

Merry Christmas, 2014

Dear friends and family members,

Ours has been an eventful year. "Eventful" means "good!" The single most important event was Maurie being graduated from California State University, Northridge (CSUN) with her bachelors degree. We had quite the gathering in southern California. Auntie Janet came from Michigan, Auntie Anne came from Texas, Grandpa and Judy came from Arizona, Deanna, Yoneko, and I drove down from Oakland, our neighbor Sondra and her partner Mike came and my sister Linda joined us from the next town east. Maurie was also surrounded by many of her classmates and friends from Northridge and surrounds.



Maurie in her graduation gown

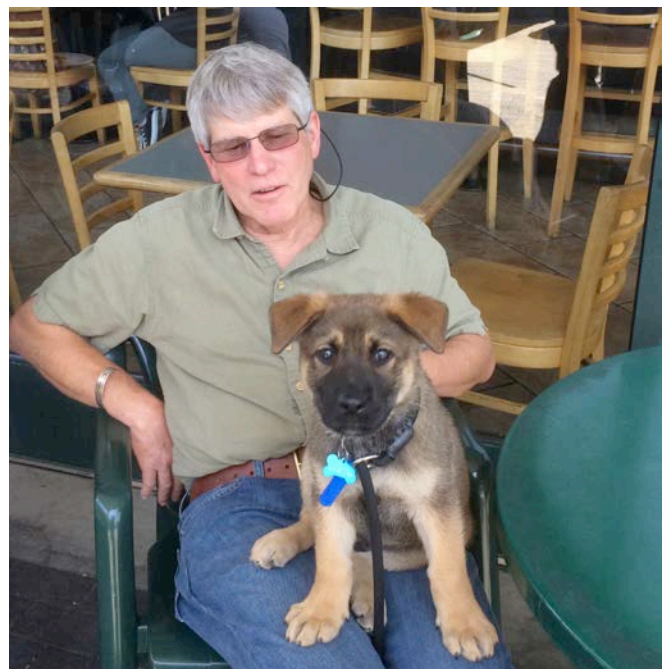
Maurie got accepted to graduate school back at CSUN and she is in their three-year program to earn a Master of Social Work (MSW) degree.

The next significant event took place one morning when Deanna and I were walking Mattie and we found a puppy under a bush in Berkeley. He was frightened and dusty but looked healthy and well-fed. Deanna scooped him up like a little baby bear and carried him about a quarter mile home. Mattie and I followed about a block behind so the big dog wouldn't upset the little dog. I put Mattie in my car before I got to the house, went to the back yard, and Deanna greeted me with "We've bonded..." We took photos, made posters, put him on Craigs List, checked at the vet for a microchip ("no"), put him in a kitty crate, and tested Mattie for her approval ("yes"). I took him to work because he was too young to leave alone for more than about an hour. Three days later, we took him to the vet

again, chipped him, gave him his first round of vaccinations, and gave him our home. That was when he weighed 12 pounds, 62 pounds ago.



Baby Bear



While in Menlo Park, Bear took me to Cafe Borrone

We bought one new car and sold three others. Deanna's new job requires less driving and more weaving around in parking ramps in San Francisco. She didn't want a car that was Too Small but she was tired of the 4Runner Limited that was Too Big, so she got a car that was Just Right—a RAV4 that she named *Goldilocks*. I decided I didn't need three early-sixties cars much less two 1962 sports cars. So I sold the Porsche just before I had to fix anything else on it.

Boy that felt good, only one old sports car that I never drive and that is rotting in the garage. Oh wait, I sold the Jaguar also. That entailed replacing much of the interior, which took most of the summer, but it came out great and eBay Motors is my friend. My dear old 4Runner SR5, *Akiho*, had well over 300,000 miles and still ran well but the Limited is a better two vehicle for the Airstream, *Button*, and I didn't need two 4Runners. So my buddy Joe stopped me from advertising it and bought it. I get visitation privileges.

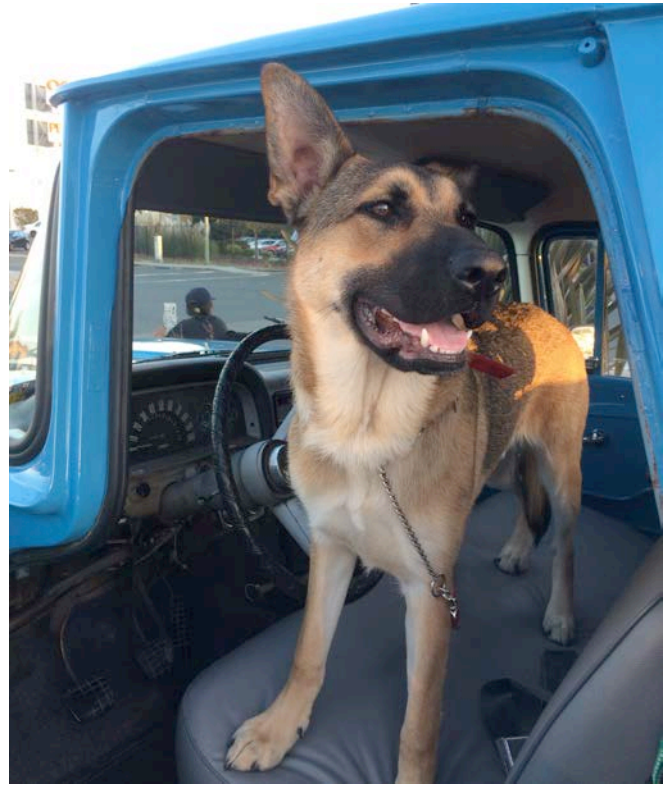


Bear will go anywhere with us

Since I am keeping my 1961 Chev pickup, *Hillary*, Deanna decided it was time to give her some TLC. So the truck went off to the shop for some welding to fill in holes where she had rusted out, and to get a nice shiny new coat of paint. She is the original GM blue that she originally got at the factory. She also got a new windshield, new upholstery, and lots of new stainless-steel fittings. I bought that truck when I was fighting forest fires in Oregon, did my thesis field work in her, and used her to move from home to home many times. Bear loves her, even though he still cries because it is too far down for him to jump when it's time to go in the house. He's such a baby Bear.



I think I was about Maurie's age the first time I drove this XK-E. I never took it above 120 MPH



Bear got bigger but still wants to be lifted down

We are fairly heavy electricity users. I have a drill press and a chop saw; Deanna has a fridge and a second fridge. The wine is always chilled, we keep *Button* plugged in, I run a server... So Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) had us in the highest of their four-tiered pricing structure. Y'know how you walk through Home Depot and these guys hijack you and get you to talk about their product? Well, one of them was from Elon Musk's (PayPal, SpaceX, Tesla) SolarCity. To make a long story short, our roof is now covered with photovoltaic (PV) cells. Our electricity bill is about a quarter of what it was. I originally thought it would cut our electricity bill in half but it seems to be doing even better than that. Also, it sucks up energy that would otherwise just make the attic hotter and deteriorate the roofing material faster. The engineers came over and assessed the house and looked at aspect, angle, latitude, historic cloud cover, and surface area to calculate solar flux. They know what their output is in terms of watts per square meter and lo and behold, even the north-facing side of the house turns a profit. One of the guys ran his GoPro Hero over the finished job with his quadcopter and it looks, uh, er... spacy. Speaking of GoPros, I gave one of those cameras to Maurie for Christmas. I expect to see a movie soon of what happens when she clips it onto the puppy's collar.



Solar panels

A couple of adventures with The Explorers Club took place this year. I'm so glad I have a calendar on my iPhone; it would help if I looked at it. On the way to work on morning, wearing my usual jeans and a shirt from REI, I noticed that I accepted an invitation to a reception up at the Stanford Faculty Club for HRH Jigyel Ugyen Wangchuck, Crown Prince of Bhutan. Macy's was having a sale anyhow so... a new shirt, slacks, sport coat, and tie and I pulled it off. A month later, jeans and an REI shirt were fine as we went to The Geysers geothermal area. I got to give a little presentation about the thermal flow in the shadow of the migrating triple junction (say that three times fast).



Mike and Jigyel Ugyen Wangchuck



Geology in action. The rock boils treated wastewater

Maurie made a quick trip home to participate in the Color Run. It was wonderful to see her and the little kids on the block were ecstatic, as usual. Hugs are recommended *before* the run. We pulled the Airstream down to Malibu this year again for Spring Break. We only had one dog at the time but she dug enough for several. Maurie-Mama Time is always a photographed event. We also worked out details for the graduation festivities including trying all the dishes at the dinner location.



The Color Run

Oh, did I mention that the graduation event included several thousand of our best friends?



Grand gathering



Maurie-Mama Time

Bear has gained over sixty pounds in half a year and hasn't slowed down. Wherever we are, that is where he wants to be.



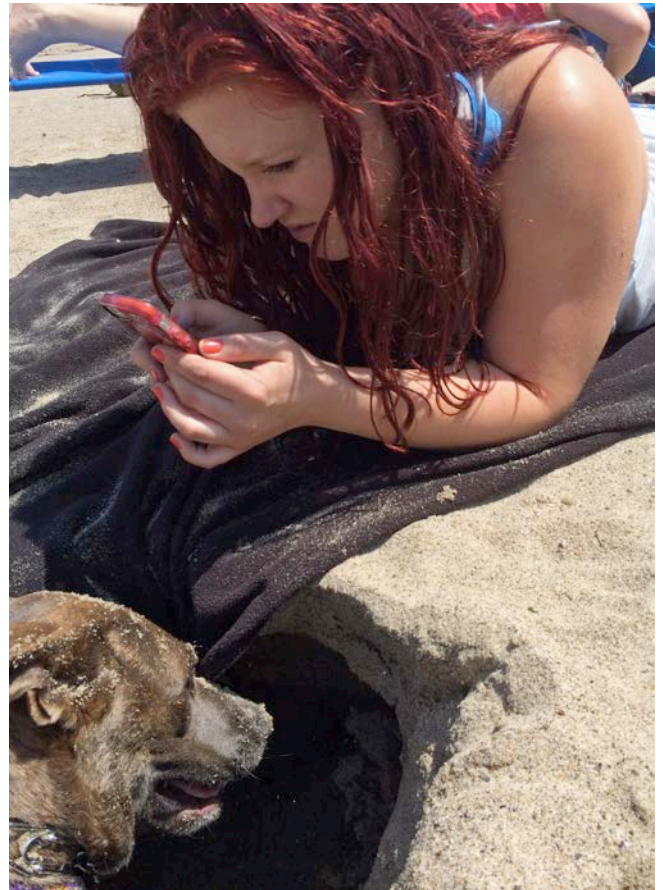
Bear, Maurie, and Mattie; the dogs get equal time.

Oh, is Maurie home? Whatever she's doing, we'll help.

Michael had to abandon the poor dogs for a geology gig in West Virginia. Deanna was heroic holding down The Fort mostly by herself. We thank good friends for pitching in and helping her. Michael made the choice to raise a puppy this year and let Yosemite wait for a year. It'll still be there, huh? I wonder if Bear would like to try carrying doggie saddlebags. There is a place east of Yosemite that we have our eyes on called Saddlebag Lake. There is a trailhead there to one of the standard approaches to Mount Conness. It's a day to drive over, a day to hike in (saddlebags on dog), a day to climb (gotta get somebody to join us

who wants to stay in camp and puppy sit fish), a day to get out (with dinner waiting at Whoa Nellie Deli in Lee Vining), and a day to drive home. With luck, we'll have clear air like we did last year when we did Mount Dana.

Or, we could just spend more time at the beach! There is a dog-friendly beach at Point Dume near Malibu that we love. We'll be back there next March.



Mattie excavates right under you until you fall in



Angel On Top

Have a wonderful and safe Christmas and New Year,
 -Michael, Deanna, and Maurie
 -Lilly, Luv Dove, Yo Yo, Lola, Mattie, and Bear