

Merry Christmas, 2016

Dear friends and family members,

This year at Christmas is similar to last year where Maurie had to work so we took Christmas down to her in Northridge. This year at least, she was not working on Christmas day but was working late Christmas eve. So, we hauled Button, the Airstream, with the dogs back down with a miniature Christmas tree to be there on the 23rd.



Maurie in her "angel on top" photo.

We celebrated with a visit to my sister, Linda, and my grandniece, Joy, as well. We packed up the trailer, the dogs, and the daughter and brought 'em all back up to Oakland on the 26th for family gatherings. Maurie takes a plane back down to school January 2.



We dressed the dogs up for Christmas again.

Deanna has had her position as a Case Manager at U.C. San Francisco for a full year now (hematology/oncology/bone-marrow-transplant). It is

a lot of hard work which is all worth it when she gets complicated patients taken care of with all of their ducks in a row.

The Elephant Seals at Año Nuevo Preserve were in rare form again this year. If you get up before dawn and are out on the dunes at first light, the seals are more active than when it warms up later in the morning. These two were deciding who was the alpha (the interloper lost this time but the season was young).



Sex and violence.

We did some more work on Button again this year like we tend to do every year. This year she got a really nice new fridge and a new accordion curtain. I took off most of the windows and rebuilt them. We are also working on the garage, the Little House in the back yard, and the attic. All three of those are partially done which is to say none of them is neat and tidy yet.



Fridge and door all done.

A somewhat obscure bit of Americana is the Airstream Rally. People who have these silver wonders tend to gather in groups and go places

together. One such even took place at our favorite campground near Point Reyes National Seashore where we go a few times every year anyhow. So, we joined in. It was fun to see so much polished aluminum in one place and the potluck dinner was grand. We are signed up to do an Airstream caravan to eastern Oregon next August to see the solar eclipse. That'll be the longest trip we've ever taken and the dogs will love it.



Airstream Rally

Mike ended up in Virginia this year for whirlwind USGS visits that included visiting the back rooms of the Smithsonian and holding in my hand a rock sample collected on the Wilkes' U.S. Exploring Expedition in the early 1800s by James Dwight Dana himself.



This guy also wrote the Handbook of Mineralogy.

A tradition among geologists is the enjoyment of beer. So when 30 of us gathered after work, what better place to present Mike with his 40-year award than a bar.



A lapel pin and a certificate signed by the Director herself.

We also had a bit of a Gathering of Diggles with dinner and more beer. Kate, Anna, and Alison live nearby so I got to meet more cousins.



Dinner with Diggles

Maurie is in her third and final year of grad school at Calif. State Univ. Northridge (CSUN). She drove our old Honda down there when she was an undergrad and the little car had pretty many miles on it. Well, it was getting on in years so she sweet-talked us out of our Toyota which meant we needed a replacement. We're on our third 4Runner.



This'll pull Button to Oregon with ease.

With the temporary plates still on the new car, I was off in the snow in four-wheel drive to Tahoe where we had a grand gathering of geologists to celebrate the career of Jim Moore with several days of presentations and a field trip. The weather cleared and we were out looking at maps and rocks in short order.



Jim showing ground failure on a map of the shoreline

Those poor dogs... if it isn't one holiday costume it's another. We promise not to dress them up for Ground Hog Day.



Bat Bear and Wonder Mattie

We had a nice gathering of family and friends for Thanksgiving also. We didn't even dress the dogs like Pilgrims or turkeys.



*Mattie puts in long weeks and loves to go surfing.
Deanna did two different styles of turkey*



A dog and her woman

Deanna pulls some long weeks and gets to trade for some short ones. She can jump on a commuter flight and go down to Northridge for some Mother-Daughter Time. It is wonderful for both of them; they are so cute together.



Maurie and Deanna.

Have a wonderful and safe Christmas and New Year,

-Michael, Deanna, and Maurie
-Lilly, Mocha, YoYo, Mattie, and Bear