving to get there. This was a choice location between Santa Barbara and the town where Kastamas live north of there. The cell phone again helped us. Pat and Frank got there before us and their directions took us right to the parking lot where they were standing to greet us.

Solvang was packed with vacationers. Christmas was on Sunday and besides



actual vacationers, most everyone had Monday off as a holiday. We walked the streets for a while getting a sense of the place. When we decided to find an eating place, it turned out that there were lines everywhere even though it was not 5 PM yet. Ultimately, we found a Mexican restaurant and had a good meal and good long talk. The shame of it all!! We were visiting an idyllic Danish enclave like Solvang and ending up in a Mexican restaurant. Oh well, it worked.

Check my picture. I only took a couple shots since it was getting dark. Notice the peak of the roof on the building across the street. All the ends of those roof stringers crossing one another at the top. Maybe it was fake architecture, but it was quaint-looking!! Danish. The village must have enforced a very tough building code, because all the structures looked like part of the old Danish homeland.

I can't recall quite when we left for the trip back. We got our packing done when we got back to the motel and went to bed. In the morning we would be leaving for Orange, CA.

December 27, 2012

As we got on the road after breakfast, our mileage read 2624.6. The temperature in Santa Barbara was 50 degrees.

I certainly don't have much verbiage from this day. My only notes are in the lines just above. Everything is photographs.

Our intent was to go first to Woodland Hills. Before we left on the trip, my attempts to find an old teaching friend from Buffalo State days had me looking in Yahoo White Pages for Kwan-Wei Chen. I last talked to him by phone in the early 1990s when I believe Mrs. Kennedy (also from Buffalo) had given me his phone number in LA. The Yahoo White Pages had been very helpful in other searching. They did locate someone of that name and near the proper age in Woodland Hills, but no phone number was registered. So we would just go and see. An address was provided.

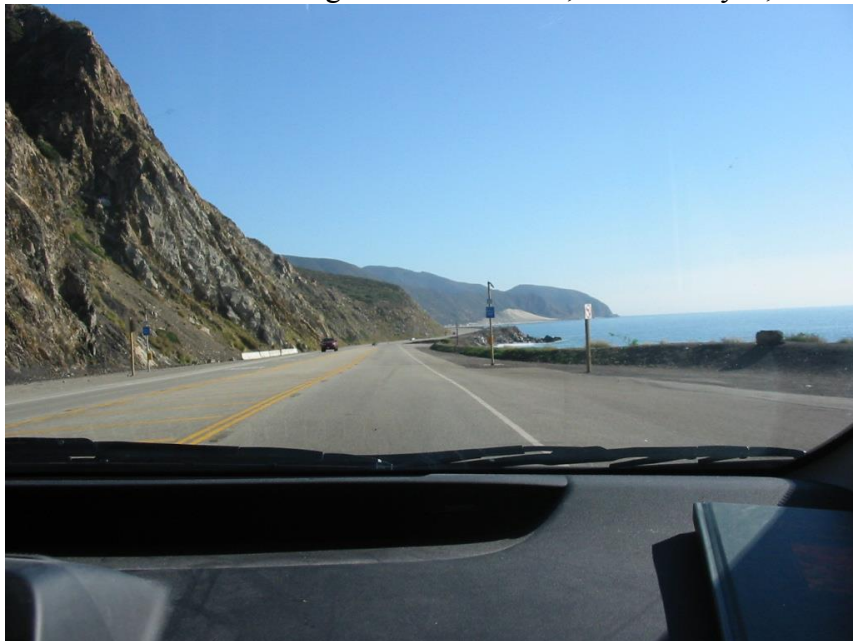


Beverly drove since she retained a sense of the area since her time out there in the 1960s. The general route was to take Hwy 101 to just past Ventura where we would pick up CA 1 along the coast. Most of the way along the coast, the Pacific was on our right. Once we got to CA 1, we would be traveling with the Pacific on the right and the Santa Monica Mts on the left. Again this set of foothill height mountains were in an area called the Santa Monica Mts. National Recreation Area. The city of Santa Monica was on the far east end of that area and we turned inland before reaching it. We did make our

turn north just after Malibu. In all, there were lots of miles without too much, if any, city life.

As we left Santa Barbara, I did take the photo on the last page from inside the car. The road bikers were out for their morning jaunt. These were regular streets but they were marked on either side with a fair-sized bike lane.

All the photos show, the hills, highway and ocean in a left to right sequence. I like all of them, so here is one. If it isn't interesting or even beautiful, all I can say is, "You had to be there." ☺ Occasionally,



some land would remain to the right between the road and the ocean. I don't know who owned or managed that land, but some of it was relegated for motor homes and campers. I wonder what it would be like to just rent one of those spaces and stay a week. At least at this time of year, you wouldn't need shade and none was available.

This was California – an agricultural state. At one point, I captured one of the several gardening areas. Many were small, but this was large. No, I didn't see any greenery either. The crop was under some sort of movable



greenhouse – the white things. The service road was loaded with the parked pickups and autos of the workers. (I wonder how the Dutch truck farmers in Indiana managed to grow vegetables in the 40s and 50s without all that labor.) Whatever crop is here seems to require a lot of manual labor. We never got up close, but my social-profiling brain just assumes that the workers were

Hispanic.





Traveling along, I took shots of whatever I could. We didn't stop. Whoops!! People have been known to break cameras photographing that face!!

A blimp carrying a MetLife logo crossed our path. It was probably getting ready for the Rosé Bowl in a few days.

For anyone who is still puzzling over my horticultural question from a couple chapters back, here are three or 4 of those curvy-plumed plants growing in the wild. Whoops another biker, too!

Beverly left Hwy 1 at Zuma Beach (Point Dume) and looked for the place where she had lived in 1964 – in view of the ocean and swimming whales. She didn't have much luck. It seemed like the road is lengthened and the real estate has become "gated communities". Makes sense. But I believe we can see the old triplex on Google Earth – searching for 7131 Birdview; Malibu, CA. What else is neat is "ground-level view" Someone is modeling all the Malibu houses.



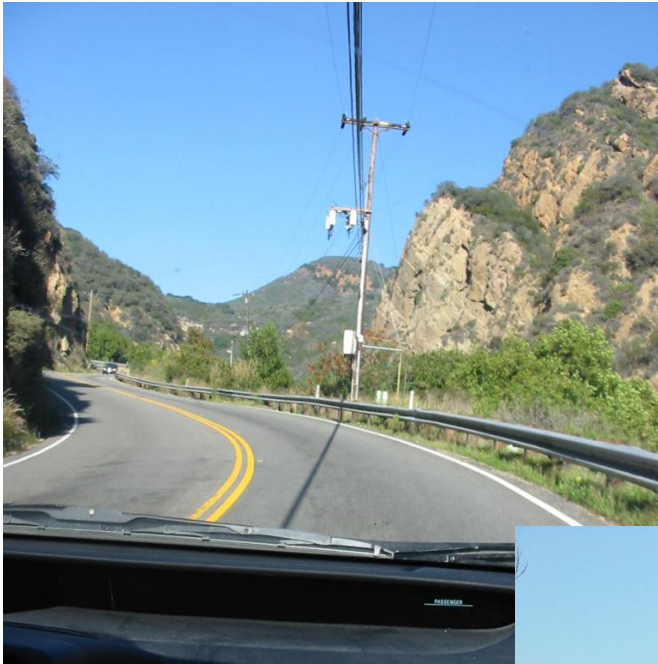
Check it out!!



Malibu approacheth!! My only good shot from the coast approaching beautiful Malibu has a tree and telephone pole. This one on the left contains a light standard also. Need a faster camera! ☺



Well, we are ready to turn north. There had been a number of “canyon” roads heading up into the mountains. Several were marked as scenic. We turned at CA 27 which was Topanga Canyon Road. It was a scenic 13 mile route which wasn’t marked as scenic. There were three little towns on the route –



Fernwood, Topanga, and Glenview. I guess I understand that it can be nail-biting time along there during fire season. You’ve heard of the California fires. When one starts from a careless cigarette or campfire as they seem to every year, they can roar up those narrow canyons and do a lot of damage. Fire insurance must be expensive.

The journey from the shoreline was an uphill jaunt. Even though the Santa Monica Mts are not very high, when you start up, you begin from sea level -- and not 4 or 5,000 for some ascents to mountain passes in mountain states. At the top, we were in Woodland Hills. I took one photo that I liked. I

believe it shows the skyline of Encino, CA which lies in “the valley” below.



“Mrs. GPS” as we call our GPS device helped out again. Woodland Hills was down the mountain side and the roads were very straight. We



plugged in Chen’s address and followed her directions. Ultimately, we found 5703 McDonie Avenue.

We parked across the street. I got out and went over to the front door that opened off the curved driveway.

I just had no problem recognizing Chen as he opened in response to my knock. He was surprised when I introduced myself. His voice had that usual high-

pitched sound that I remember when he was excited. We called Bev to come over and we went into the house.

We only talked for about 45 minutes. I believe Chen is about 79 from what I remember from Yahoo White Pages. His sister, whose name I have forgotten, is a little older and has had to use oxygen as our picture shows. I remember in the 60s when Chen's sister was sent by Chen's mother to "take care of him." (Chen said.)

Chen talked about his jobs after Buffalo State. I remember Fisher Body was one place after teaching. I believe he helped his brother who had the franchise to sell smoke detectors to Sears for a while.

We talked fast about everything. Chen has kept in contact with Kathy Ludwig and Jim Westrope. I have sent a letter to Jim in Fort Myers, but haven't heard back. This writing reminds me to contact Chen again by email. There was some mention of taking his sister to Minnesota to get the care of a niece who lives here.

We went outside for the photo-shoot, said our good-byes, and went back to driving toward Orange, CA. That was to be the final destination for the day. There we would stay over night with Charlotte and Howard Johnston, Bev's aunt and uncle, from Bev's father's side of the family.

I didn't retain much of a record of our trip from Woodland Hills to Orange. I only took three freeway pictures. Nothing dramatic. Haven't got a clue what I took this one for. ☺ One thing I did notice was



the freeways didn't have the truck traffic I am used to around Chicago. However, this was still mid-afternoon. Maybe I am always heading out of Chicago at 4 or 5 PM.

We arrived in Orange and had a nice comfortable reunion. Charlotte is 92 and Howie is 94. Howie looks frail, but he still drives and has been doing quite well of late. They have children and grandchildren galore and seem to have no problem remembering and relaying everything that those youngsters are doing. We went out to eat at a restaurant that they often visit. It was great.



Back at the house, we talked until Howard announced that it was time for bed. We had a wonderful room with our own washroom so we were able to get to bed very quickly. I slept better there than the nights in

Santa Barbara when I had achy legs. (I still believe that I didn't spend enough time adjusting the seat on that mountain bike. I had it too low. It just wasn't like normal.) The bed was hard and I liked that.



Here is a picture of aunt, uncle and niece. It was nice to be off the road in a residence for a while to see something of Christmas. Note the stockings and Charlotte sweater. In California, it would be a real problem for me to get in the Christmas spirit.



In the morning (12/28), we had breakfast in the nook at the Johnston house. We then drove over to Wanda's house and visited that just a few minutes. (Wanda was a granddaughter who has three daughters – hence great grandchildren.) Back at the house this time, we reviewed Howard's roses which they said were suffering from some malady. The word was that they'd have to tear them out and start over. They looked great to me. (It reminded me of Helen Kolstad from St. Anthony who worked in the Johnson greenhouse on Edwards. She would give us bushes that were not producing fast enough for Johnsons. We reveled in their production when we planted them by our front sidewalk.) There were quite a few different bushes. Different roses, all with names. I just took my photo centered on the red one.

We left for Palm Springs before lunch. As was our habit we had no lunch, but would wait for supertime. We did leave with a bag full of avocados this time. People in the neighborhood as well as Charlotte and Howie have grapefruits, oranges, lemons, etc. just going in their yards.

Palm Springs is to the east of Orange. We got no nearer to Los Angeles. Yet I believe we drove freeways all the way. There wasn't much else. At some point heading east, I took three pictures approaching a maze of bridges. The next picture was the last of the three and was taken almost under the

first overpass. This is just an idea of what it's like. I can see on maps that it gets much worse where I10 and I5 meet around Los Angeles. (Also the Long Beach Freeway meeting the Pomona Freeway, etc, etc.)



As we drove west, the desert terrain came back again. As Beverly said, even in Orange, Santa Barbara, Los Angeles and other California cities the green is artificial – brought there by pulling in water from all their aquifers and lots of distant one. It is the issue that we saw in Nevada where the northern Nevada (Great Basin) people fear the loss of their meager water resources because of Las Vegas water needs hundreds of miles away in the Mojave desert.





Desert shows on the upper two of these shots. The one at the left shows the snow-capped San Bernardino Mountains that will ultimately be northwest of Palm Springs. I have no idea how well this will print; but in the foreground, there is a forest of wind turbines covering the hills. Quite an extensive wind farm. This shows attention to the power problem. The water problem should be on the agenda too.

We arrived in Palm Springs and found our Comfort Inn Motel on Indian Canyon Drive. For purposes of our discussion in this chapter, there were two main thoroughfares – Palm Canyon Drive which was one way south and Indian Canyon Drive that was one-way north. Most of the retail and eating places we hit were on Palm Canyon which was just the next block west of Indian Canyon. So we did a lot of walking when going to eat.

For us, the place might seem totally different for other tourists. That's natural. But what I mean is the place provides casinos – big time – if you want that. For others for whom golf is king, this is touted to be the home of 100 golf courses. Theater may also play a big part with the sidewalks of Palm Canyon studded with the names of lots of “stars” – very few of whom we knew. We don't watch enough television, I suppose.

After getting to Palm Springs and getting our bags to our second floor room, I think we took a walk over to Palm Canyon Drive to get oriented. It helped a little.

Back at the motel, we went and looked up Frank and Pat Kastama. Yes, they were the same two whom we have met in Solvang the other night. Our reason for being in Palm Springs was to help celebrate their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. Bev and I were fortunate enough to be included. Bev has known Pat and Frank from way back in the 60s when Bev was programming right after leaving Boeing. I believe Pat, Frank and Beverly all started working for a company (Systems Development Corporation) on the same day in 1962. (That is a bonding event with which I have had some experience.)

For a while, we sat around in the Kastama room meeting the other members of the party who had arrived for this two or three day affair. Frank gave me a bottle of his “homebrewed” ale. Not bad. I should have gone back to see if any was left on Thursday or Friday.

Of the interesting couples we met were Frank’s sister and husband. They work for some Alaskan state agency and have spent most of their married lives in tents and associating with brown bears. They catch and tag trout and salmon and live out in “the field” most of the year. Just the two. Go visit them and you can be the third member of the team who could help in recording data as they handle the fish. They do have a house somewhere, but I believe it is on an island and they have to boat to their neighbors who do not live close! I believe they live south in Alaska along the Pacific coast. (Closer to Juneau.)

Another aspect of meeting these Alaskans, Bev and I were out of the running for the ones who came the farthest to attend. If they did not beat our 2000 miles, some arrivals from the east coast would have done it. (There really was no contest!!)

Eventually, eight or ten of us took off for supper. The restaurant of choice was Fisherman’s Market & Grill. I don’t know how pricey other places were, but this place had a booming business with people dressed like us. (More profiling.) First you were assigned a table by number. Inside and outside was possible. To order you went through a market side where the menu options were displayed as well as a wide variety of cold fish were on display at the counter.

That night my choice was crab strips – a dish I used to love when Howard Johnson’s had it on their menu long ago. No luck. Out of crab strips. I ordered fish and chips – small order (I’m in training.) It was good, but I should have ordered more. It was just a nice comfortable time for getting acquainted. It was kind of cool although Bev and I were dressed for it. Plus these restaurants all seemed to have their gas burners to heat the outdoor eating areas. Enough. Except for one short stop on the way back to the motel, that ended December 28.

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This is sort of an errata page. I forgot one shot from Santa Barbara that I took while biking back from Cliff Road on Christmas Day. I believe I took it after my phone call with Chris. This shows that those surfers in an earlier photo had to traverse this cliff with their surf board in order to do commune with the waves. That in itself was a lot of exercise. As you can see, there was not much surf.





The real reason for this picture is the horizon. Check it out. Those two blips on the right at the horizon are not ships!

They are oil rigs. I believe there are 5 or 6 of them in that area. All in a row. They can be seen by their lights at night. They were there on our earlier trip to California when we had to pass them on the way to the Channel Islands.

All I can think of is oil spills. ☹