

Merry Christmas, 2012

To our dear family members and friends,

We hope your last year was a grand one. We are blessed to have had a fairly good one of those ourselves. Maurie will be back home for Christmas for a couple of weeks. She's a Junior at Cal State Northridge and will be doing a winter-session online class during the "break." This was her first Presidential election as a voter.



"My Mama always said, if you don't vote, you can't [whine]."

One of the most difficult parts of going away to college, if you are a dog, is that you have to wait until visits to get kisses from Your Girl.



Jazz and Maurie.

As we tend to do each January (and March, May, July, September, and sometimes October), we hauled our little Airstream, "Button," off to go Glamour Camping. For Dr.

King Day, we went to Olema, beat the trailer up on the bumpy road through Sam Taylor Park, and managed to crack the rear part of the frame again (same zone of weakness, it just "unzipped" like an earthquake fault). We had a grand time at the beach with Jazz and made a run to the hardware store. A bit of 6061 T6 aircraft aluminum sheet metal, some steel barstock, some stainless fasteners, and we are good to go again.



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We went to my sister Linda's house for a joint birthday for a bunch of us. Maurie's school is right over the hill, and my grand niece Joy has endless fun with her.



Maurie and Joy iPadding.

My friend Greg from Humboldt (circa 1965 through Earth Day and all that) came out to teach a class in Wilderness management to the local National Park Service over at Point Reyes. So I took some time off, joined him for stories and beers after one of his days, and went out to see

my other old friends, the Elephant Seals. I saw one of these two beaches up closer a few years back when some of us were out in a skiff working on a guy's thesis. But a long lens with a rain cover worked pretty well this time also.



See those little lumps down there? They're over a thousand pounds each.

Before Maurie's Spring Break, we fixed a few more things on Button. The cabinets flew open and stuff ended up all over the floor when we hit bumps, the table leg was ready to collapse when Jazz bumped it, and it needed a new "period" awning.



I got to use the drill press my Honey gave me for Christmas a few years back.

So when we drove down to Malibu Beach (about six miles from Maurie's dorm), we set up camp and could hang out with her in style.



Mother-Daughter Act; they are such a cute pair.

Maurie had also decided to start living life on the edge. Although if your daughter gets busted for Bunny

Smuggling, it could be worse. Yes, Maurie has a bunny rabbit named Chubys. And Chubs wasn't supposed to be in the dorms. There are stories of playing cat and mouse with the bunny when the management was closing in.



Maurie and Chubys



Jazz may look worried about competition but he's a con dog; he's well-loved.



Oh yeah, that cute Mother-Daughter Act again

I've been collecting rocks for a few decades now. In fact, I'm on my second fork-lift palate. A few hundred of them are slabs of granite I cut and analyzed and have long-since published the resulting geologic maps. So I drove my pickup truck (Hillary) down to the warehouse, loaded her up, and Let the Walkway Games Begin.



Fewer than 500 samples; these were just the trim stones.

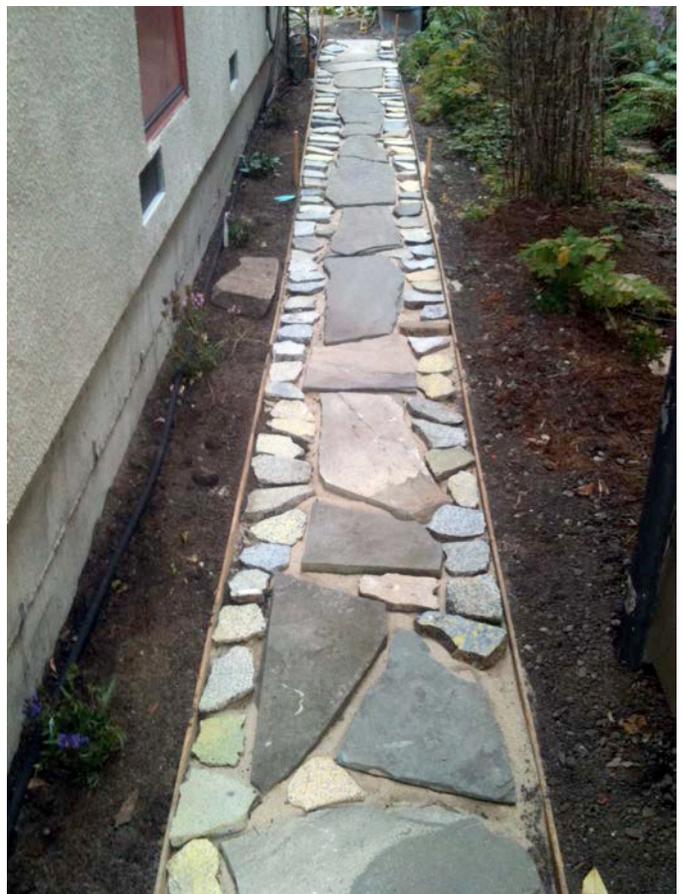


Moved half a yard of dirt...

Inside the house, where the kitchen is the center of family life, we couldn't let the girls doing their iPadding get the better of us. We got an iPad bracket for the cabinet near the stove. The old technique was to print recipes so we didn't get the screen greasy. This is much better.



The stonework took many weekends, the cooking magic, meanwhile, was ongoing.



Added half a yard of sand and cement and 3/4 ton of sandstone slabs, put in potting soil and dichondra, Deanna planted the flowerbed, and we were done.

I was sad to have had to given up using Kodachrome to take these.



The last batch of processing took place early this year.

Photography did play big this year, mostly having to do with things astronomical. Here are three semi-related topics. Oh, OK, you have to use your imagination a bit.



In May; a partial annular solar eclipse in my back yard.



A month later, Venus made a transect of the Sun (that little dot at 3:00). This was mid-day so I took my camera to work and set it up near the parking lot for folks.



In September, the Endeavor made a flyby over the San Francisco Bay Area. I got this shot from the Emeryville mud flats

I worked the triennial U.S. Geological Survey Open House again this time around. We had several thousand people over the weekend. I put a photo essay of it online at <http://www.diggles.com/openhouse2012/>.

Since our cats constantly tell us they are not loved enough, Deanna gave into their demands for cushions on the cushions. After all, they work hard all day and all night keeping busy doing, uh... er... whatever they do.



Wait; there's one cat missing.



Oh, there she is.

We no longer have a teenager in the household. Maurie turned 20 in late June.

ALTAR FLOWERS are given by Deanna & Michael Diggles to the glory of God and in celebration of Maurie's 20th birthday.

From the Church bulletin.

She and two other young women from college got their own apartment near campus and get to have all the joys of living on their own like getting an Internet hookup, adding

wifi, arguing with the gas company, and enjoying the bunny no longer being illegal. She's pretty much an iStudent. She has her iPod, iPad, iPhone and puts Instagram to good use. She's pretty much put her Mac Book laptop computer aside; the iPad is her main device for schoolwork. She got *Pages* from the Apple App Store and prefers it over Google *Docs*.



Maurie and Mama

About nine years ago, we got pretty far up Mt. Brewer in the High Sierra. My cousin Jon was on that trip with me when we got stormed off so he wanted to take another crack at it. We got just about as far this year and got stormed off yet again. <http://www.diggles.com/brewer/>.



Storm clouds and steep granite; nice country!

We had a grand time both ascents. This year, my cousin Sarah joined us (her older brother Justin was on the first trip). When William Brewer made the first ascent in 1864, he went with Charles Hoffmann, a topographer. So since we didn't get up William's namesake, we headed north and

via Mono Lake to Yosemite to bag Charles' namesake



Michael, Jon, and Sarah on the summit of Mt. Hoffmann.

The Yosemite trip with the sixty 11-year-olds has been put off until early 2013 due to hantavirus so we took Button to El Portal and hit the Ahwahnee for our anniversary (9th) toast.



This is the same table where we got engaged in 2003.

Deanna has had several years of trouble with her back that may be in part from thirty years of her nursing career. In any event, after trying all of the lesser choices, she finally had to go in and get spinal surgery. She was in and out of Stanford Hospital in four days and three nights and is now home with me. I'm taking off from work until Maurie gets home and then we'll tag-team providing *Oh-Mama Care*. We get out for walks down to Dry Garden nursery in Berkeley and back (a full mile) or similar adventures. She has to keep from twisting her lower spine or bending over. The five-pound limit on lifting weight isn't easy either; it even excludes picking up a cat.

As the year comes to a close, Deanna is doing well, Maurie is due home from school in a week (yay!), and Lilly has the tree staked out for herself, we are thankful for care and caregivers and for all of you.

Have a wonderful and safe Christmas and New Year,
-Michael, Deanna, and Maurie

-Lilly, Luv Dove, Yo Yo, Lola, and Jazz

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