

## JEAN AND ART TRAVEL REPORT 1

### Miles and Moments

**We've sent travel reports** to family and friends many times over the past years. Mostly to let folks know where we are and what we are doing.

As many already know Jean had a serious head injury with brain trauma late last May while we were in Palo Alto. Ambulance, emergency room and a hospital night, etc. Since that time we have operated in slower speed. Shorter walks and more naps but otherwise still on the go. Most can't tell anything ever happened to her.

We decided to see how much of a trip we might take. Shorter miles, stopping earlier using our "nap-along" strategy. Every couple of hours we stop at a Rest Area and tilt back the seats for a cat-nap of 5 or 8 minutes. It works for us. Our strategy for this trip was to decide day by day whether we were still good to go or whether we needed to hang out a little longer where we were. Or whether maybe we had gone far enough. We also realized that visiting was often tiring.

We had already planned for lunch in Eugene. We drove 200 miles from Eugene to Ashland where we spent 2 nights.

I left out the fact that we just purchased a new car. We didn't need a new car. The old one was only 11 years old and running fine. I have been thinking that in my advanced years I should have all the safety and warning features possible to prevent me getting in the paper with a report about an elderly driver accident. I want to put off the day when my children take away my keys. New cars are basically a computer on four wheels. I haven't even looked under the hood. Jean has been trying to deal with the mystery of more information than we can possibly use. It's like getting a new cell phone and laptop at the same time with no instruction manual.

It seems like a good car. I felt a twinge of jealousy when the dealer assured me that the car would need service only once a year, guaranteed for four years without charge. I would like that same deal on myself!

We don't make reservations because we don't know how far we will feel like going. The first night after Ashland was Willows at an old familiar place we like. The next night was Bakersfield. We should have stopped an hour sooner, but we were lucky in finding a great motel on the East side of the city. We took a simple take-out meal from the Denny's next door.

There are "moments" that appear unexpectedly. A lady was standing as we waiting for our order. She noted Jean's walking stick, or maybe our ancient appearance. She could tell that we were a couple and asked how many years we had been married. Jean told her "66 years." The lady said she had been married for 30 years when her son died. Her husband wouldn't go to the son's funeral. So she divorced him. We had nothing to say. She was holding back tears. She thanked us for listening. She had a grief than needed out. The order came and we hobbled back to our room. (We're actually fairly mobile, although Jean has one of those hiking poles)

We commented on how friendly people really are if you smile and speak a personal word. Most of us have a "default look" that needs to be activated. People like to be helpful.

We got 31+ mpg on that first full tank to Bakersfield. Then to Twentynine Palms. No rooms in any of the nearby towns. "Peak of the season" they said. Jean finally found the last room in a Motel 6, appropriately "handicapped". Over \$200! Jean didn't tell me exactly. I thought of Mary and Joseph sleeping in a barn. We were tired and glad to sleep anywhere. And thankful.

A brief drive-through Joshua Tree National Park that we last visited 50 years ago, then on to Desert Hot Springs. (Near Palm Springs) They took mercy on us and found a nice room with a patio opening to a half dozen hot spring pools. Desert Hot Springs and Spa they call it.

We've been here before. We plan to sit and dip and nap and stay put for four days, or maybe 5 if they can arrange it. It's a therapy time without plans to tour or visit or anything. A big day will include at least one walk around the perimeter of this place which is at least a mile, three or four dips in one or more of the hot pools, and as many naps as Jean needs. And maybe I'll have time for some writing as well. End of Report #1. For the Moment....

