

Though we were traveling West to East, following the trail was an education. You needed 150 pounds of flour for each person.

1850 Clayton's to Oregon Trail

<https://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/digital/collection/TrailGuides/id/2978/rec/7>

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We didn't stop at any state parks because we didn't want to disturb the animals. We just saw friends and family that we wanted to see along the way. Not like meeting friends while we were at a meeting or something. We enjoyed seeing the country. I wish we had seen more of the Oregon coast.

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Left Friday, March 28, 2025

7,685 miles in six weeks with 17 nights in Marriotts, the rest with friends and family.  
No rain, windy,

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Starting off with a box on the roof with a painting in it to deliver to Atlanta, our first stop.



My on the road painting kit. I did not bring one but bought the hot plate and two boxes of crayons, one of standard colors and the other of the 24 shades of man, a quarter of the way through. I normally do not start documenting until the voyage is well underway.





Painting delivered and hung.

So we, you know, we started off at Eileen's beautiful mansion, delivered a painting. We went to see Uncle Tom. Well, he's doing really great. He looks good. We went out to dinner. We went out to dinner with Eileen. And we were just eating our way through the States. Anyway, Uncle Tom's fine. We went well.

3 hr 11 min (208 miles)

Eileen Smyrna GA 30080

Tom MARIETTA GA 30066



And then we went to Pensacola to see Mary. I met her in Atlanta and used to spend a lot of time visiting her. When I went to see Grandmother every year in Atlanta I'd bring Helen as a baby and stay with Mary. Now, Mary's living in a cute ranch with a swimming pool. The endless white beach is right down the way. Then we went to Sulphur Springs, Louisiana, and spent the night.

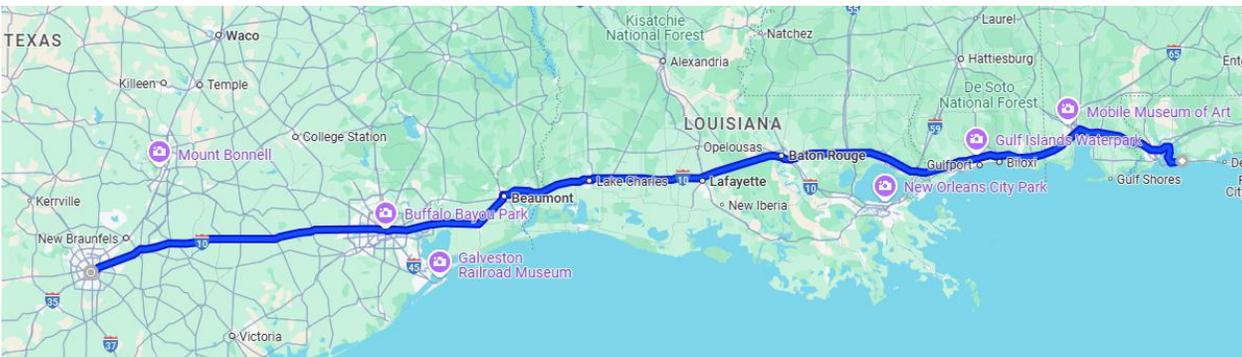
5 hr 18 min (329 miles) from Tom to Mary

Mary Navarre FL 32566

Monday to Wednesday April 2



Birmingham, Al

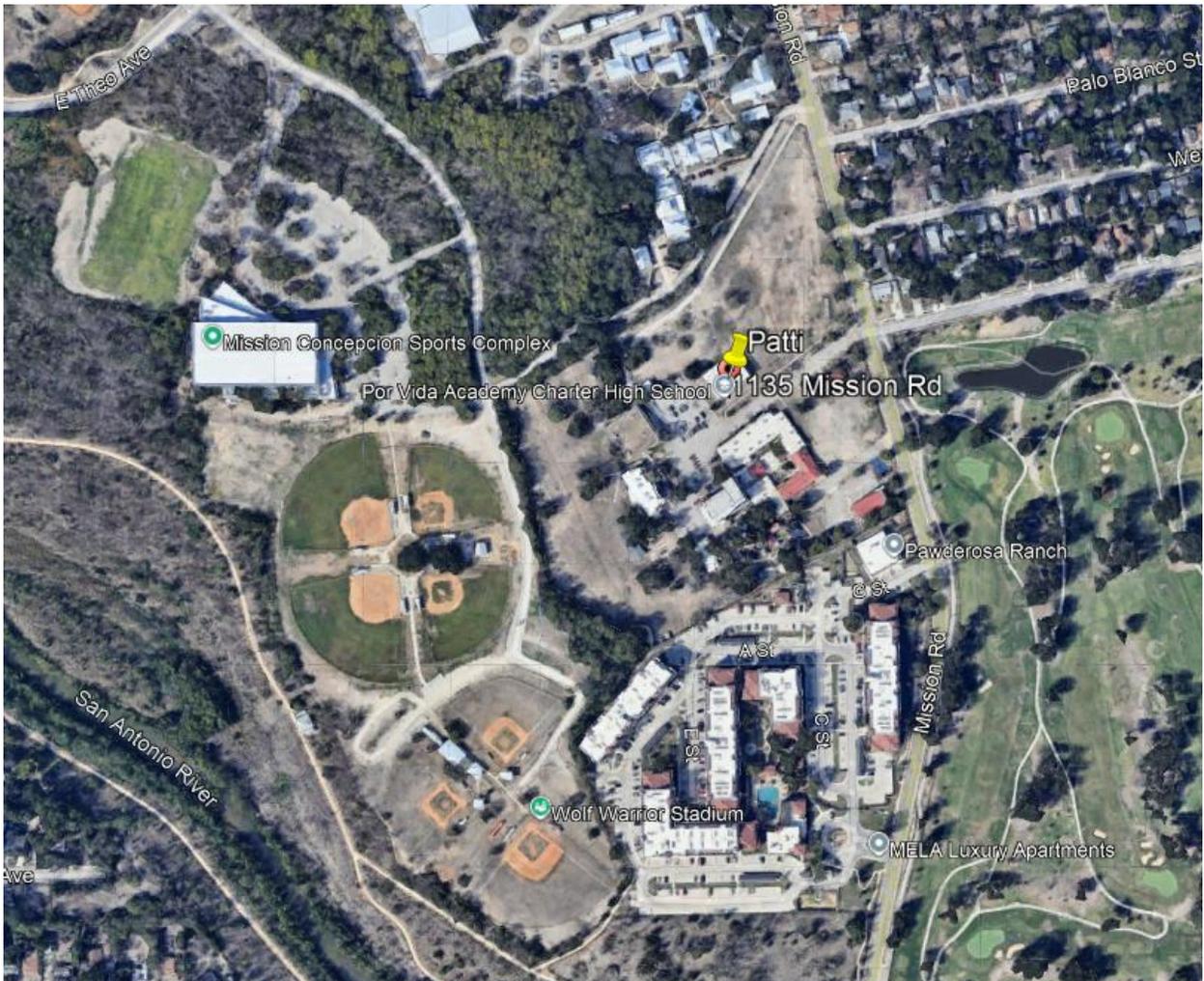


**11 hr 10 min (742 miles) from Mary to Patti Thur April 3 to Sunday April 6**

Next was San Antonio to spend the afternoon with Sister Pattie visiting her convent and several missions. We went to the river walk to have dinner and low and behold, a restaurant was opening up giving free food and beer!

Hampton Inn Alpine - Hotel  
2607 US-90 Alpine, TX 79830

**5 hr 43 min (398 miles) from San Antonio to Marfa**



Sister Patti's Convent



Google Earth 3D view of the convent.



Inside the convent where Sister Patti works.



One of the Missions in San Antonio, TX



Uncle Jim, my dad's youngest brother, became a Marine. His son, Mark, had his metals & ribbons. Mark passed away and his sister, Patti, took possession of the ribbons & metals and ribbons and gave them to me on our trip.

The image shows a U.S. Marine Corps Good Conduct Medal. This medal is awarded to enlisted members of the U.S. military for completing three consecutive years of "honorable and faithful service," or the initial term of enlistment if less than three years.



The object is the Eagle, Globe, and Anchor (EGA), the official emblem of the United States Marine Corps (USMC). It is a bronze-colored emblem featuring an eagle perched atop a globe, with an anchor wrapped around it. The EGA symbolizes the Marine Corps' readiness to serve across the globe and its naval heritage.



World War I Victory Ribbon

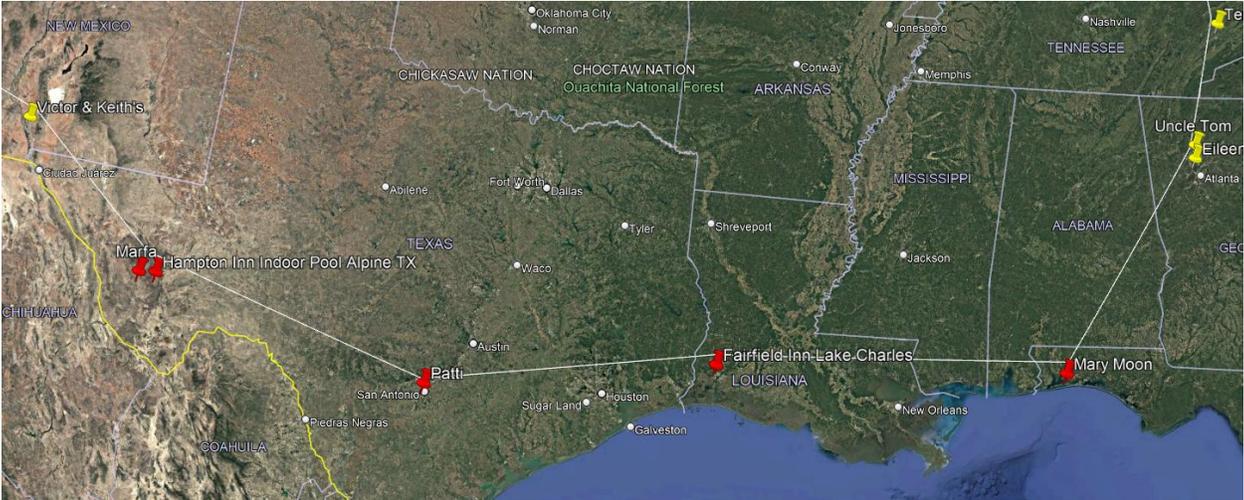
Could this be great grandfather Lohre's ribbon? It may be missing a metal that hung from it.



The items are likely a pair of early U.S. Navy aviation bronze chinstrap buttons. These buttons feature a design approved in early 1918 by Bailey, Banks, and Biddle for Naval Aviators.



Unit destination metal



Route through the southern desert.

Halfway from Mary's to Patti's  
**Fairfield Inn 2615 Ruth St Sulphur, LA 70665 April 1**  
**4 hr 55 min (333 miles) Sulphur LA to Patti's work**

No W 96824

JEFFERSON CO. SHERIFF'S OFFICE

DATE 4/2/25 HOUR 10:21 A.M.

DRIVER NAME LAST <i>Thomas</i> FIRST <i>6</i> MI		SEX	RACE
RESIDENCE ADDRESS CITY <i>Cincinnati, OH</i> STATE <i>OH</i> ZIP CODE		TELEPHONE	
VEHICLE MAKE & TYPE <i>Nissan PA</i>	LICENSE NO. <i>KM24572</i>	STATE <i>OH</i>	D.L. NO. <i>KK464HP1</i>
COUNTY <b>JEFFERSON</b>	LOCATION & ROUTE <i>I-10 0/45</i>	CONST. ZONE WORKERS PRESENT <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	MILE MARKER <i>897</i>
OTHER LOCATION INFORMATION	CITY STREET <input type="checkbox"/>	U.S. HIGHWAY <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	STATE HIGHWAY <input type="checkbox"/>
COUNTY ROAD <input type="checkbox"/>	PRIVATE PROPERTY <input type="checkbox"/>		
VEHICLE SEARCH YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	TYPE OF SEARCH CONSENT <input type="checkbox"/> PC <input type="checkbox"/>	INC. TO ARREST <input type="checkbox"/>	INVENTORY <input type="checkbox"/>
CONTRABAND FOUND YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	TYPE OF CONTRABAND	DRUGS <input type="checkbox"/>	WEAPONS <input type="checkbox"/>
CURRENCY <input type="checkbox"/>	OTHER <input type="checkbox"/>	CHARGES FILED YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
WAS RACE OR ETHNICITY KNOWN PRIOR TO STOP? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO		WAS PHYSICAL FORCE RESULTING IN BODILY INJURY USED DURING STOP? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	

VIOLATION (1) *Speeding 81/75*

VIOLATION (2) *Fail to signal lane change*

VIOLATION (3)

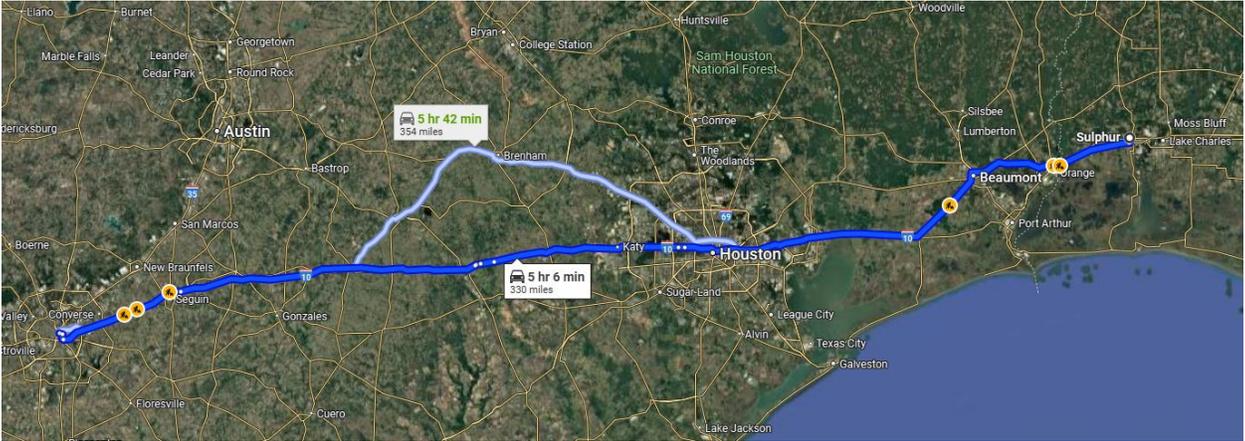
**THIS IS A WARNING ONLY** for an infraction of the traffic laws committed to a minor degree or with extenuating circumstances present. No penalty will be assessed and no further action on your part is necessary other than to comply with the traffic laws in the future. This does not become a part of your driving record.



SIGNATURE *X*  
 This warning is given to you in an effort to secure you cooperation in better observance of the traffic laws thus helping to prevent traffic accidents. The Jefferson Co. Sheriff's Office believes that good citizens will comply with traffic laws when reminded of their provisions and of the importance of strict compliance with them.

ISSUED BY *[Signature]* I.D. NO. *[Signature]*

The Warning



Luckily for us we got a warning in the most typical speed trap known to man, a carefully arranged stretch of I-10 where the speed limit goes from 75 to 45, mysteriously in Jefferson County, TX. A sun tanned, leather faced, female officer, asked if I had any issues with my license as I gave it to her with my mirrored glasses on, I replied, "No." Irene thought I would certainly be jailed. Though I had not opened a beer, that was the last time I had an opened beer on the trip!



Leave Patti's Sunday, April 6th

Spend night of Sunday April 6th on road around Marfa

Missed the Marfa Lights. Passed by the Marfa Texas Prada Store. Marfa is open only Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday. A sleepy town full of masterpieces being finished.

In Marfa, Texas, we stayed at the Pisano Hotel.

**The Hotel Paisano 207 Highland St Marfa TX 79843 Thursday April 3 Confirmed**

Patti to Victor & Keith 10 hr 29 min (676 miles)

Victor and Keith's Monday April 7th  
until Friday April 11th



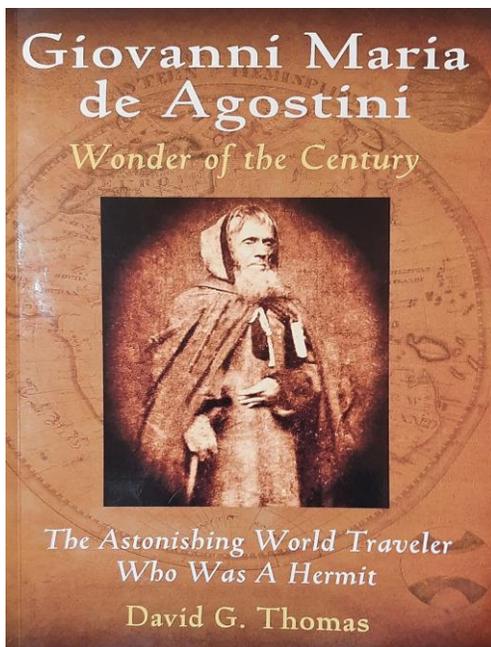
The Rio Grand goes through Las Cruces but most of the time it is the big sandy. In June they open up the dam and it fills with water creating a wall of water moving through town. A real celebration when it happens.



A trip to the foothills of the revered mountains is a must do.



Las Cruces Mother & Child



Las Cruces was the last resting place of this world traveling hermit!

Films made around the area:

'Knight', featuring Bruce Willis

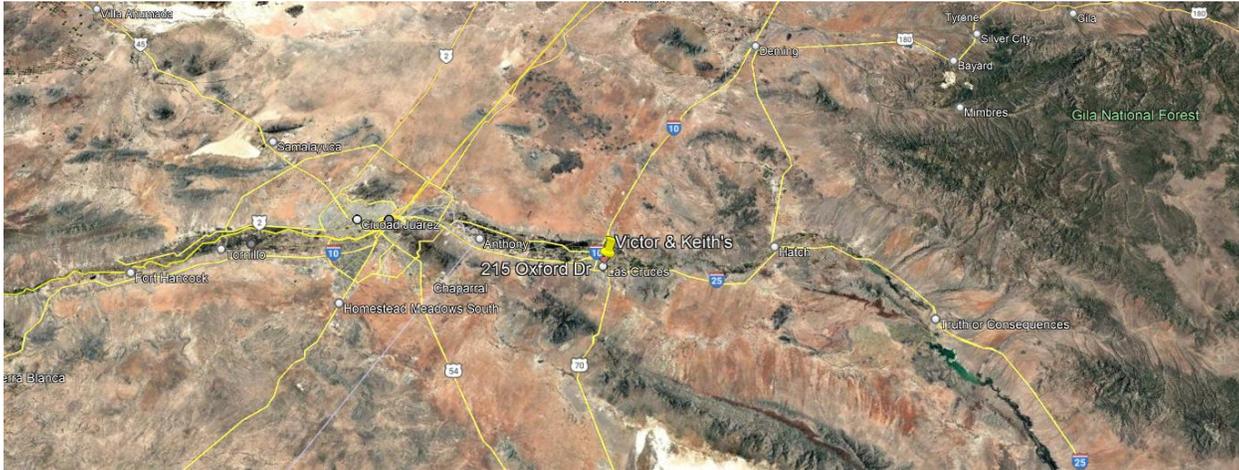
'Hot Seat', featuring Mel Gibson,

The Locksmith', starring Ryan Phillippe and Kate Bosworth,

Dig', starring Thomas Jane and Emile Hirsch

Chupa and The Price We Pay

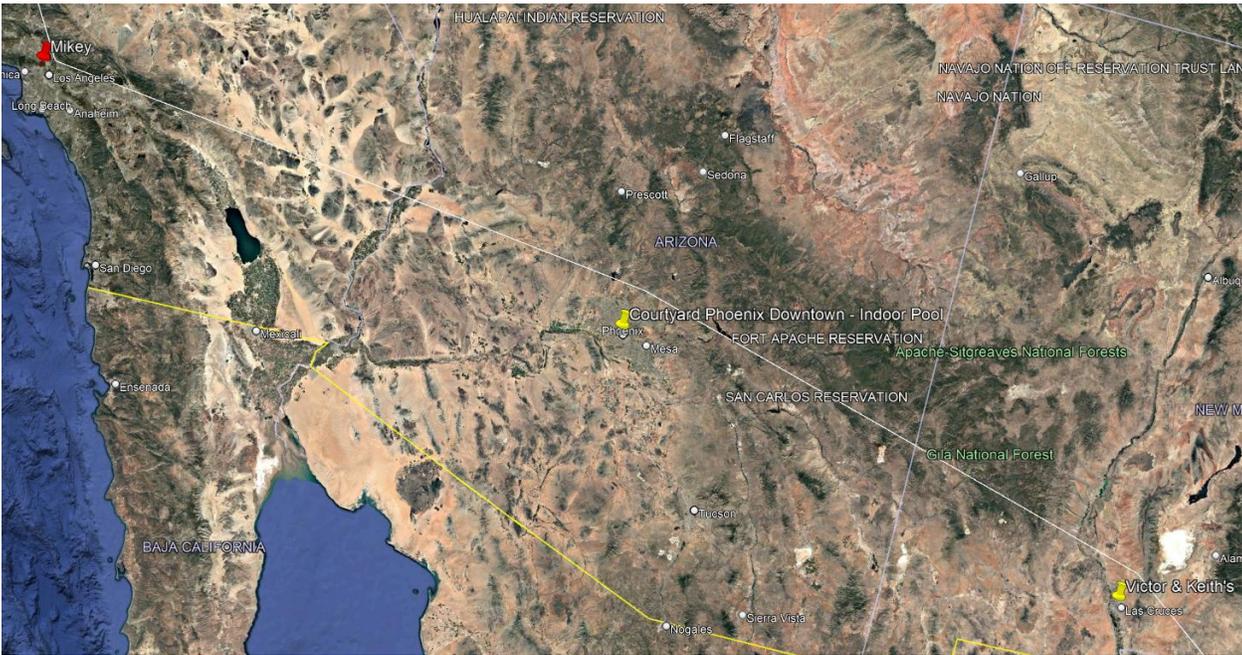
All shot in and around the Las Cruces area.



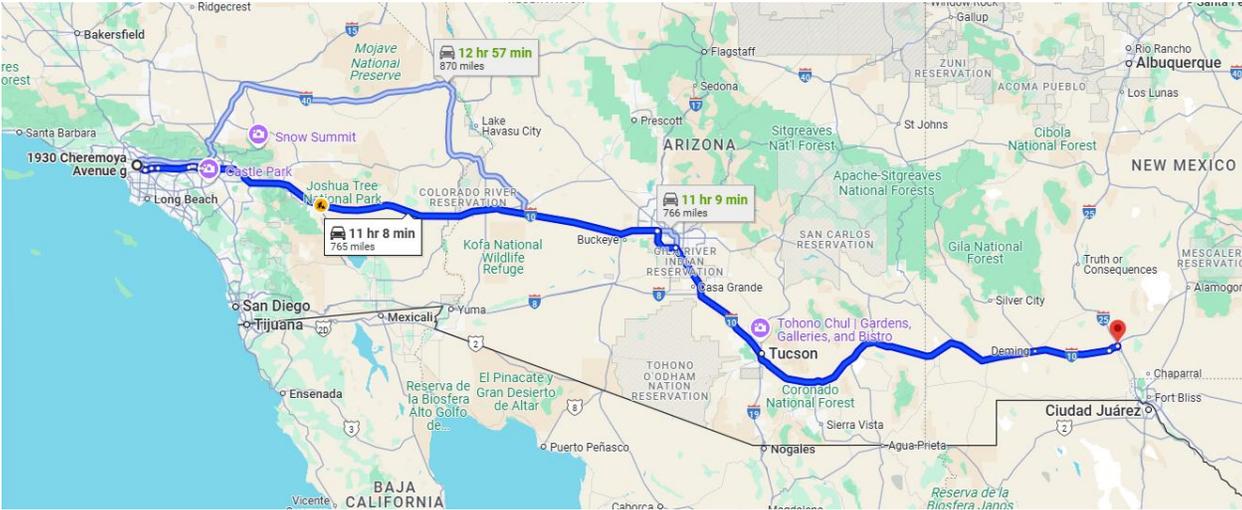
Victor & Keith, Las Cruces



The strange cactus showed up outside of Phoenix.



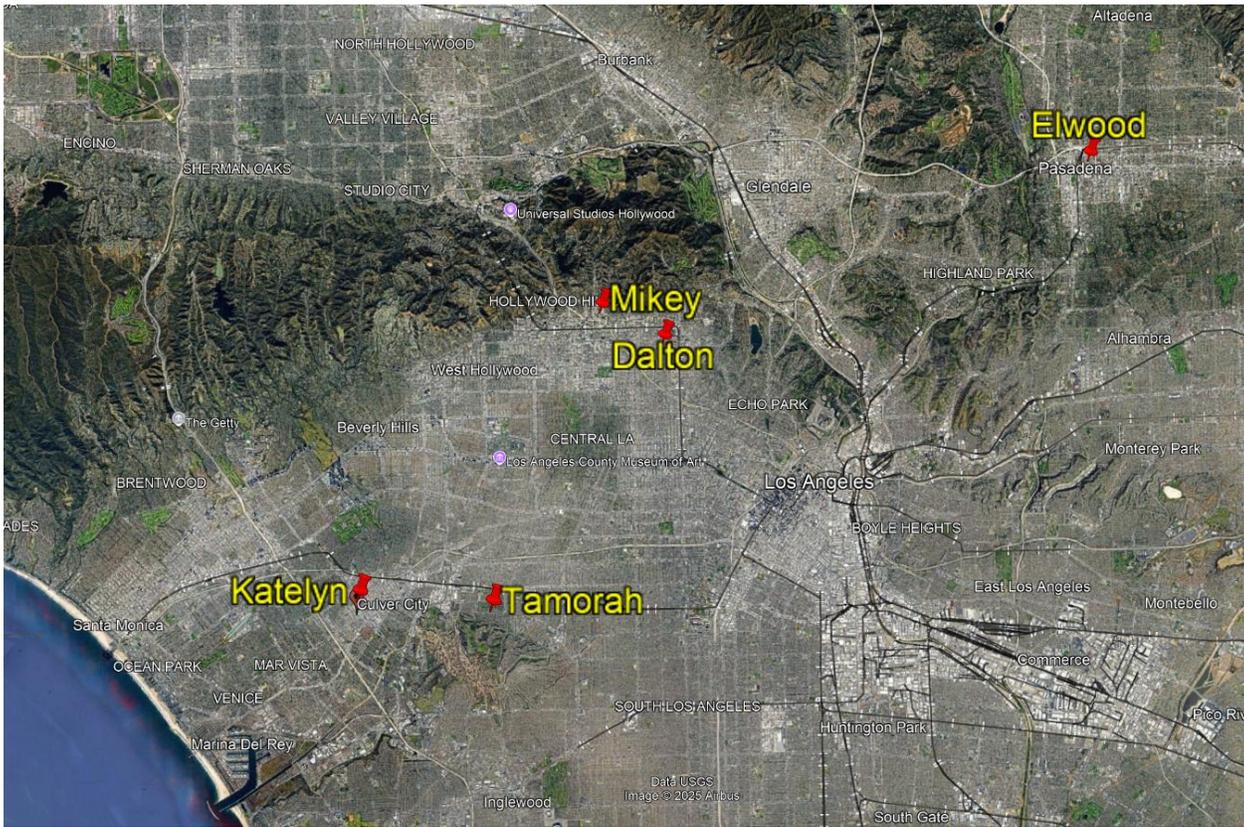
Missed visiting Troy in Phoenix, a dear friend and master artist.



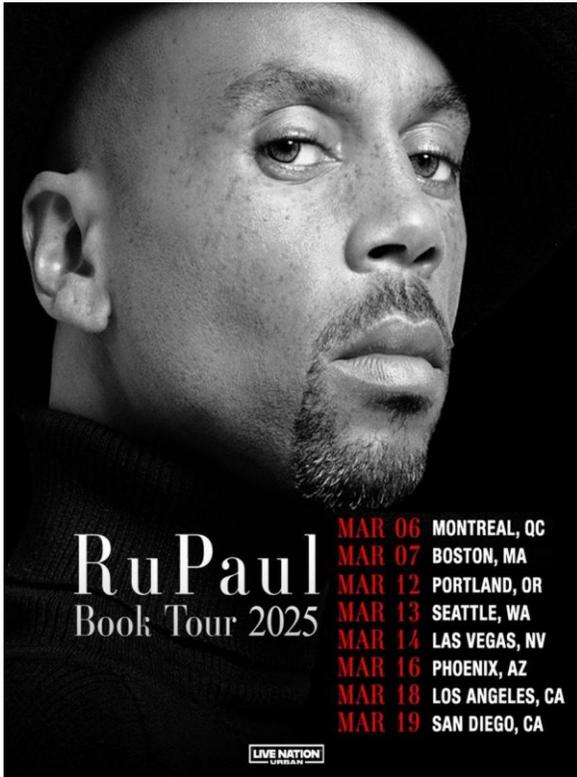
Victor & Keiths to Mikey's 11 hr 29 min (765 miles)

Courtyard Phoenix Downtown - Hotel  
132 S Central Ave Phoenix, AZ 85004

From Las Cruces we went to Phoenix where we didn't know anybody; we just spent the night. But in Phoenix is where those big cactuses are that kind of strange-looking.



Nieces and nephews in LA



RuPaul

<https://rupaul.com/product/the-house-of-hidden-meanings/>



Greek Statue In Drag

16" x 20", Oil on canvas by Tom Lohre

Painted in 1980 in Tom's Greenwich Village apartment. He regularly painted drag queens like Alexa DeLago and Dean Johnson. Even painted Michael Musto for his birthday. Nelson Sullivan commissioned his portrait. This painting had to be done. The Greeks were good at everything! I bought the painting in the hope of giving it to Ru Paul, who was part of the gang in the Village in the 80's. It never happened but I may be able to get it to him if he has another book signing tour.

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Stayed at HOLLYWOOD Tribute Portfolio Hotel 6516 Selma Ave LA 90028 Tuesday April 8-12

In LA, we spent five nights in LA, and we saw Mikey Gable, Sue's boy. Irene's nephew Dalton, lives within walking distance from Mikey. We hung out with Dalton for a good day, going to the Frank Lloyd Wright house in LA, and to the Griffith Observatory.



<https://youtu.be/g0QLFVs710w>

After 4 days in LA, we finally got the boys together. They live within walking distance of each other.



Culver City dinner with Irene's niece Katelyn, her boyfriend Ethan and Irene's nephew Dalton.



Dalton's Digs

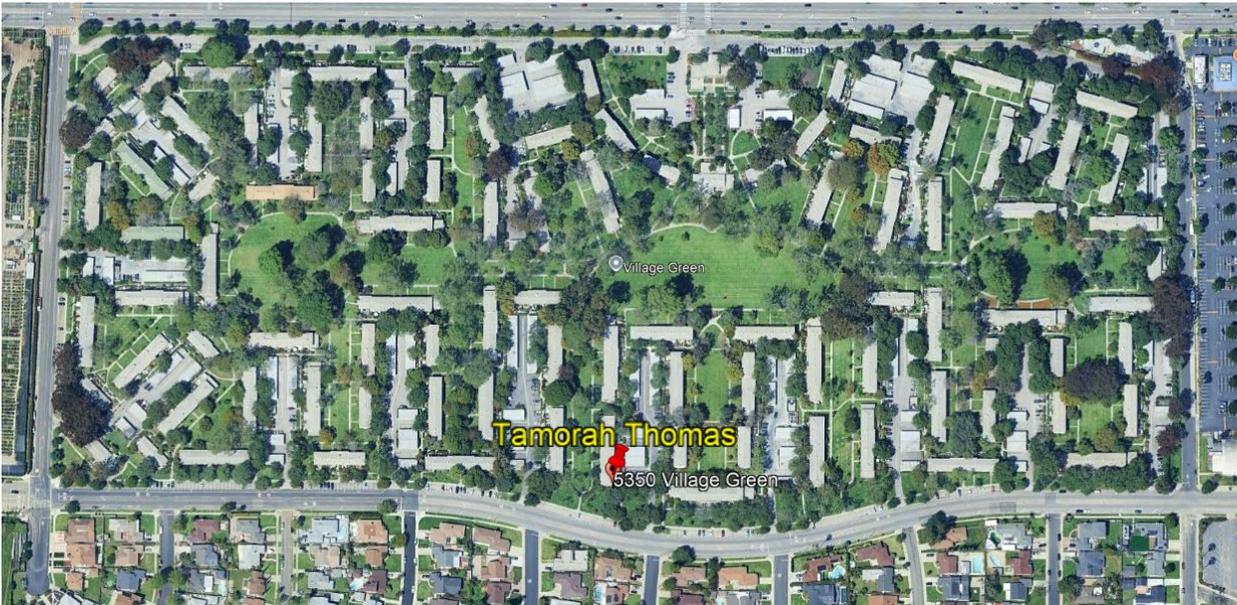


Friends met in Desert 5, one of the hot spots of Hollywood and on top of the hotel we stayed at. Irene and I went up there for cocktail hour once and ran into a couple who were just vacationing and having a good time. They lived in the valley.



The sea water pool was exceptional.

In Hollywood at the place where they had a nightclub on the top floor. It was a great nightclub. It was really popular and crowded. It was called the Desert Five. And they had a mechanical bull and taught line dancing.



I went to visit Tamara Thomas. She moved out to Los Angeles a long time ago. She's living in a wonderful community in Culver City.

I took the bus there. It was a 45-minute bus ride. On the way back, I witnessed a fight on the bus.

A smart-looking older man, who could have been my age, was at the bus stop on the way back, and well, he was having a good time. He was taking the bus that day; he didn't want to drive. He was having a beer and had a small plastic water bottle full of bourbon. He was rolling a joint, and smoking a cigarette. We got on the bus.

Drove by a roadside stand somebody had set up to sell something. This guy he called somebody. He says, 'Hey, those people aren't paying the tax here.' It was like you had to pay somebody in order to have a roadside stand. I started to think more and more about how this guy might have been like a wise guy. Someone who, like, ran the rackets in L. A.

We continued on. Earlier I had let him use my lighter. He called from the back of the bus. I was in the back of the bus, too, right behind the back exit. He was two seats behind. He said, "Tom, can I buy your lighter?" I sold it to him for a dollar. Then some young kids get on the bus. And he says to these kids, "Okay boys, I want you to behave yourself. You know what to do. I don't want any monkey business." This guy is like the father figure of the kids on the street. So I'm curious.

And then after a while, the bus stops and a gay guy gets on board. He's very handsome, incredibly handsome. And the funny thing about it is that when I was in L. A., I was trying to meet my friend RuPaul. RuPaul from the drag show. This guy was a spitting image for RuPaul when he was a young man. He sits down in front of me. He's right by the back door, and I'm right behind him. Okay, well. And then the bus keeps on going down the road, and eventually it's getting near the time of the old man's stop. The guy wise guy I sold the lighter to. So he comes up and sits next to me. He says, "Tom, I know you're going to Hollywood Boulevard. I want to warn you, there's a lot of people out there that are going to steal from you, you know, pickpocket, you know, give you a hard time. And so I took it to heart and said thank you.

Then he starts dishing on this gay guy. They start to have this little tit for tat. Obviously, this old wise guy didn't like gay men. Oh, it's perfect. They get dishing each other, sparring. The gay handsome guy says, "You don't

want to mess with me. I'm a boxer." The old man gets up to get off the bus and things come to a head. They have a fight right there on the bus. The handsome gay guy just beats the hell out of this wise guy. And then he kicks him off the bus into the gutter. The wise guy just sort of goes off with his tail between his legs and the door shuts. This is my meeting with RuPaul since Ru's very feisty too! He knows how to handle himself. What a trip!



Homeless in LA



Standard check out load.

So then another funny thing that happened on the bus was: We were coming back with Dalton from the Griffith Observatory. It was nighttime, and we had stayed up there to see the moon and the planets and the stars through the telescopes. It was dark when we were taking our last bus. And it's very hard to get any beer around the hotel, so I saw a 7-Eleven down the street. I said to Irene, "I'm going to run down to the 7-Eleven. I don't think the bus is coming. I'll be back before you know it." So I ran down to the 7-Eleven and was in line to get my beer, and lo and behold, the bus had stopped across the street. Irene had gotten on the bus, didn't have any money and had gotten the bus driver to stop and wait for me. Irene holds the bus there for what seemed to be three minutes. The bus is waiting for me to come across the street with my beer. I run across the street and get on the bus. It's a big joke. Everybody on the bus is just taking it in stride. We get off the bus. I tried to give the bus driver a ten dollar bill but he would not take it as he smiled. Everybody in L. A. is nice. They are super people.



Up the coast route to Tahoe City.



Dear friend Joann, our hostess in Tahoe.

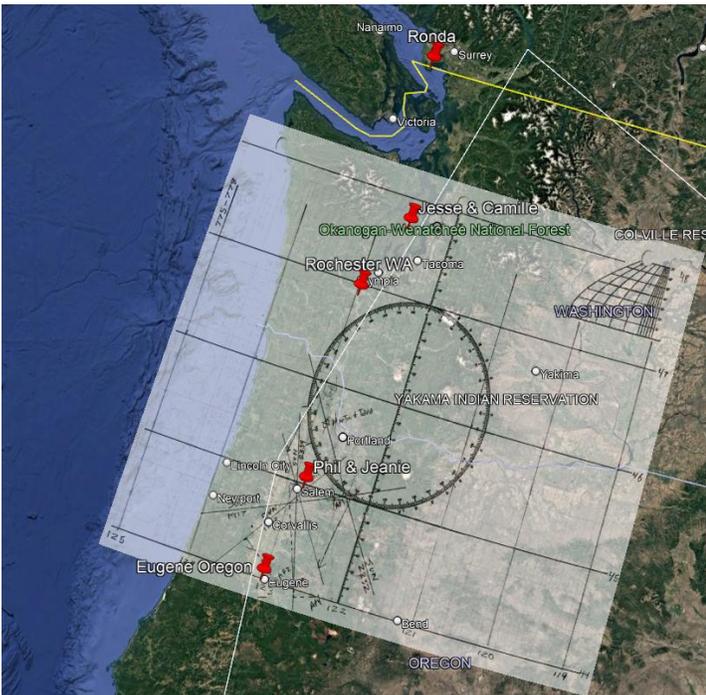


Ben does his sighting.

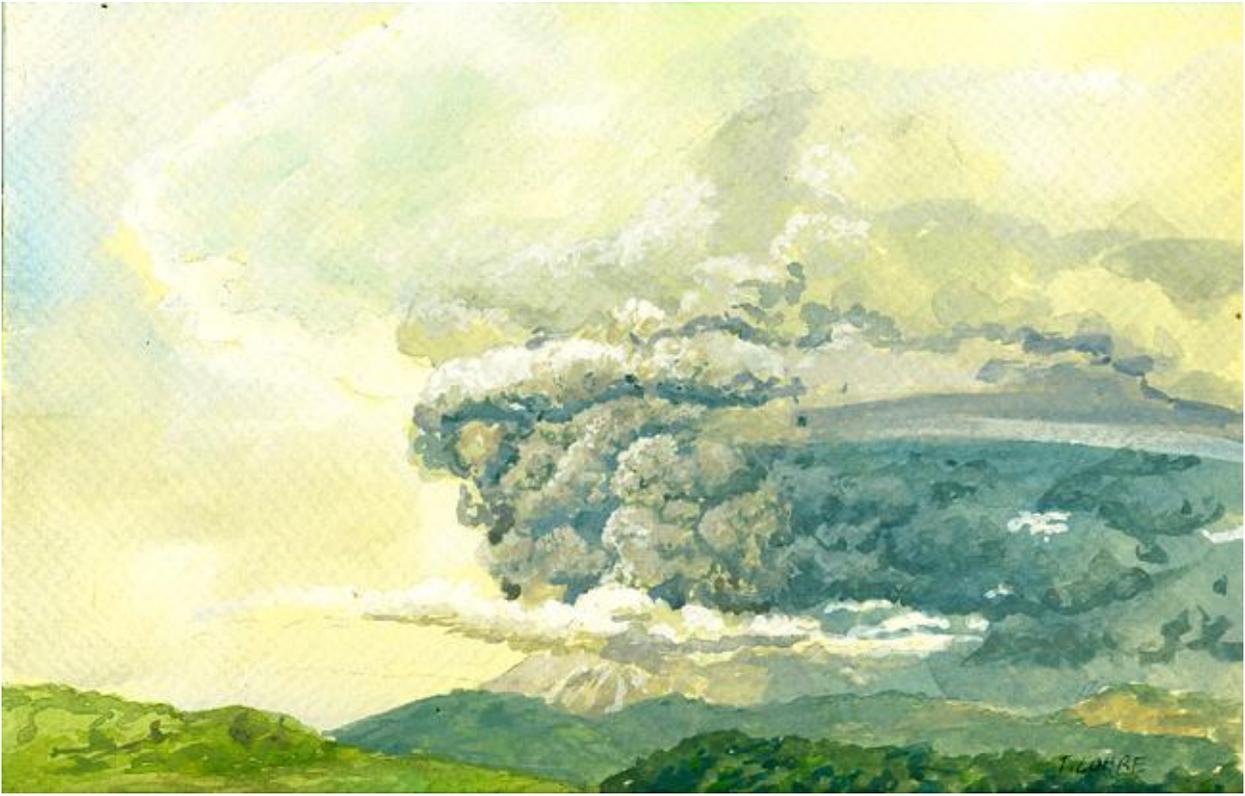
We stayed with them for two nights. Stayed in another motel along the way and the next day we were at Jeannie, Irene's cousin.



In the mountains every home has its own ski slope.



The plot around Salem Oregon is the dot in the triangle below Salem, 10 miles from our location.  
en & Joann's to Jeanie & Phil 9 hr 5 min (538 miles)





Lumber is the big thing in the northwest. We did stop in Chelatchie Prairie, near Mount St. Helens. I was there in 1980 for the explosion. It was fun to hang out. I couldn't find the place that I stayed at then.



Jeanie's Family in Salem Oregon

We stayed with the Peacock's for three nights. They drove us to Newport, a town along the Pacific coast, home of the Rogue Brewery. We ate lunch at the Rogue Brewery Restaurant on the wharf.

At Jeanie's, I was able to get some cuttings of a northern gardenia that grows in a colder climate. Brought six cuttings home, rooting them now. We'll have gardenias in the ground year-round, but it's going to take about three years. Growing them in pots for three years. A really nice keepsake of the trip

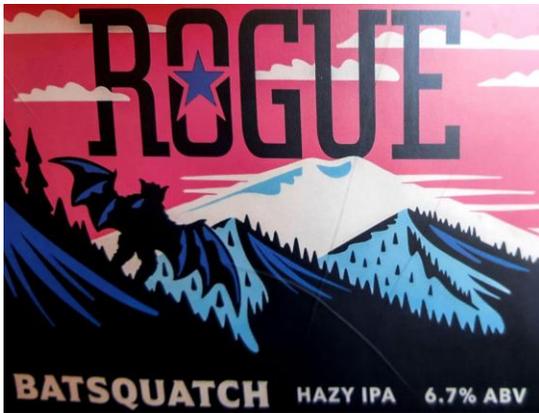


We saw thousands of acres of blueberry fields. Going through Oregon, we saw that that's where they grow all the blueberries. All along the way, we saw big irrigation systems that make big circles. They're sprinklers that go across the land. It's either barren or they are growing something. In Oregon, they grow blueberries.



You can pick them by hand with a scoop or with a machine that has little metal fingers that coax the berries off the bush.

Jeannie & Phil Salem OR April 16-19



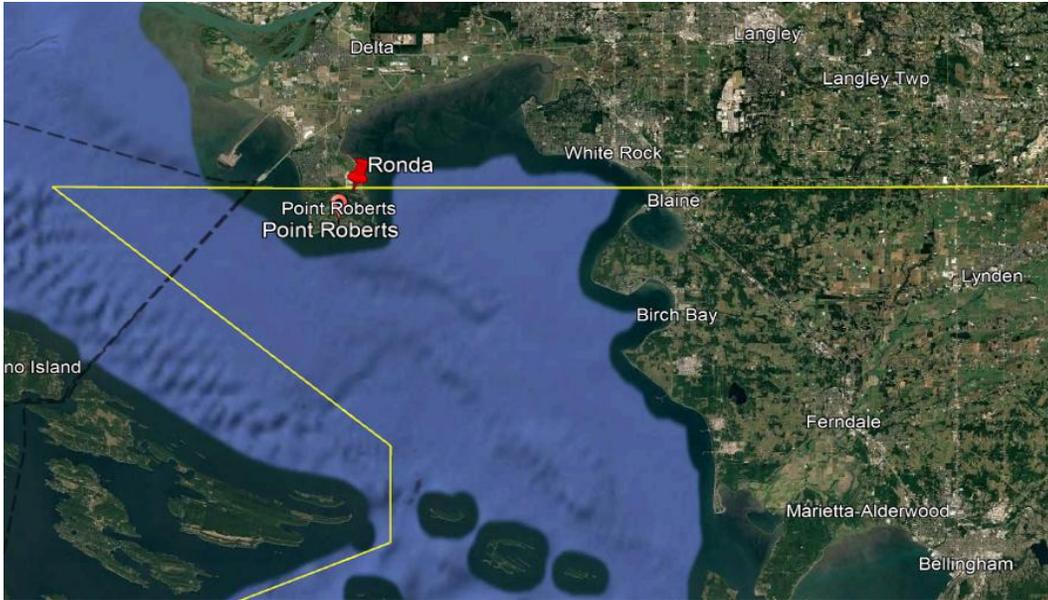
Jeannie & Phil treated us to lunch at Newport, OR; on the water!



From Jeannie's, we were going to stop in Port Orchard where Irene's cousin, Jesse lives but he was on a nuclear submarine. He had just gotten married and the young couple were living in Port Orchard where the submarine is based. He is on his first deployment. This is a thousand foot long submarine. It's three stories

high. He went through officer training. He got his career started in a paper mill, which has a lot of high-pressure plumbing. Submarines have a lot of the same. So when he expressed interest in joining, they were really excited to have him aboard.

We went to Point Roberts, which is the farthest northwest part of the US. Actually, it's attached to Canada. When they drew the 49th parallel, they cut through a little piece of a peninsula of Canada, and that became the US. The only way to get there is to drive through Canada. My friend Rhonda moved there. I don't know exactly why. I guess maybe she had a friend there. We spent two nights with her. During COVID, the Canadian border was closed and they had a ferry run from Bellingham to Point Roberts, 27 miles. There's two really fantastic marinas in Point Roberts. It's a great place to have a boat.



Ronda put the dog on for us in Point Robert's, the tip of a Canadian peninsula that is below the 49th parallel hence part of the US, a special place like a young Nantucket.

Ronda cooks for the senior center. We went to have lunch there. Of course everybody's old and we fit right in. And we sat down with this incredible couple. They were both sailors. She was on the first female crew sailboat that sailed from there to Hawaii. And there she met her soon-to-be husband. He was an old naval officer. They were both totally larger than life characters. She started her life as a circus performer with multiple jobs.



Ronda Granger April 22-23



In Robert's Point as our furthest NW point, we saw the huge tree logs that float in those waters piled along the beach. The loggers make huge rafts out of them and a few get away. Man you have to watch out for them if your sailing those waters.



Driving through the mountains where mines used to be everywhere, now it's nature living off the land.

Courtyard Missoula MT April 24  
4559 N Reserve St  
Missoula, MT 59808



Outside Jackson Hole



Mike & Jane, old Clifton residences, were not in Driggs ID on April 25. I generated this AI image of Mike as a painting for their new home.

We went through the Tetons on our way to Jackson Hole, through the Rocky Mountains. All along the way, it never rained. And we followed spring all the way around the country. So by the time we got to Wisconsin, the daffodils had just finished blooming.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h\\_fCR8bb8jU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h_fCR8bb8jU) NightFall 1957 movie partly shot in Teton County, Wyoming



Idaho Falls sounded better than Eagle Rock, the town's name until it changed it to attract settlers. There were no falls either till they put in an hydroelectric dam.



Plot overlaid on Google Earth, using the principle of a running fix, our location was within 20 miles of Butte, the dot in the middle of the triangle is our fix.

4 hr 30 min (246 miles) from Butte to Jackson Hole

4 hr 32 min (287 miles) from Jackson to Rawlins



The dry conditions make the rain evaporate before it hits the ground in Colorado.

We'd been on the road for five weeks. Irene started talking about this trip about a year beforehand. It wasn't because I was an ocean sailor. She wanted to go see her nieces and nephews in LA and we might as well drive. If we were going to be in L. A., we might as well drive up to see her cousin, Jeannie in Oregon. If we're going to do that, we might as well go see Aunt Nancy in Colorado.

In Nebraska, it's flat. It was so flat I was able to take a sextant reading using the horizon as the horizon on the ocean giving a pretty good fix. It was very windy in the deserts and snowy country. They have these long barriers that are snow drift barriers. They prevent the snow from piling on the highway. They're kind of a triangular shape made out of wood.



Open trails around Strader home.



Some of the Strader Clan

When Mark retired from the oil and gas industry, they just moved to where the children were. So Pam and Matt are living in the area. Aunt Nancy is living in an assisted home. She has her own little room. It's a house with about 12 other tenants.



Visiting Breckenridge for lunch.



Aunt Nancy takes a sighting.

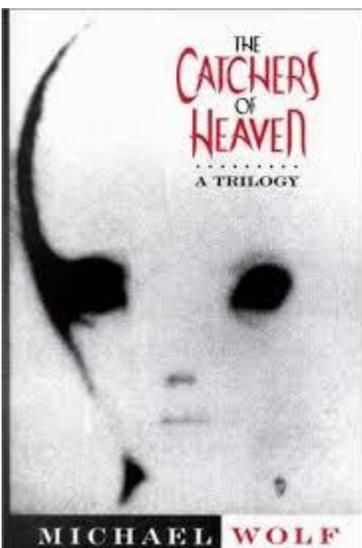
Aunt Nancy, Littleton, CO April 27-29

We had a fine dinner at Pam's house with their daughter Emily and their son Matt. Emily has two boys and Matt has one. That's the reason they moved out to Denver to be with the family. We took a road trip to Breckenridge, an old time mining town turned into a quaint ski resort.



Lori & Fred, Lyons, CO 80540 April 29-30

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The catchers of heaven : a trilogy By Michael Wolf is a rare book and by chance it was on the shelves at University of Colorado Boulder Norlin Library 303-492-7521  
184 UCB, 1720 Pleasant Street, Boulder, CO, 80309-0184

I took the opportunity to copy all 400 pages with my cell phone. I was working to finish the large Saturn painting I started at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory during the Voyager II encounter with the planet in August 1981. I started to put my daughter in a spacecraft but she said, "Why a spacecraft?" So the painting became an Alien Abduction. Michael Wolf worked with everything Alien for the US government. His book is a definitive explanation about all things Alien.

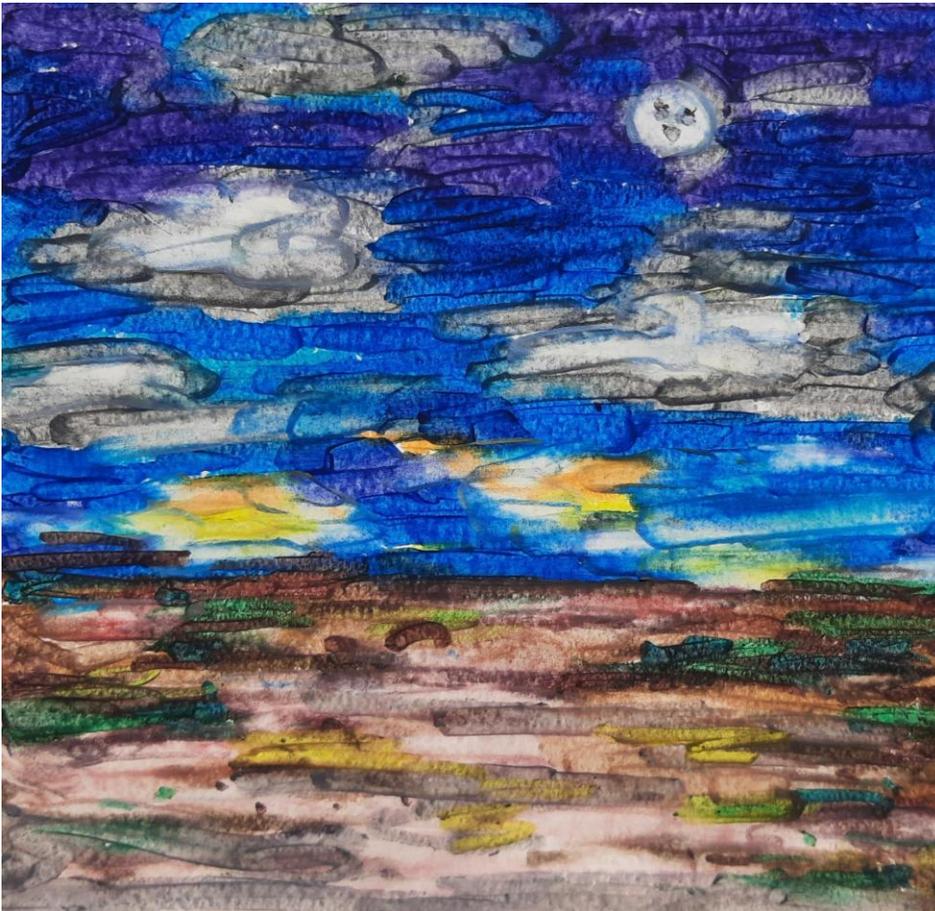


5' x 4', Oil on canvas

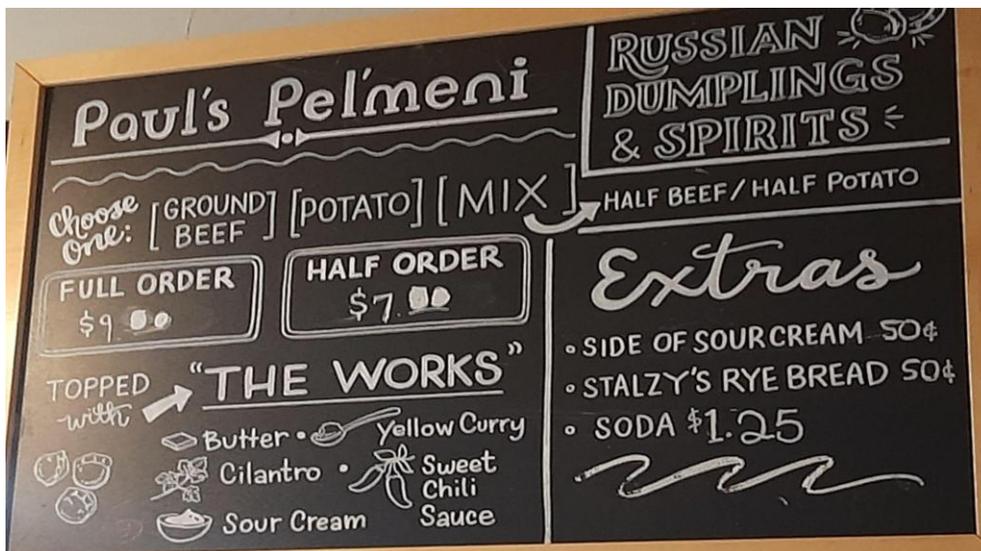


Summer Rental, the go to movie for fun and games learning to sail. No joke left not done!

[https://youtu.be/VD9\\_0FNSwZA?si=AnL3cMZZ5ohpAcTt](https://youtu.be/VD9_0FNSwZA?si=AnL3cMZZ5ohpAcTt)



Nebraska, where you can use the horizon for the horizon at sea to take a sighting for celestial navigation!



**Paul's Pel'meni**

414 W Gilman St Madison WI 54703



Where we met Lucy, Patrick and friend for authentic Russia Perogies



No Wisconsin visit is complete until you visit a cheese shop.

Tracy & Steve Janesville WI May 3

In Wisconsin we visited Irene's great niece Lucy. And she took us to a wonderful Russian pierogi restaurant. Afterwards we went to visit Irene's old colleague, Steve in Janesville, Wisconsin. He and Tracy live in a real mansion; a fantastic modern home – all tricked out pool room, a bar, and entertainment there formal dining, wood-lined offices. Just shocking how palatial this home was. They had seen this home in a Cincinnati homearama and had it built in Janesville.

Next was Ann Arbor, Michigan, the home of Michigan State. And we stayed with Irene's cousin, Teddy.



Teddy & Roxanne Ann Arbor MI May 4  
Last stop in the six week tour of the United States.





Irene drove the last 100 miles. When we started thinking about this trip, I started looking into a self-driving car. I settled on a Nissan Altima. We found a 2023 in Fort Wayne, Indiana and bought it. It had super cruise control where it followed the car in front of you, you know, a certain distance. It had collision avoidance, so if something tried to pull into your lane, the car would actually move away automatically, into the lane next to it because they knew nobody was there.

And this actually happened on the road trip. It's kind of hands-free. You have to hold your wheel. But it'll steer itself. It made driving a lot more enjoyable. I didn't really drive without the super cruise control and collision avoidance.

Our trip was nicked by a stone and starred our windshield, replacing it to a tune of \$1,945! Insurance covered it.



Whaler & Flowers



Back home with our daughter and her boyfriend Anil.