

My So-Called Real Life

Preface

This is a companion piece to a story about my work life called *My So-Called Career*. I wrote that one as I was reaching retirement last year, realizing that my wife Junell had no idea what I had been doing all those years. Unfortunately, she never had a chance to read it. After she died – this was just six weeks ago – I showed it to Jennifer and Aaron. I didn't think it would make much of an impression, but it did. I had been thinking about that story for a long while, and I even did a bit of background research on the companies where I had worked. This piece was more spontaneous.

It actually came about suddenly, inspired by a picture of Junell that Franci sent me on the day of Junell's memorial. Aaron had a parallel memorial in Newburyport, which Jen and I attended by Facetime. At that event was an old boyfriend of Junell's, Peter, whom I had heard of but never met. The picture, almost certainly taken by Peter, was from shortly before I met Junell, and it reminded me once again of how beautiful she was. [Note added September 2025: This picture was actually from 1987 at a Franci Xmas party, probably taken by Franci. She still was a beauty.]



That got me to go back to Lightroom and take another look at all my old photos, clean them up a bit. The software today is so much better than just a few years ago, increasing the resolution, removing noise, even removing “distractions”, meaning extra people you don't want in the shot. Cleaning up the old photos is a lot of work – anything before 1998 is a copy of a print, and even the digital ones from before the early 2000s were low-res – but I think worth the effort.

Writing this story helps me remember all the good times, not just the pain of the last two years. And now I am also thinking about my own mortality, and who is ever going to access those thousands of photos in Lightroom? I need to string the good ones together in a story, make it a pdf and put it on my website. This is that story.

Junell's memorial, here at the house, was just four days ago.



Here is my speech from that event:

The year was 1980. I was 31 years old living the bachelor life in Cambridge MA. With my family all in California, I was invited by a friend to her uncle's house for Thanksgiving dinner. Junell was newly divorced, also living in Cambridge, invited by my friend's brother to that same dinner. She had a cold; her eyes watery, her nose was bright red. She was the most beautiful woman I had ever met.

Our first date, I had a dinner reservation at a nice restaurant, but we never got there. Instead we spent the evening at Angel Memorial pet hospital. Her cat was sick and they had to pump some drugs under the skin till that cat inflated like a water balloon. I was competing with several other suitors at that point but that evening at Angel Memorial gave me a decisive edge.

We bonded that spring of 1981 over the Boston Celtics. It was their first championship year with Larry Bird. She remained a diehard Celtics fan her entire life. When you're a Boston fan you stay a Boston fan forever.

That summer we moved into a rented farmhouse in Lincoln MA. Oh, did I mention she had 2 little kids? Jennifer age 6 and Aaron age 4. Yes, that was new. We got married a year later and bought an old house in Weston MA. You hear kids today say how good the boomers had it back then with housing. Our mortgage was 13.25%.

We spent all our money on the down payment, so Junell had to get a job. While she lacked what we would call marketable job skills, she was extremely intelligent. She took the unlikely step of enrolling in a course in computer programming, and although she had little love for technology, she wound up working in IT for 10 years, at the end as a product manager for Digital Equipment Corp, the 2nd largest computer company in the world.

In 1986 she was wanting to get a dog. I didn't have a pet growing up, and now a new job, doing renovations on the house. It was too much, so I put her off. When I returned from a business trip to Japan - surprise! - we had a little golden retriever puppy, Molly. I was not happy about getting steamrolled like that, but getting that dog was the best thing ever. If Junell's mind was made up about something, she would just overrule me, and over the years it was usually for the better. We had dogs, usually 2 or 3, for the next 36 years. You may remember our doodles Annie and Kenna barking at you from the driveway gate. Junell loved all dogs, but golden doodles most of all.

After several years, Junell was able to quit her tech job and at last follow her dream, to become a psychologist. She got her Masters and then a PhD in Clinical Psychology from Fielding Graduate Institute. In 1997 we moved to Aptos, California, 20 acres in the redwoods and close to the beach. For a decade she had a private practice as a clinical psychologist in Santa Cruz, where her talent, natural warmth and empathy could at last be put to practical use. She was an excellent psychologist, but from a business perspective it wasn't great. She didn't take insurance because it paid so little but she had a hard time asking patients for payment when they didn't have much money. Except for the drug dealers, who were plentiful in Santa Cruz and always paid full price in cash. But she was an outstanding clinician and served as president of the Monterey Bay Psychological Association.

In 2012 we moved to Altadena. At the time, both Aaron and Jennifer lived here. Junell loved our neighborhood - the leafy streets, the diversity, friendships with the neighbors, her book club... in a way that she didn't love Santa Cruz. She was a serious person, and she didn't think Santa Cruz was for serious people. She told me, "People come to Santa Cruz to get away from people like me."

She loved being a grandmother. She doted on her grandchildren Maia, Kira, and Ryder, and kept them overstocked with clothes, toys, and whatever else she could come up with. She was a fabulous cook, and loved to entertain with spectacular meals and place decorations. One time she invited Paul, the chef from Alta Eats, over for dinner. That took courage, but she certainly did not lack confidence in the kitchen.

She was opinionated and could be blunt, as I'm sure some of you know. She would rail against what she called "California nice": she said people raised in California, if they were upset with someone, would keep quiet or say something polite instead of just coming out with it. She thought I had that problem, and also Jen's husband Brent. She was not that way. Here's an example: We traveled to Europe a lot, and she especially loved Paris, where the first several trips we stayed at a small boutique hotel. And in a place like that, the concierge makes dinner reservations, someplace walking distance from the hotel, and when you return he asks how was the dinner. On the third night of this, he asks how was the dinner, and Junell says, "You know, we come all the way

from California, and the food here is supposed to be so great, and it's just ok; we can get just as good back home." And she says, "We don't care about the fine china, the table settings, all the waiters hovering around. And we don't need to walk, we're happy to take a cab. It's just about the food." The concierge says, "I understand. There is a place you will like, not nearby. It's near where I live." Next night we go there. It's in an outer borough, a warehouse district – a bit like the Arts district here in LA – a hole in the wall restaurant. An elderly couple sat next to us with a large dog under the table. And it was one of those meals that was so great you remember it the rest of your life. We never had a not-great restaurant recommendation in Paris ever again.

She was also a world class clothes shopper, and she had a distinctive style. Her greatest ambition was, when in Paris, to be mistaken for a Parisian. Which did happen once or twice. When it came to clothes, I was her greatest disappointment.

She was a feminist in a post-feminist age. She could not understand how all those rights she had fought for and won when she was younger could be taken away with no similar fight from the younger generation of women. She loved watching women's sports – her granddaughters on the soccer field or track, or women's sports on TV – soccer, ice skating, volleyball, whatever.

In the spring of 2023 we rented a large apartment in Paris for a month. That would not have been my first choice; we had just gone the year before. But Junell really wanted to do it. She insisted, so we did. I realize now she knew that would be her last time. Her body was breaking down. She had terrible back pain and in December of that year she had surgery to remove a cyst on her spine. That helped a lot but she continued to have nerve pain in her back, which gradually spread over her whole body. She had a number of procedures after that, and heavy doses of powerful drugs. So she had good spells and bad spells, but overall her neurological condition just got worse.

She used to walk a couple miles every day, but in the last 18 months she was limited to walks around the block holding my arm. We would do it 2 or 3 times a day; you probably saw us. She loved those walks. She loved our neighborhood, the shady trees, petting the dogs, chatting with the neighbors. She did not love it when neighbors let their overgrown shrubs block the sidewalk, and she would let them know about it. She was not California nice.

And I have to add this. In the last few months, she could be quick to take offense and she said some mean things... to friends, family, and neighbors. If she did that to you, I ask your forgiveness. My shrink says people manage their pain by projecting it on other people. I think it was the pain talking, not the real Junell, and I'm sorry.

We could not have survived the last 18 months without the help of Patricia Lopez, our housekeeper, who not only kept the house and yard immaculate but helped Junell every day with bathing, getting dressed, curling her hair, making soup, emergency food shopping, all those things you never imagine you will need, until you do. We love you Patricia.

Evacuation from the fire and smoke damage in January was a hardship, not just for us but for many of you as well. Fortunately, Jennifer put us up at her house in Solana Beach. But after we returned, Junell's condition got steadily worse, and then the drugs stopped working. Endless trips to the emergency room, then the hospital, eventually leading to hospice at home.

Junell did not fear death. By the end she welcomed it. She was happy with her life, proud of her accomplishments, of Aaron and Jennifer's success and happiness, of her grandchildren, her beautiful home and garden, and our 43 years of marriage. She said she had gone everywhere and done everything she ever wanted. The end came fairly quickly, and she died peacefully with Jen, Aaron, and me by her side at home. I'm still in shock and miss her terribly.

In a way, that is the short version of this story, maybe sanitized a bit.

People thought we had the perfect marriage, but like all marriages it was far from perfect. She was very strong-willed and threatened divorce on more than one occasion. Although my therapist says I gave in to her too easily, I did manage to stay married to her for 43 years, and I'm glad of that. In spite of everything, we did love each other deeply.

Bruce Silver

Pasadena, August 7, 2025

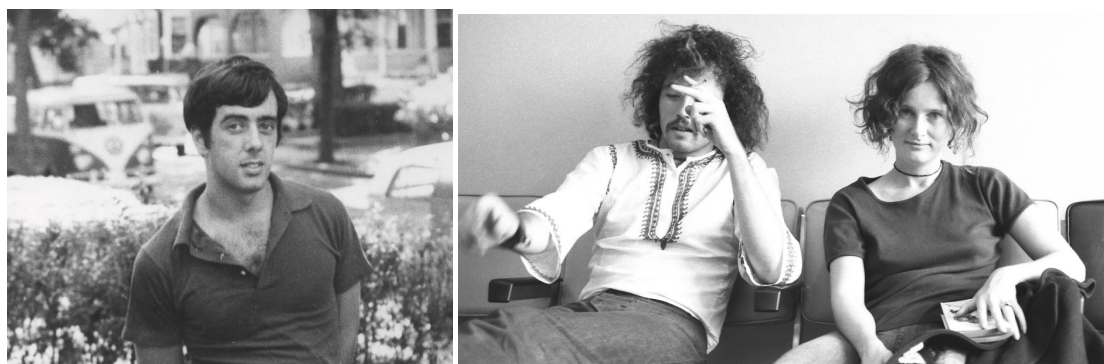
False Starts

1971

It might seem strange to begin this story with my first love Rosemary Trowbridge but she kind of set the stage for Junell. I met her in 1971 when I was beginning my second year of grad school, and I lived with her until 1977, a long time. But I have been thinking about the similarities between Rosemary and Junell, which were many. Both I found strikingly beautiful, extremely intelligent, and strong-willed. Both were a few years older than me. Both came from working class families, never had much money. They were both great cooks and taught me a lot in the kitchen. Both were strident feminists – often to my detriment. Both had strong opinions, a fiercely independent streak, and both threatened to leave me multiple times... but ultimately didn't.

They were very different in certain ways, as well. Rosemary supported me financially. She was a teacher and I was a grad student with no income. While Junell had to get a job when we were first married, once we could afford it she went back to school to become a psychologist and left the income part to me. Junell knew me when we had money, Rosemary when we had very little, and both were fine with that arrangement. Also, Rosemary didn't really enjoy sex, while Junell was the opposite. With Rosemary I was inexperienced and not very good at it. Years later she became a lesbian, so I'm not sure what role I played in that. By the time I met Junell I had the sex part figured out.

In the summer of 1971, I spent 6 weeks in Army training at Indiantown Gap, PA, after which I returned to MIT. I would be sharing an apartment on Marlborough St in Boston with guys from my lab starting in September, but I needed a place to stay for August. Rosemary was going to San Francisco for the month of August and I answered an ad to sublet her room in Cambridge. My hair was cut short for the Army, so I definitely lacked the required hipster look of Cambridge. Here you see me as I looked then, and Rosemary with one of our roommates at the TWA terminal at Logan. After she returned, I was totally smitten. I rarely went to Marlborough St, preferring to stay at her place.



1972

In 1972, we moved into a fine one-bedroom apartment at 10 Dana Street, near Harvard Square. I remember it was \$280 a month under rent control. It must be over \$5000 today. When I graduated college in 1970, I received my grandmother's 1965 Ford Galaxie and, just as important, a gasoline credit card. In the summer of 1972, Rosemary and I took it on a cross-country camping adventure, starting at my college roommate Jeff Greene's wedding on Long Island and after that going to Colorado, Utah, the Sierras and Yosemite, briefly to my house in Pacific Palisades, then off to Nevada, Yellowstone, Tetons, Wyoming, tenting in campgrounds along the way. So much fun, but it just about killed that car.



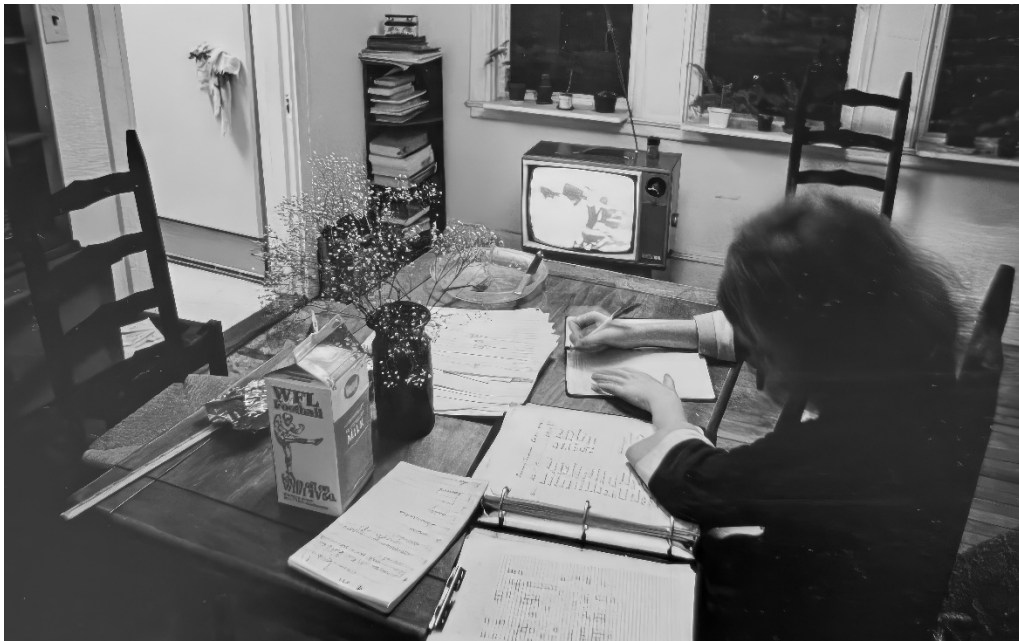
1973

The summer of 1973 we went camping in Europe, renting a car with a tent. She had taught at a school in Switzerland, and we would meet her friends from there along the way, one in France, one in Italy. One was the daughter of a baker in Macon, and we spent several days there touring the Beaujolais wineries and had a fabulous dinner. Rosemary owned a yellow Beetle convertible with a stick shift, which I did not know how to drive until that trip. But I learned how on our rental car and drove it over the Simplon pass into Switzerland. That was a great trip, but Rosemary's friends didn't think much of me and kept encouraging her to dump me.

1974

I spent January 1974 in Rome doing photography with Minor White, documenting certain locations for the MIT architecture department. I wrote about that in *My So-Called Career*, as it was the highlight of my 6 and a half years at MIT. My assigned location was Piazza del Popolo, but these below are Piazza Navona and Spanish Steps.





Maybe Rosemary's friends had a point, because in the summer of 1974 she went off on her August trip somewhere and asked me to be gone when she returned. I checked out some roommate wanted ads but they were all too depressing, like "What is your craft?" So I was still there when she returned, and she didn't say any more about it.

1975

In 1975, we went with Pete and Bonnie from my lab at MIT to the eastern Sierras, packed in on horseback for a week. That's really the way to do it, because you can carry in beer and steaks and stuff like that. On the way out, there was a lightning snowstorm as we rode over the high pass, the pack horses ambling down the steep slippery rocks. Not much of a horseman, I kissed the ground when we finally got back. I need to find the slides from that trip. I reconnected with Pete and Bonnie at Stony Brook 42 years later.

1976

In 1976, I finished the lab part of my dissertation, so I decided to do my 3-month Army active duty for training that summer, after which I would write it up. I did make it back to Boston for July 4 weekend on the Esplanade, bigger than usual because of the Bicentennial. We visited a cousin of Rosemary's in New York. They were folk singers, friends of Don Maclean (Bye Bye Miss American Pie, that guy) and were totally outraged that I was in the Army. Basically kicked us out of their apartment. That wasn't nice.

As I explained in *My So-Called Career*, that fall I somehow got a job at Polaroid and finally had an income to contribute. But life with Rosemary was getting increasingly tense. I mentioned she was a devoted feminist. She was president of Boston NOW, trying to pass the Equal Rights Amendment and at the same time fighting off takeover of NOW by the lesbian contingent. She was under a lot of stress. I didn't object to all the feminist stuff, but it wasn't really my cause.



1977

Once out of MIT, the relationship with Rosemary got harder to sustain. The people at Polaroid were a lot more fun than my mates at MIT. I feel guilty because now I had an income, but I needed to move out at last and start over. After all those times trying to get rid of me, Rosemary was shocked and very unhappy about it. I moved into a one-bedroom apartment on Appleton St in Cambridge and began bachelor life for real.



My first post-Rosemary girlfriend was Dawn Luca. She ran the Clarence Kennedy Gallery at Polaroid and later worked in marketing. Complete opposite of Rosemary, in every possible way. Very sweet, very sexy. I learned a whole lot from her and often regretted moving on. It was quite intense for a year, but we remained friends after we broke up.



1978

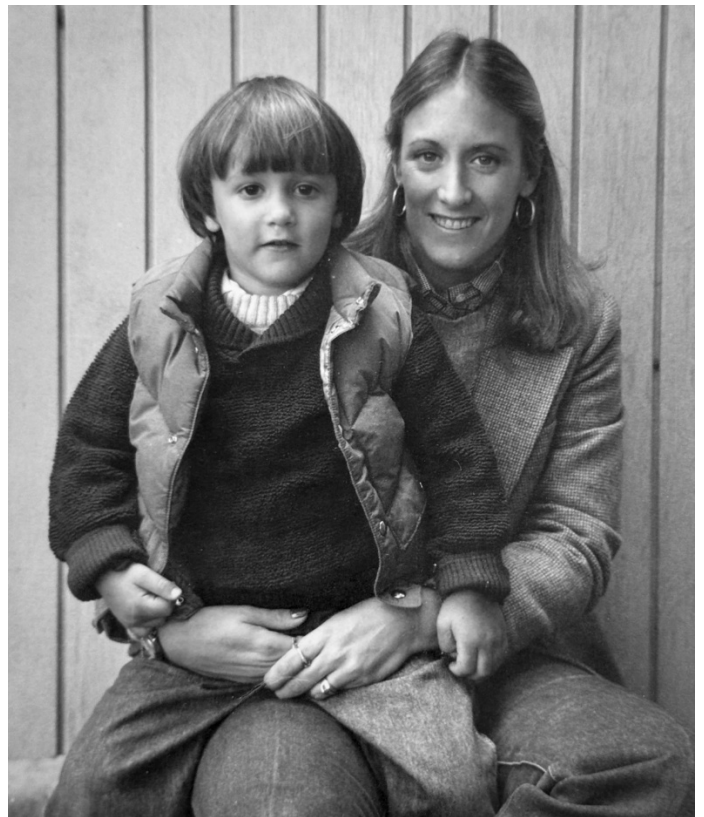
After Dawn I dated many different women, none seriously. One that got away was Pat Pence, a cowgirl from Santa Barbara working as an assistant at the Ansel Adams workshop in Yosemite, 1978. She had no money and I took her to dinner most nights. Of course she was totally beautiful. After knowing her for just a week, I asked her to come back to Boston to live with me. She had the sense to say no to that. I did reconnect with her about 30 years later, could tell right away it never would have worked out. She moved to Idaho, became a large animal veterinarian, and wrote *the* textbook on horse dentistry. Hmmm, ok. Here's a selfie with her in 1978 and one of her with Ansel.



1979

The only other serious one was Denise Spivak, whom I met at the blackjack table on Paradise Island, Bahamas in April 1979. I was burned out after a grueling stint developing Polavision sound (see *My So-Called Career*) and I went by myself to the Club Med there. Denise was at a property next door, but we spent the rest of the week together. She was recently divorced, Jewish, fairly wealthy and had a lot of wealthy friends. She lived in Danbury CT and many weekends I drove down there. That summer of 1979 we went on a river rafting trip in Idaho with my sister Danny. Denise brought her electric hair curlers along, something that still cracks Danny up.

She also had a little boy, Bradford, maybe 3 years old, very sweet kid. I was surprised that having the kid around was actually a joy. Maybe I was getting tired of the bachelor life? I thought about asking her to marry me, but in the end she dumped me because I didn't ski. She was a super skier and rented a ski house in Vermont. I wasn't good at it and didn't really enjoy it. We were serious for a year, but it didn't work out.



That was Spring 1980. In the Fall I met my true life partner Junell, the fairest of them all.

Life with Junell - Massachusetts

1980

Meeting Junell on Thanksgiving 1980 was just as I told it at the memorial. She was sick and her nose was bright red, but she was beautiful regardless. When I called her for a date she told me this other friend (also at that dinner!) had asked her out already, and we would have to decide which one got to do it. And I said, “No, you have to decide!” And the story about the cat blown up like a water balloon is pretty much as I told it as well.

1981

So I like to say our first *real* date was a week in Negril, Jamaica in February 1981. Negril is all built up with hotels now but back then it was just a few casitas and a lot of jungle. At night guys would pop out of the jungle to exchange Jamaican money for dollars, better rate than the bank. Negril didn't have a beach, but six-foot cliffs into the water with iron ladders, so you could dive in and climb out. And the vibe was you did this with no clothes. Seriously. There would be restaurants by the water and you'd eat with no clothes on, jump in the water for a bit. Crazy. Hard to believe we did all that.



Junell learned that the ladies who hosted the casitas could get her some magic mushrooms. I had no interest in that. Even the pot in Jamaica was way too strong for me. But Junell cooked some up in a saucepan and had an enjoyable trippy experience at Rick's Café, the place everyone went to watch the sunset.



Here she is talking to some dude at Rick's.





At the end of that week we were madly in love.

As I mentioned at the memorial, she had two little kids, Jen age 6 and Aaron age 4. In June we moved into a rented farmhouse in Lincoln MA. Lincoln is a great town. Just a few miles west of Cambridge, it pretends to be a quaint village in Vermont. No street numbers, our address was just Trapelo Road, Lincoln. Here's Jen and Aaron on our front porch.



That summer we went with my sister Amy and her future husband Eddie Orton to the Yosemite high country. Swimming in the Merced River and resting after climbing Jayne Mansfield pass.



We loved Lincoln. Trees to climb, Aaron learned to ride a bike. The schools were better than Cambridge. My relationship with the kids was great. Still, I had a difficult time proposing

marriage. I didn't really trust myself as a lifetime partner. I had been in love before, with Rosemary for sure, and after some time I always fell out of love. My parents were divorced. I was afraid of that. It caused tension with Junell but eventually I took the plunge.



1982

The next summer we got married at Pierce House, just a walk across the field behind our house. Jen and Aaron were our maid of honor and best man. We didn't have parents to give us a wedding, so we did it economically.





Our honeymoon was at Little Dix Bay, Virgin Gorda, and Caneel Bay, St John. It was a package deal, all inclusive for a week. We didn't have much money so I don't know how we could have done that. I don't think we could afford it today. Casitas right on the beach. All you can eat. But it was fabulous. We loved the Virgin Islands and went back multiple times.



In the Fall of 1982, we bought a house in the neighboring town of Weston, another leafy suburb close to Boston. Junell really pushed for it, even though it cost our last dollar. I was terrified when I heard they accepted our offer, but we spent 15 delightful years in that house.

When we moved in, the house was a mess. It needed a lot of work: painting, wallpaper, new kitchen hardware. In those days we did it all ourselves.



1983



1984

The Summer of 1984 we went to Virgin Gorda again, this time with the kids and Amy and Eddie. Rented a place called Black Witch Hole. Summer is off-season, and some of the local restaurants were not in full swing. When we ordered Pina Coladas at one of them, the waiter said "I'm not in de mood, mon." That became the motto for the trip, but we had a fantastic time, snorkeling at the Baths, windsurfing at the Bitter End.









That summer Amy and Eddie got married in Stinson Beach following a hair-raising bus ride over the mountain. Eddie was a budding business tycoon but a good husband.



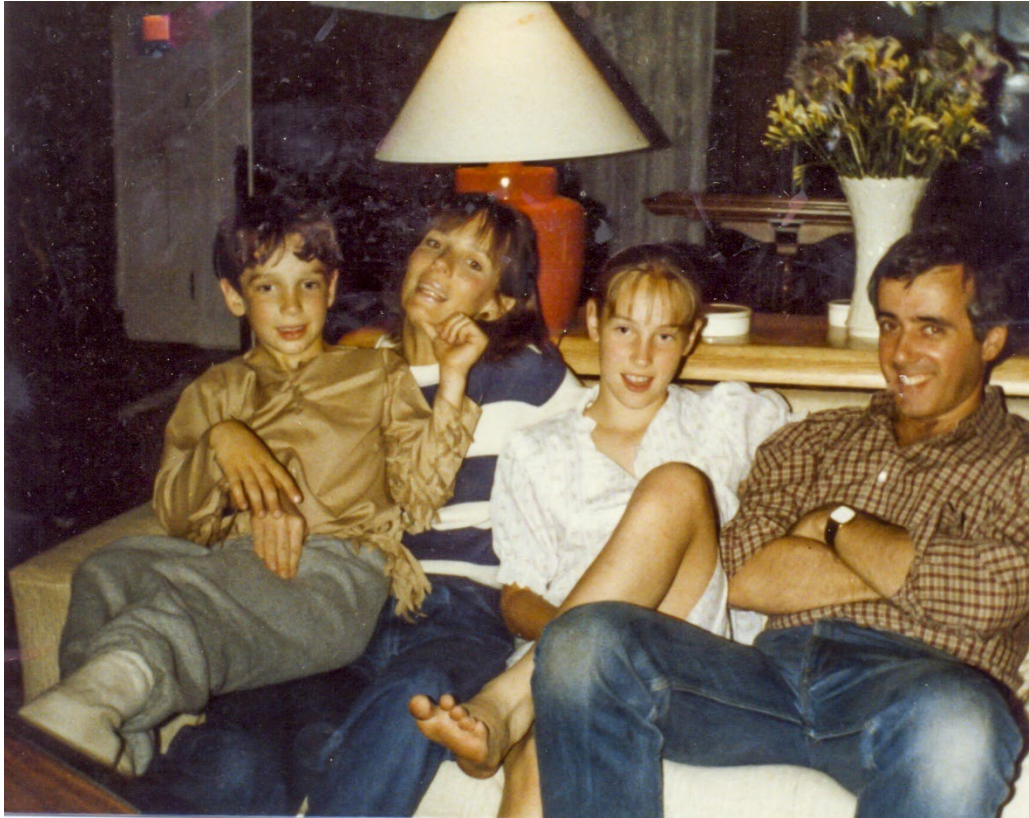
In the Fall, Aaron took up hockey. If they can just figure out how to put the equipment on.



Weston was such a great town. Behind our house was about 10 acres of woods with trails you could cross-country ski on in winter. Behind the Weises' house across the street was conservation land. The streets were lined with sugar maples that would turn bright yellow and orange in fall. And it was near to Boston and Cambridge, close to the intersection of the Mass Pike and Rte 128. The schools were outstanding: The town always overrode the Prop 2 ½ tax increase limit to keep it that way, and the town pool had a sand beach and everything.

John and Betty Weis lived across the street and were our best friends. When we met, they had us over for stingers, and I had to crawl home on my hands and knees. So they were that kind of couple. We followed them to the Bay Area 15 years later, and wound up with a condo near their subsequent home in Newbury, MA. They had us at their house on Block Island many times, and we later hosted them at Eddie Orton's apartment in Rome. Eventually they moved to North Carolina to be near their son and we kind of lost track of them.

Relaxing in the living room in Weston.



And making a snow bunny in the back yard.



1985

The year 1985 saw Jen's dance recital...



And Hurricane Gloria. No power for a week. We roasted hot dogs in the fireplace.



Every year one family hosted the last day of school breakfast for the Glen Road neighbors. Our turn this year. After breakfast we saw the kids off to the bus.





That year I left Polaroid after 9 years and started a new job at Wang Labs, a computer company in Lowell MA. It was a big improvement over Polaroid but a lot of pressure. I wrote about it in the other book. I began as an individual contributor but there was a shuffle of executives and somehow I wound up managing a team of top-notch electrical engineers and became responsible for the hardware that became the company's signature product, called WIIS.

Life in Weston pretty much revolved around the kids. Spring meant soccer and baseball



Birthday parties in the Fall. Junell made those dining room curtains with a sewing machine, and we put up the wallpaper together.



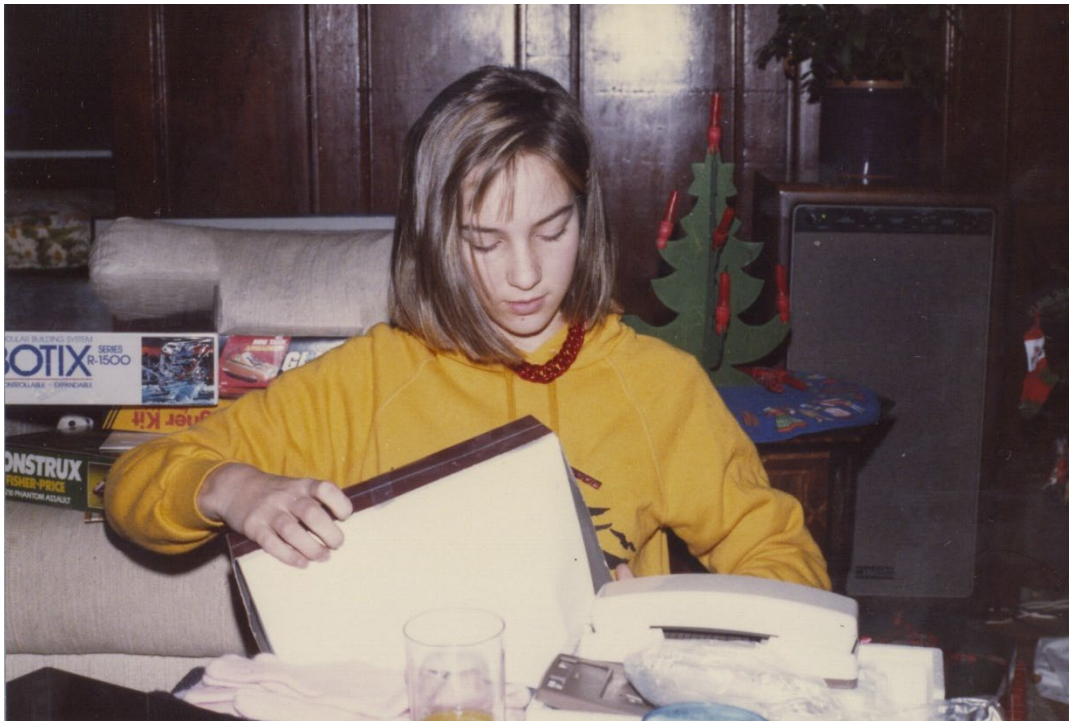
Halloween was always a big deal for kids. Miguel and I would walk with them and get beers as our treat.



Junell, Jen, and the Weston mothers



Christmas. Big focus on toys in those days. Assembling the Ewok Village was epic.



1986

In Spring 1986, Junell and I went to Barbados. The first hotel was a disaster, so we quickly bailed on that one and found a much nicer one on the beach. That was the last time we used a travel agent, had much better luck on our own.





That summer we were introduced to Block Island by our neighbors John and Betty Weis. Fishing at Coast Guard beach.



That summer we put in a new kitchen, family room, and master suite. Norm Abrams from This Old House was the contractor. The house was so out of square they had to put the floorboards in diagonally. The improvements were great, but minor compared to what we did later in California.

Before and after





We still didn't have much money so we did all the painting ourselves. (Last time for that!)



New family room in back and master bath upstairs.



I went to Japan that summer on business and when I returned... SURPRISE! Molly, a golden retriever puppy.

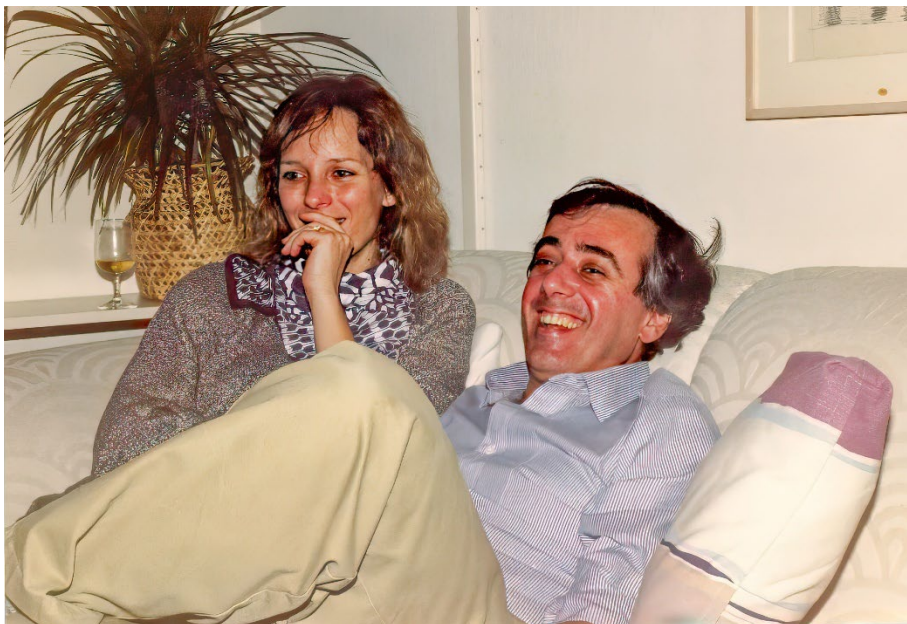


I wasn't happy about it, but Molly turned out to be a great dog. No leash law in Weston, and Molly would visit all the neighbors. Usually came home with some ladies' undergarment. We used to walk her around the Weston Reservoir. She and Weises' dog Hannah liked to sneak under the fence and swim. Bad dogs!



That year Junell had a neuroma on her foot, and then neuropathic sympathetic dystrophy when they removed it. She was on crutches for a long while.

My whole family, sisters, Mom and Dad, went to Amy and Eddie's house in Kensington for Thanksgiving that year. Aaron and Jen came; T-Sisters twins were babies. Not long after, Amy and Eddie moved to a mansion on SeaView in Piedmont.

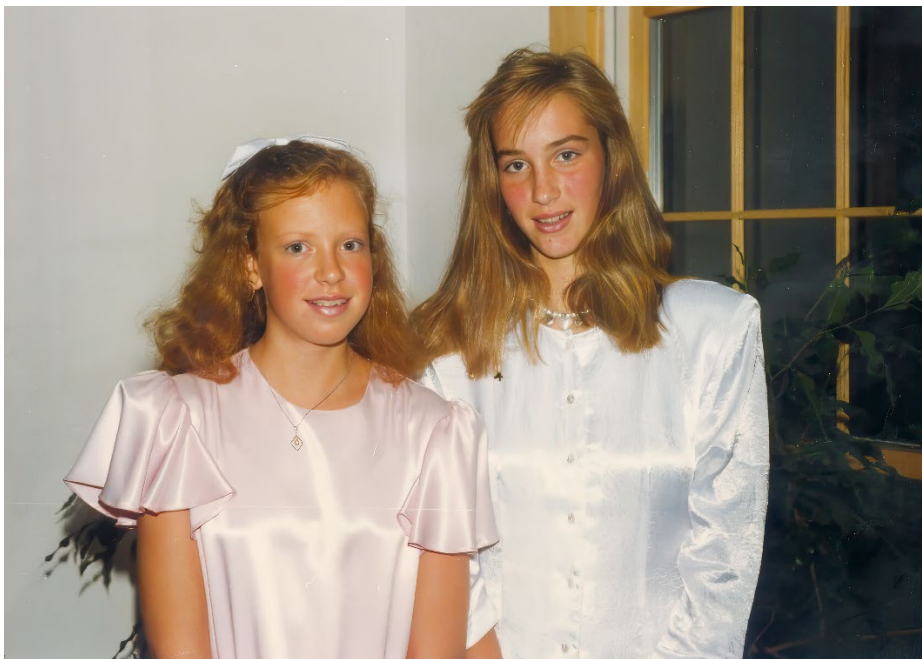


1987

The year 1987 was a busy one for me at work, so we didn't go anywhere fancy for vacation. The year started with a birthday party for Junell, 42 years old.



Jen and Susie Delea going to a prom. Jen was 13 that year.



Aaron played soccer but it was not really his thing. On the other hand, he could do a yoyo and pogoball at the same time.



In the summer we went to the beach at Michael Palmer's house in Falmouth. Junell as beautiful as ever.





1988

1988 was a big year for vacations. On Spring Break we went with Miguel Gomez-Ibanez and his kids to Akumal, near Cancun. We rented a fabulous house on a lagoon, better snorkeling there than even Cozumel.





Tulum was just an empty ruin back then, no hotels, actually no tourists at all.



In the summer, Amy and Eddie invited us to Porto Santo Stefano on the Tuscan coast, where the Italians go on vacation. We shared a villa in the hills with Eddie's cousins and Joy and her boyfriend. Dinner with Eddie's mother, uncle, and friends, who were staying in the area as well.





Later that summer we were invited to the Wang Achievers event in Quebec. Normally to reward top salespeople, I got invited because of getting two important products out the door. At the Chateau Frontenac they had a ball where we wore 17th century costumes, kinda silly.



Back home, we put in a bluestone patio below our little deck.. Still doing the work ourselves!





1989

In February I went to Japan with Dr Wang, flew home on the company jet. I wrote about this in *My So-Called Career*. A year later, Dr Wang was dead and so was his company.



Spring Break we went with Miguel's family and Susie Delea to St Martin, another beautiful house on the beach with pool.



After three years of French, Jen still couldn't order a hamburger.





Summer, Danny's wedding to Peter in Berkeley. They didn't hire caterers so my family had to do all the work. Not fun.



Then Point Lobos and Big Sur. No idea we would be living near there in a few years.



Later, back on Block Island.



Ricardo and Susan Sanchez moved out of Cambridge. Ricardo is the one lab mate from MIT that I stayed close to. He later went to medical school and I lost touch. Fortunately we were able to reconnect years later.



Thanksgiving in Weston with Donna Prince and Sayleses



1990

In 1990 I left Wang, which was sinking fast, got a job as industry analyst. Finally something I was really good at! Spring Break with Miguel in Costa Rica.



Hot springs near the Arenal volcano. She should have heeded the sign



Beautiful house on the beach, Guanacaste



But the sand too hot to walk on during the day



Into the Cloud Forest, everyone got food poisoning. Lots of monkeys.





Weises have a house on Block Island now! Very nice.



Fall at the Weston Reservoir. Jen is 16 now, Molly 6. We still like to walk Molly around the res.



Aaron's first time on a snowboard at age 13, someplace in New Hampshire. He would later major in snowboarding at Fort Lewis.



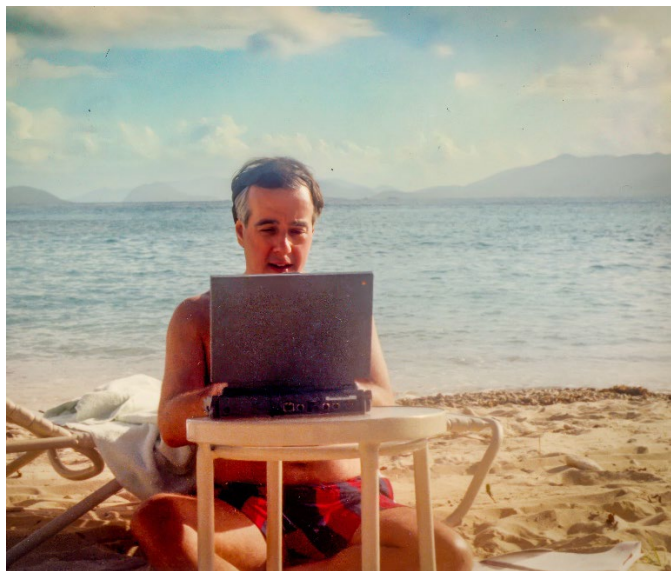
1991

Hardly any pix this year. Not sure where this is.



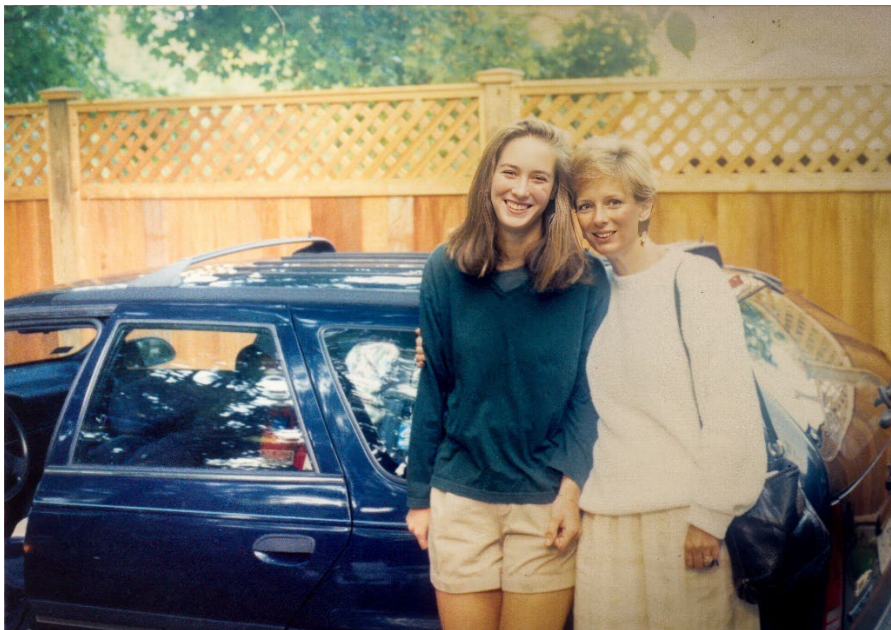
1992

Spring Break Junell and I went to St Thomas. I liked that place, easy to get to, no passport required, nice hotel and snorkeling, quiet. For my new job I had to do a lot of writing, and I could work there on the beach. On the way home, learned Jen got into Princeton.





Jen's driving now. Yikes!



In September we dropped Jen off at Princeton. All the incoming freshmen had that deer-in-the-headlights look. Princeton brought back lots of great memories.



Late Fall on chilly Block Island with Weises and Miguel



1993

Quiet at home now with Jen at Princeton. And now Aaron is gone! He didn't care for Weston, went to live with his Dad on the Cape. This year we went on vacation to Grenada, not my favorite. Junell is still gorgeous at 48.



1994

There was some Silver family event in Santa Fe, Katy's 25th anniversary and I think Danny was pregnant with Sofia. Jen's boyfriend tagged along.







Bill and Mary Sayles had a place on Kezar Lake in Maine. I had a great time windsurfing on the lake. Hiking in the woods with Junell and Molly.



I took Aaron to Boulder and Colorado Springs to look at colleges, a great trip to bond with him. We rode bikes up Boulder Canyon, watched OJ's Bronco chase on TV. He wound up going to Fort Lewis in Durango, Colorado, where he did very well. Got to be a pretty good snowboarder too.

That Fall I left the industry analyst firm and began to do it on my own as Bruce Silver Associates, working out of the house in Weston. I had doubts I could do it, but Junell convinced me that I could. And I did, for another 30 years.

1995

A couple years earlier, Junell was finally able to quit her tech job and pursue her dream of becoming a psychologist. This year she got her Masters from Antioch New England in Keene, NH.



Back on Block Island. We went there a lot.



Looks like we have a garden around the patio now. Molly checking it out in the snow.



1996

Jen's graduating Princeton! Time goes by so fast!



We rented a cottage by the beach on Block Island. John Weis enjoying his mud pack.



With Jen graduating and Aaron in college, we decided to leave Weston after 15 years. Off to California! I didn't think Junell would agree to it, but my clients were mostly in Silicon Valley now, and I was on the board of a company in San Jose, where Weises had moved already. So we're good to go! Now getting the house ready to sell.

Weston sure is beautiful in the fall. They changed the law to require lots with septic to perc before selling, and ours didn't. Had to jack up the front yard with 3 feet of fill for leach field and pump the septic outflow uphill. Yikes.



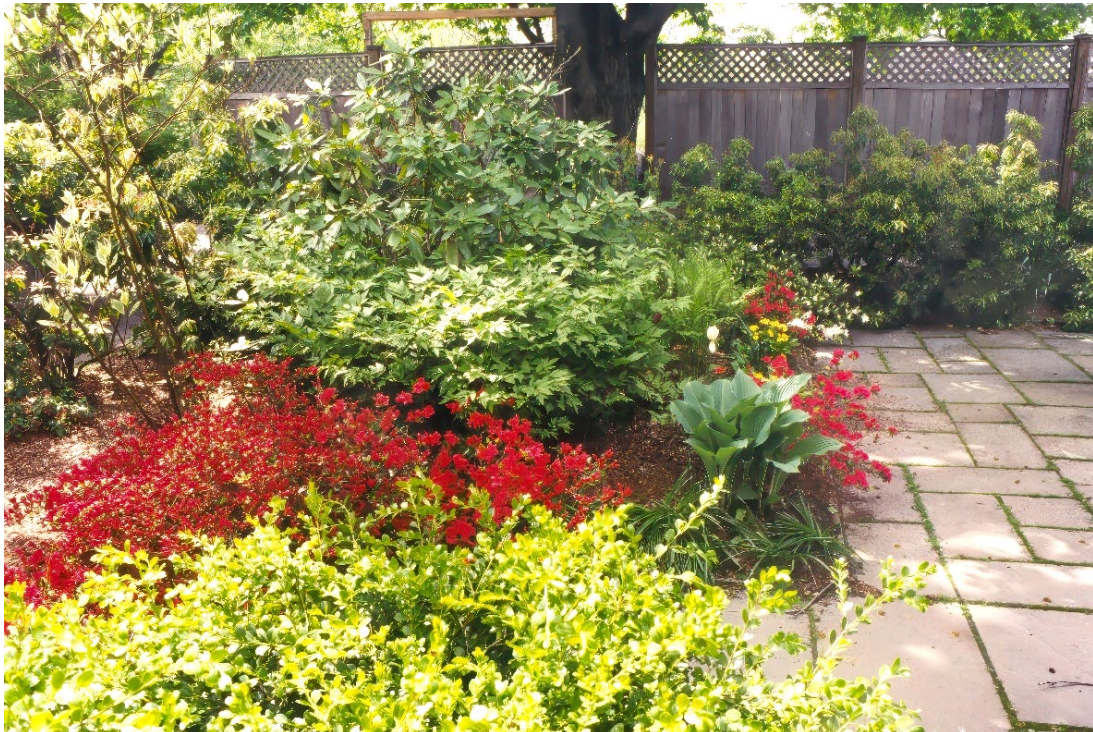
Molly died that Fall. We were heartbroken but wanted to wait until we got to California to get another dog.

1997

Springtime, yard jacked up, we're ready to sell at last. Front yard looks nice.



Garden around the patio in back looks great as well.



Open house is in May... but it *snows*??!!! It never snows in May.



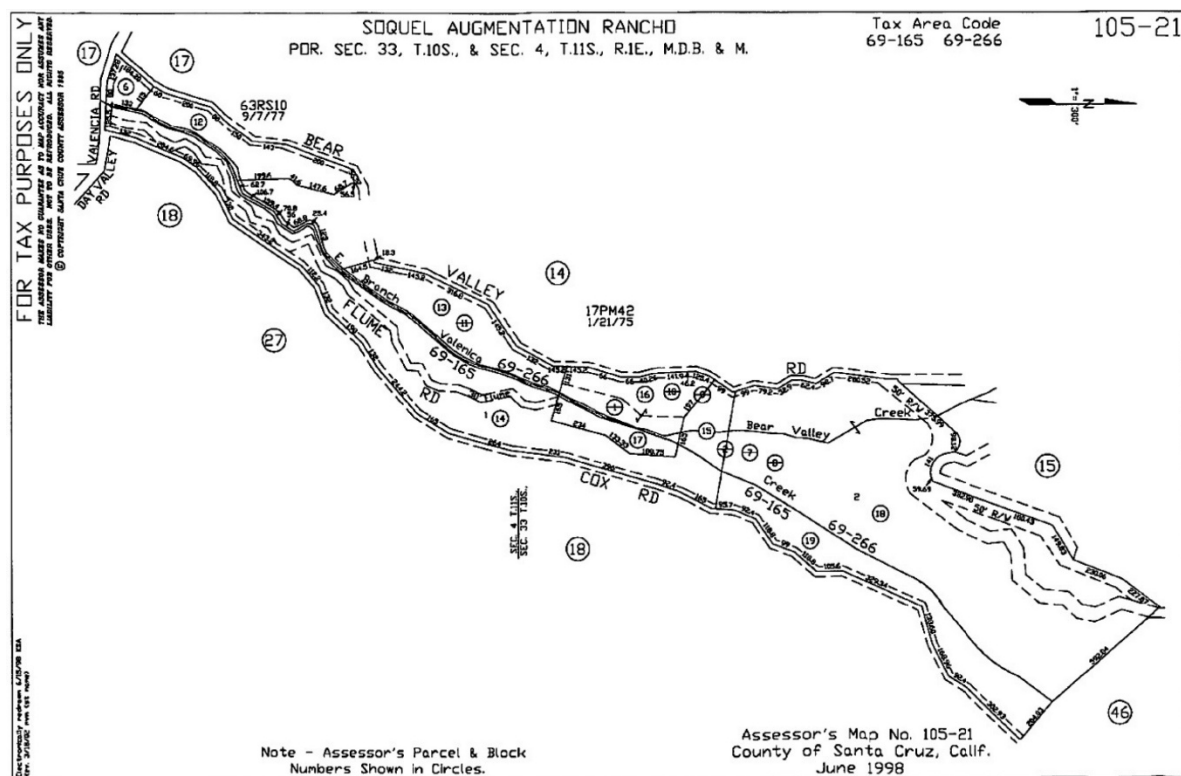
Oh well... We managed to sell it.

Aptos

1997

Next stop, Aptos CA, near Santa Cruz. The Loma Prieta earthquake (1989) was actually in Aptos. Most of the buildings around Santa Cruz fell down in the quake. (Don't think about that...) Our house was built in 1990, a year after. We had tried to find a place in Los Gatos or Saratoga, but they were way out of our price range. Santa Cruz was cheaper, and this one sort of fell into our lap.

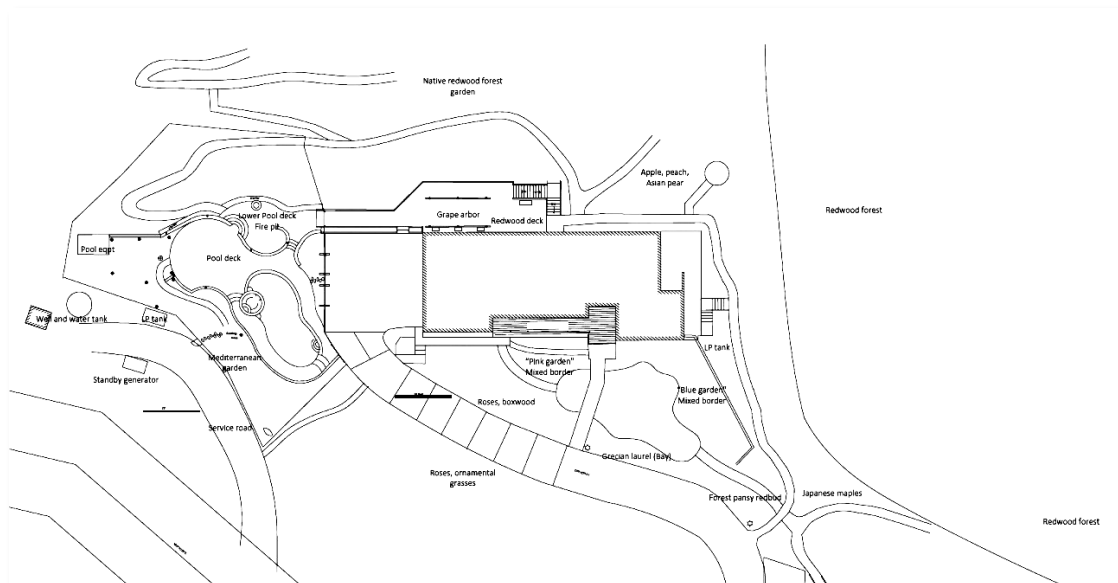
We were looking for a little more space than our half acre in Weston, and we got way more than we bargained for, 20+ acres of redwood forest, a half mile along a creek that runs all year, a couple miles from the beach. It's the entire area shown in the map below.



It was just a house plopped into a clearing in the forest when we got there, but I wanted to turn it into 5-star resort where grandchildren would love to visit and dogs could run around. This place became my obsession for the next 15 years (maybe not Junell's). I made a whole picture book about it, *Aptos Memories*.



First thing, we got a landscape architect to create a master plan for the area around the house: circulation, deck, pool, English garden, woodland garden, mediterranean garden, on and on. It was supposed to take 5 years to complete, but we did it in 3. If you want the whole story of that transformation, see *Aptos Memories*.



This house was truly off the grid. No broadband, no cell service, no town water or sewer. Since I was running my business out of the house, lack of broadband was a problem. We tried everything: ISDN, then Direcway (satellite), both horrible. Finally a T.1 line - \$500/month for 1 Mb over a special phone line – no splices between the house and the central office. (Now I pay \$89 for 1000 Mb in Altadena.)

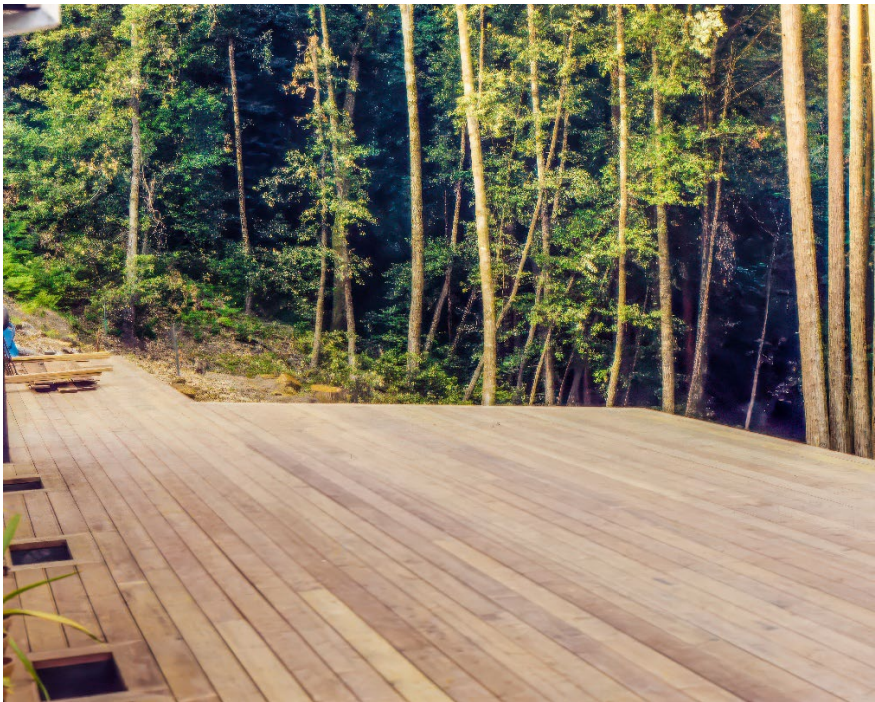
The week after we moved in, our insurance got cancelled: trees too close to the house. We hired someone to cut them back, chip the branches and winch the trunks up behind the driveway. We gave the trunks away to firewood people if they would cut them up and haul them away: 14 cords of firewood (that's a lot).

The night we arrived from Boston, Amy was having a dinner party, and her friend Karen just happened to have a new litter of golden puppies. Our prayers answered on our first night! We were so missing our dog. We chose Cody, or rather Cody chose us, nibbling on my shoe.



1998

We got to work right away on the landscape plan. First up was a large redwood deck and pergola on the rear of the house. Below you see where the chips landed from the trees we cut down, and drainage for storm water – always an issue in Santa Cruz County. The square holes in the deck would go down to grape vines planted six feet below, which would cover the pergola, looking down on the redwood forest and creek below.



Here's what it looked like when done. Pretty nice!



Christmas. Aaron visiting from Fort Lewis College in Durango. Jen is med school in Chicago. She's getting to be as beautiful as her mom.



We saw a lot of the Weises, our neighbors from Weston now in San Jose, just over the mountain from Aptos. Junell was always busting John Weis over something at dinner.



1999

We began work on the gardens. Here you see new walks around the house and plantings in front. Everything here is so tiny compared to what it became.



We excavated the pool below an undulating retaining wall. We had a stamped concrete pool deck stepping down to a firepit overlooking the redwood forest.



After it was finished...

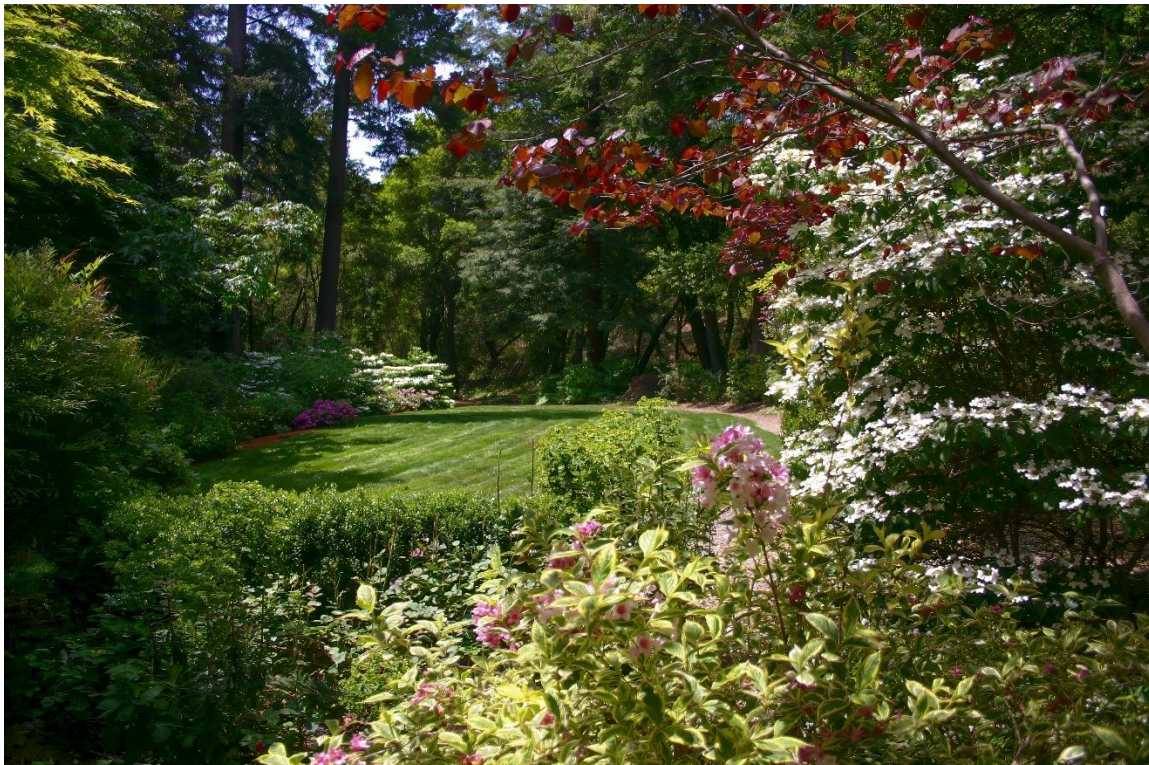




We used the dirt excavated from the pool to grade a scrubby patch that would become the Meadow.



Here it is a few years later.



1999, Aaron graduated from Fort Lewis College.



Christmas at Amy and Eddie's mansion on SeaView in Piedmont. Junell, Jen, Amy, and Toni.

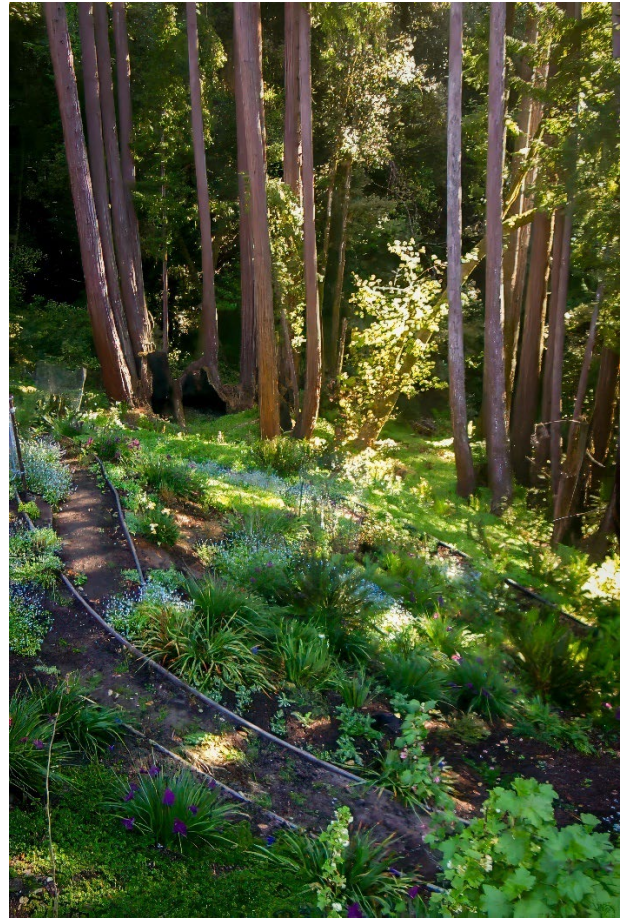
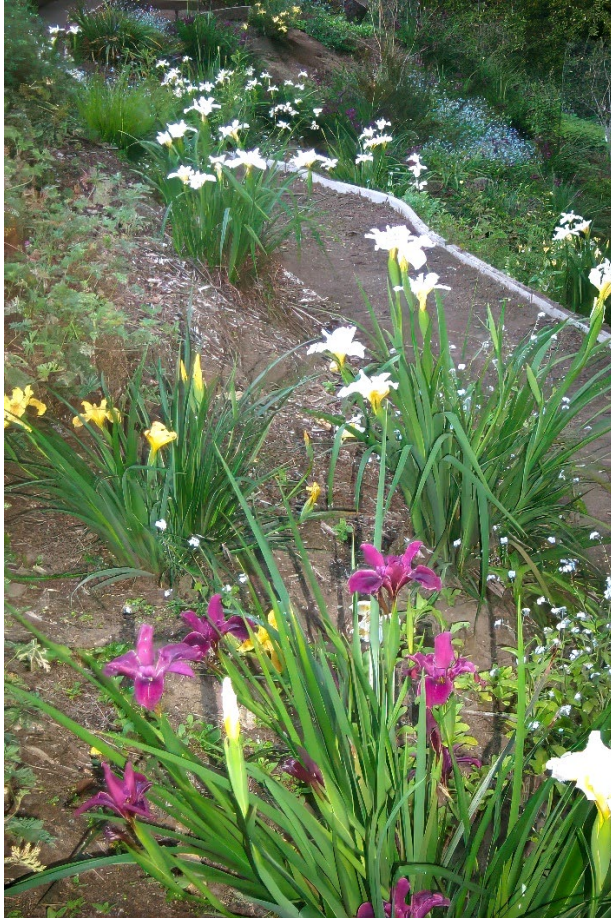


2000

Now we have a new golden retriever puppy, Cassie! Last year Cody was the dog that caught the car – truck in this case. She lost her left rear leg, but remained a happy tripod. Now she has someone to play with.



Behind the house we put in paths leading down to the redwood forest. We planted the slope with Douglas Iris and native woodland plants. Our land used to be a logging camp called Valencia in the 1890s. They clear cut the old growth redwoods, and now we have the second growth, 6-10 feet in diameter and over 100 feet high. Thousands of them.



Dogs loved playing in the creek.



2001

Meanwhile, Junell has been working on her PhD from Fielding Graduate Institute. Here she is writing her dissertation behind the pool, and later getting her degree.



That year Jennifer graduated from med school in Chicago.



In July we went to Vail with Amy and Eddie.



Another Silver family gathering in Santa Fe, where Danny and Katy live. Danny and Amy perform a birthday song for Mom, a family tradition.



2002

No idea where this is, but Junell and I look happy together.

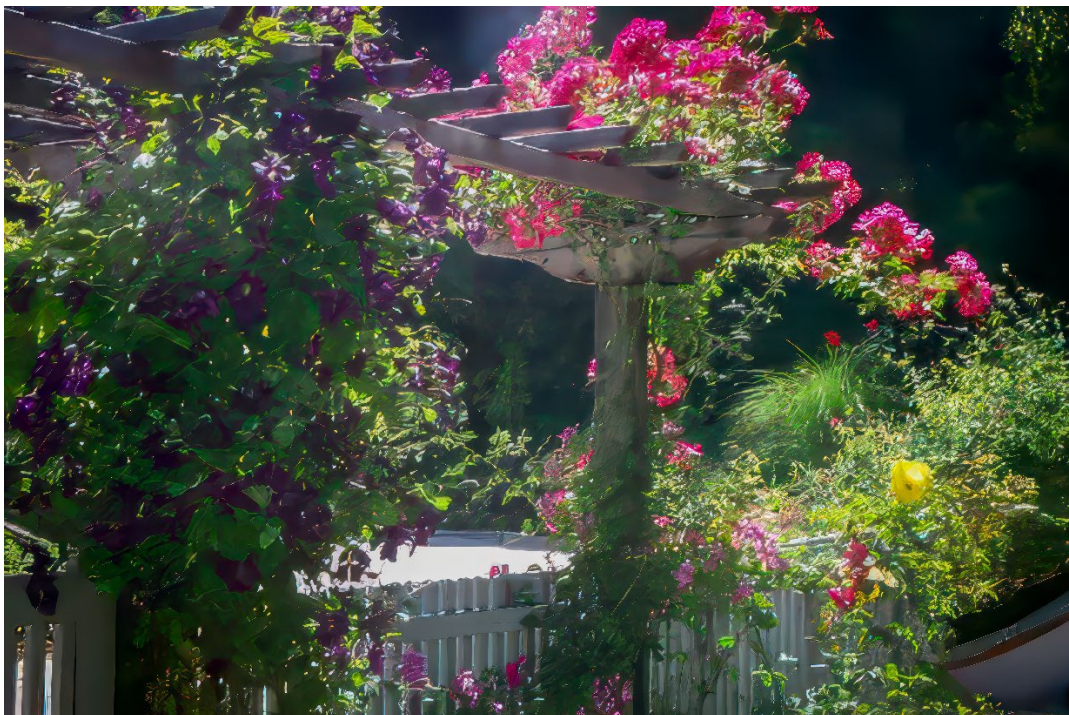


In February we vacationed in St John with Jen and her boyfriend Brent. Looks serious this time.





Back home, I had begun to learn all about plants, with help from our neighbor Sarah. No wonder I knew nothing from Weston: our house was on granite ledge, no real soil at all! Now I learned the Western Garden Book by heart, even got business cards printed as a landscaper so I could shop the wholesale nurseries - \$5 for a 5-gallon plant! In the end we had 3 acres of gardens, over 150 roses. The electric bill for our well pump was as much as our water bill in Altadena today. Here are roses and clematis on arbor above the pool gate.



That Summer we went to Italy, first Rome, then Venice, and Tuscany. After 9/11, Americans were afraid to fly, so we had Italy to ourselves (almost)! Before going to Porto Santo Stefano again with Eddie and Amy, Junell and I spent several days driving around Tuscany so I could photograph the countryside. I was following the locations of a photography book by Charlie Waite, which I loved. Next February I am going on a photo workshop in Spain with Charlie Waite! Think I'll get him to autograph that book.



The villa in P.S.S. was right on the Mediterranean, hard to get even for the rich Italians

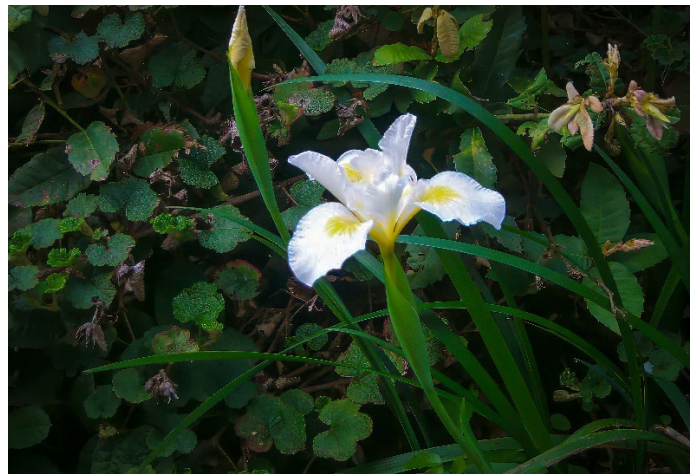


2003

I loved our place in Aptos. This picture captures the mood. Junell is walking the dogs on an empty country road. Our property is on the right, goes for another half mile. Misty, cool, quiet, I loved it.



Every kind of plant thrives in the climate here. The gardens were overflowing with color. Even in back where the blown out wood chips were 2 feet thick, plants would grow.



Dogwoods and redwoods. Dogs romping in the Meadow. It was all so beautiful.



Toni's daughter Erika graduated that year. Junell celebrating at SeaView with Danny and Toni's husband Ramsey.



Jen and Brent are getting married! Their wedding would be at our house in the Meadow. This is a practice run.





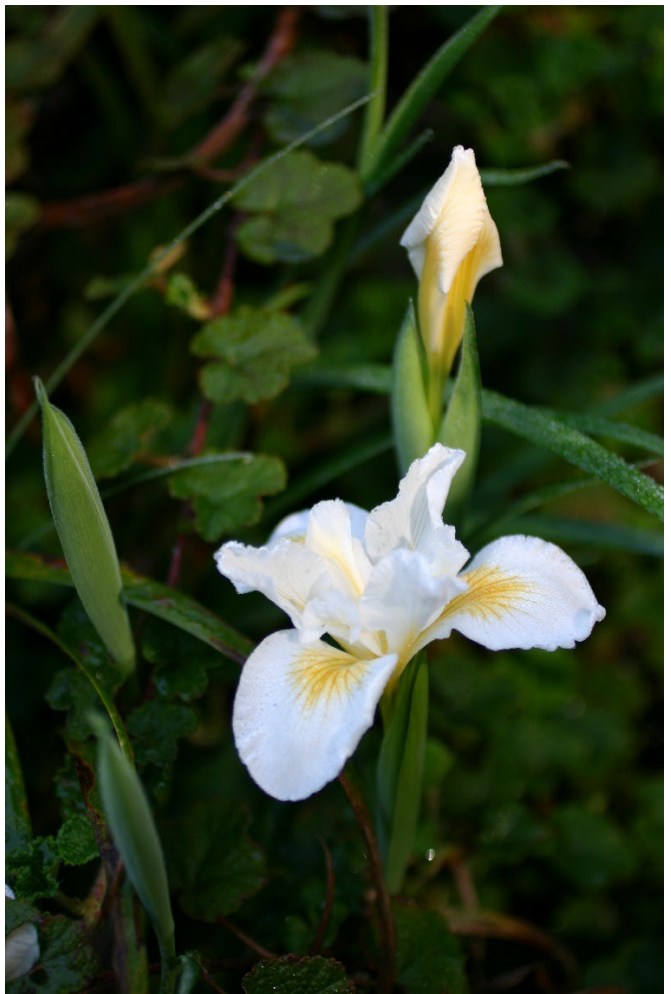


2004

Another great thing about Aptos: Nearby beaches, empty, dogs could run. This is New Years Day.



The gardens in Spring.



Cody, our happy tripod.



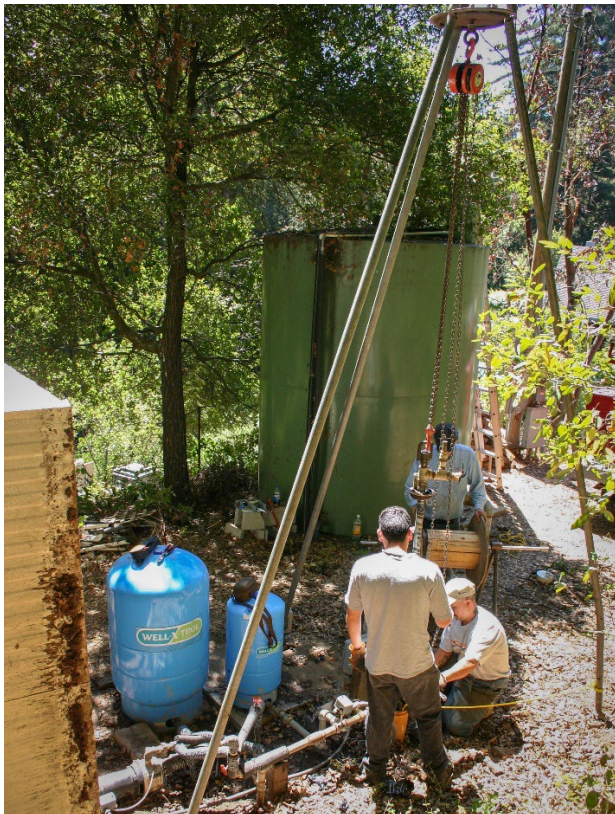
Amy had a fabulous 50th birthday bash in May.



After a year in Boston, Jen and Brent now in Santa Monica. They got a dog, but it had some congenital issue and did not survive long.



Aptos required a lot of maintenance. Replacing the well pump.



Visiting Jen and Brent in LA



2005

In January we took a Princeton Journeys whale watching cruise in Baja.



We met Bob and Jan Garrison, who became good friends in Santa Cruz. Bob was a Princeton guy and now chair of the geology department at UC Santa Cruz.



In May visited Jen in LA, got a Princeton tour of the Disney Center



Franci came to visit in Aptos. Legendary lunch in Carmel with Meursault Les Perrieres 1995. I'm surprised this is Franci's first appearance in this story. She was Junell's visiting nurse with Jen back in 1974 and remained her best friend forever. I consider her one of my closest friends today. We saw her all the time in Weston and after we moved to California. After her husband Hank died, she moved into our condo in Newburyport.



July 4 on Block Island with Franci and Hank. They flew us to Nantucket for lunch. Junell is still beautiful at age 60.



We liked this house on BI. Rented it multiple times. Junell and Franci in the kitchen.





Jen is pregnant! We found the perfect baby name: Cooneymus!



Lots of visitors: Amy and Eddie, Ricardo and Susan (we reconnected at last).



Junell had a fundraiser for Monterey Bay Psych Association at the house.



Wine tasting Paso Robles with Weises



December, Jen's ready to pop. Baby Maia takes the stage





Christmas at Jen's in Santa Monica.



2006

I used to ride my bike with my friend Ben, even 100K rides. Our area was mostly ag, a lot of strawberry fields. That year we watched the Tour of California time trial in San Jose. Won by Floyd Landis, later discovered to be a massive drug cheater.



I was on the board of Captiva when it got acquired by EMC. Big party at Torrey Pines Lodge. I got a Rolex, gave it to Aaron. Options finally in the money, later paid for a new kitchen.



It does snow in Aptos (maybe 2-3 times in 15 years). Plants are cut back for winter. I planted Boston Ivy on the wall, but Junell later made me cut it down.



In April I gave a talk for Unisys in St Paul de Vence. I'd done it twice before, but this time Junell came. Customers from different countries would compete in a pétanque Olympics. She loved it so much we put in a pétanque court at the end of the Meadow.



Afterwards we spent a week driving around Provence. Franci tricked us into having the \$500 lunch at Beaumaniere in Les Baux. Later I read that place was Melissa Clark's introduction to French cooking.





We traveled all around Provence. From our base in St Remy and later Aix, we went to Avignon, Gigondas and the Cotes de Rhone wineries. Junell as beautiful as always at age 61.



Cotes de Rhone wine country





Our hotel in St Remy (Valrugues) was quite stunning as well.



From there we continued on to Sicily to meet our friends the Garrisons. In Siracusa I got a traffic ticket via hidden camera, although didn't know until 6 months later. I never paid it, and their dire threats were never carried out. We stayed in the Grand Hotel, very nice, while Garrisons stayed in some cheap hovel. So glad I didn't become an academic.



We drove all around Sicily. Lots of ancient Greek ruins, rococo churches, just cool countryside.
Junell and Jan Garrison





The town of Erice was amazing. On top of a mountain right next to the sea. It was like something out of a video game.



Back home, Maia is introduced to Cassie.



Fun in the spa



Jen and Brent residency at UCLA. They live in Westwood now. Cody loves Maia. They read books together.







Mom's 80th birthday dinner, Oakland, with her old friends from the Palisades. She has lived in Las Vegas since early 1970s.



Maia loves Grammy



Maia's first birthday



Maia liked the swing in Aptos. Later we got a bigger one and she would jump off it.



2007

At the beach in Santa Monica. Aaron's a banker now in LA. We talked about mortgage-backed securities. Those could never crash... right??



Maia liked to ride that dog.



Finally we did work inside the house: New kitchen and family room. While the gardens were mostly my thing, Junell took charge of this project, and she did a fabulous job... but managed to spend the entire amount of our Captiva options.

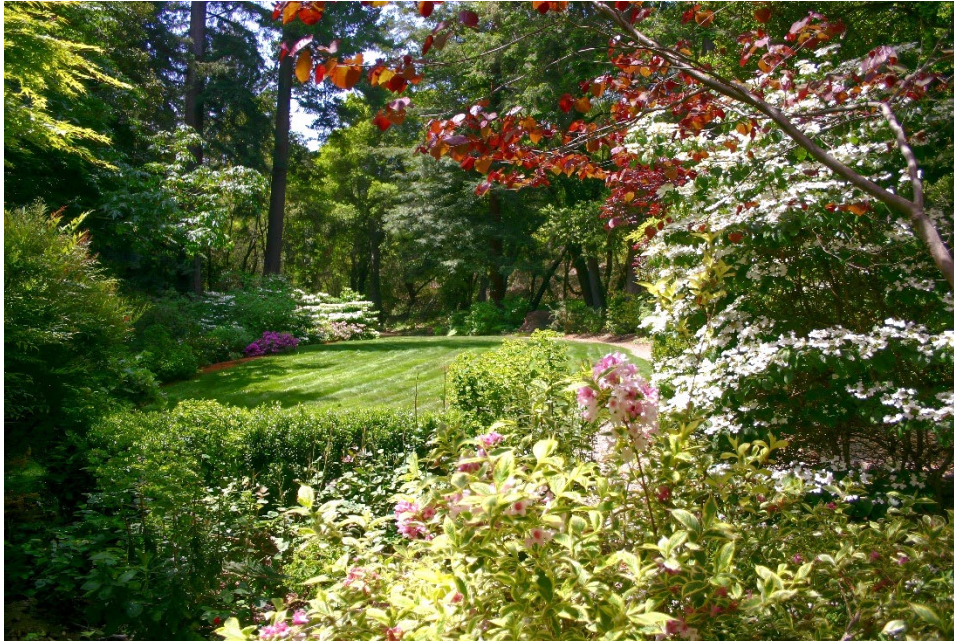


2008

Maia is cuter than ever. She loved Big Baby.



The Meadow was especially beautiful this spring. Here you see that pétanque court we put in.



Giving Cody a bath



Aaron is getting married to Zita in England! At some fancy castle. We hosted a rehearsal dinner cruise on the Thames at Henley.





The houses along the river were spectacular.



The wedding was at a place called Danesfield. Very England.







After the wedding, Junell, Amy, Eddie, and I walked around the Cotswolds





The gardens were amazing



As were the houses



From there, off to Scotland

My favorite picture with Junell





Back home, we upgraded the master bath





At the Boardwalk, Santa Cruz



For my 60th birthday, we hired a bus to take family and friends to Sierra Mar at Post Ranch Inn in Big Sur for a fabulous dinner.

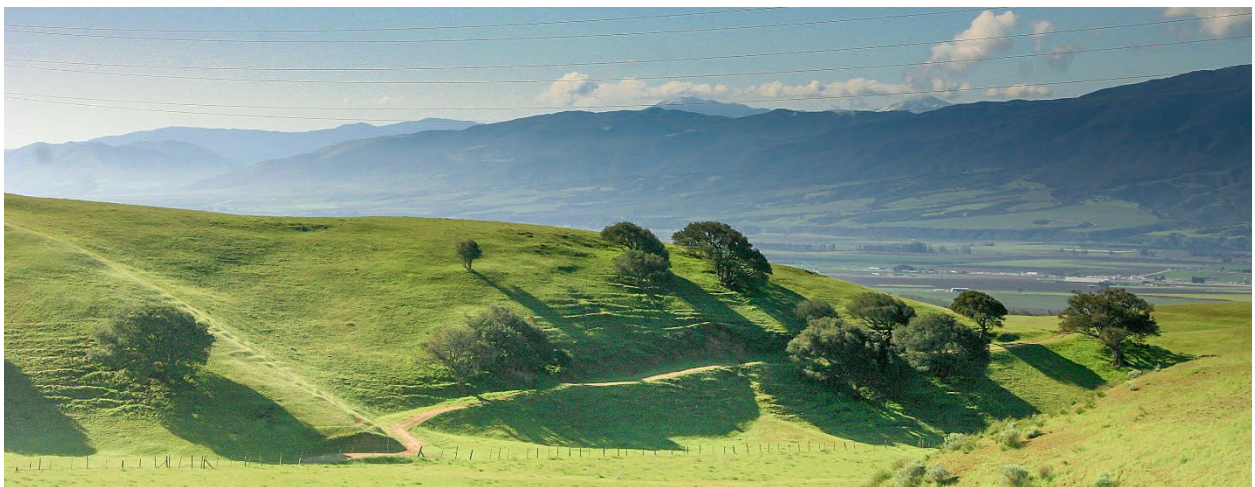


Christmas at Jen's this year. This might be South Pasadena.



2009

Went photographing Salinas Valley with Robbie Parkman, husband of one of Junell's psych friends and a great photographer. Fabulous house in Pebble Beach. We later inherited their realtor in Pasadena.



Maia and Grammy at the beach in Aptos



Dogs are no longer scaring off the deer. We had to enclose the gardens with a quarter mile of deer fence, even down to the redwoods below



At the park in South Pas, Maia could climb the trees better than the boys



I had started doing BPMN training in 2007, now traveling more and more to Europe. Here a class in Utrecht, Netherlands



This is how they do it in Europe. France even better; white wine course and red wine course. How do they stay awake?



Cody died December 2009. Even missing a leg she had very 12 happy years. That dog was a gamer! I loved her so much! Still miss her.



Christmas in South Pas, Maia and Cassie



2010

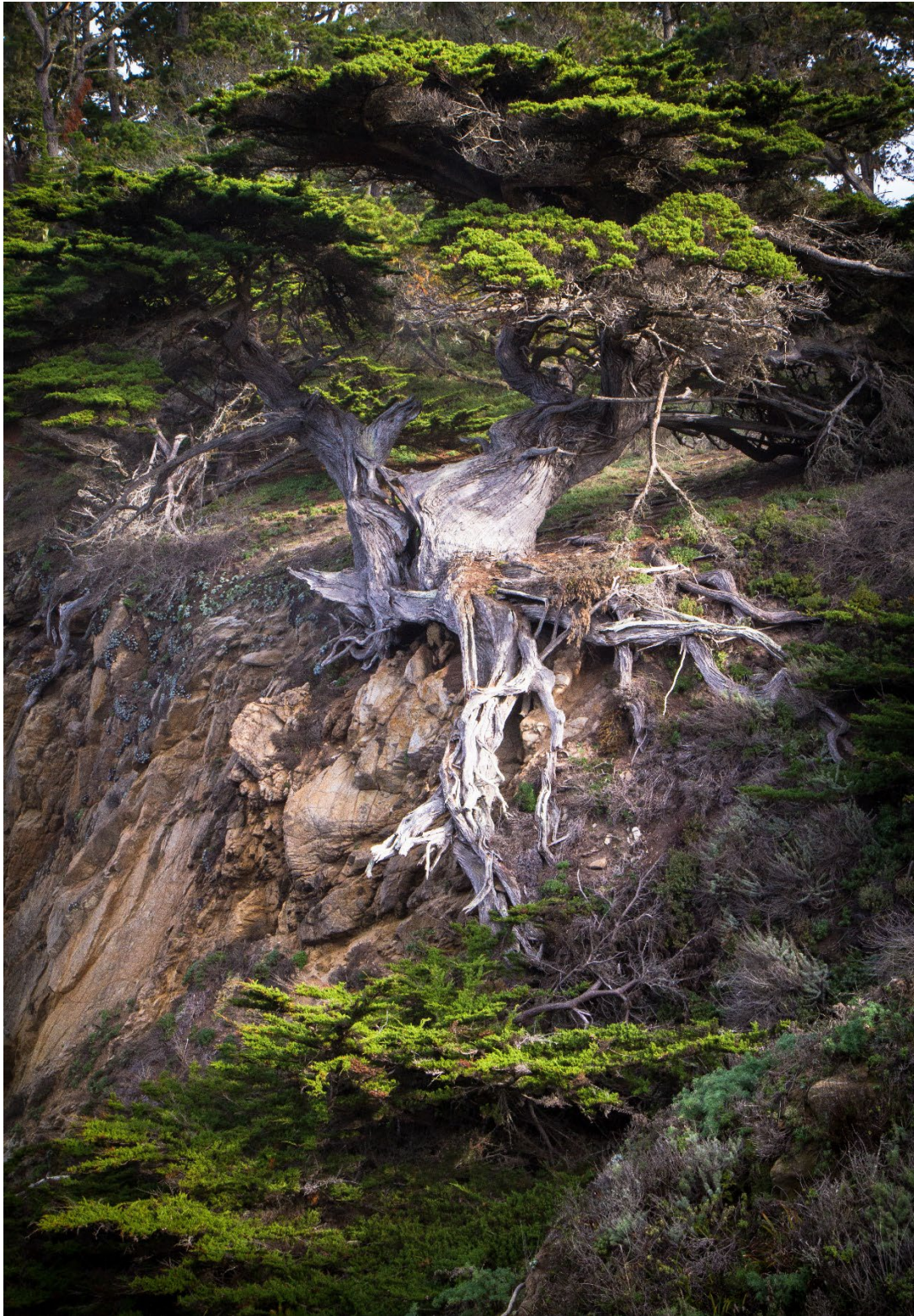
The redwood forest behind our house was a magical place.



Maia and Cassie playing in the creek



Point Lobos and Garrapata, just south of Carmel. The beauty of the Monterey Bay landscape is just stunning.







I never could quite capture the sunbeams through the redwoods behind the house. Magical



Ah, Paris! My first trip there with Junell. It became her favorite place. February, it was freezing. I went there to do training for Alcatel. This is where Junell told the concierge we wanted better restaurants... and got them. View from the Arc de Triomphe. Junell looking like a Parisienne. Lunch at the Musee d'Orsay.



Back home, night photography workshop in San Francisco. My photography took a step up with the workshops.



Lombard St and Embarcadero



Another photo workshop, this one in Point Reyes



Back home, path down to the redwoods, Springtime



Wisteria and redbuds in front. Viburnum budding out



Oh no! Weises are moving back to Boston. But we inherit their golden doodle Annie! Now Cassie gets a playmate and Junell gets a soulmate.



Jen's pregnant again, a hard one. Out comes Kira. She doesn't look happy about it.









Junell and Amy, back on Block Island



Franci and Junell in a hurricane



Back at our favorite house. Lots of room for visitors.



From BI we went to Ricardo and Susan's house in Westport, MA, right on the water



Weises now live in Newbury, MA. Here are Junell and Betty Weis in Newburyport. We would buy a condo there in a few years.



At Jen's in South Pas. Maia's soccer career begins



2011

Maia at fairy event in Griffith Park



Big Sur in the rain



Kira's first birthday



We now have a new doodle pup, Kenna! Picked her up at the Delta Freight Terminal at SJC, 1030pm. Her puppy name was Bunny and she hopped out of the crate. If Annie was Junell's dog, Kenna was my dog. Feisty, I called her Mr Dog. So now we have 3.





Aaron and Zita have a baby girl, Amelie. But this did not go well.





She had a fatal genetic condition and she died 2 weeks later. Everyone was devastated. We spread her ashes on beach in Malibu.





Later that summer we went to Copenhagen. I was there to do training at Maersk. Junell loved Copenhagen.



After Amelie, Junell's face took on a sadness that never completely went away.



At Sayles family cottage on Kezar Lake, Fall color











Christmas 2011. Maia is 6 and Kira is 1.



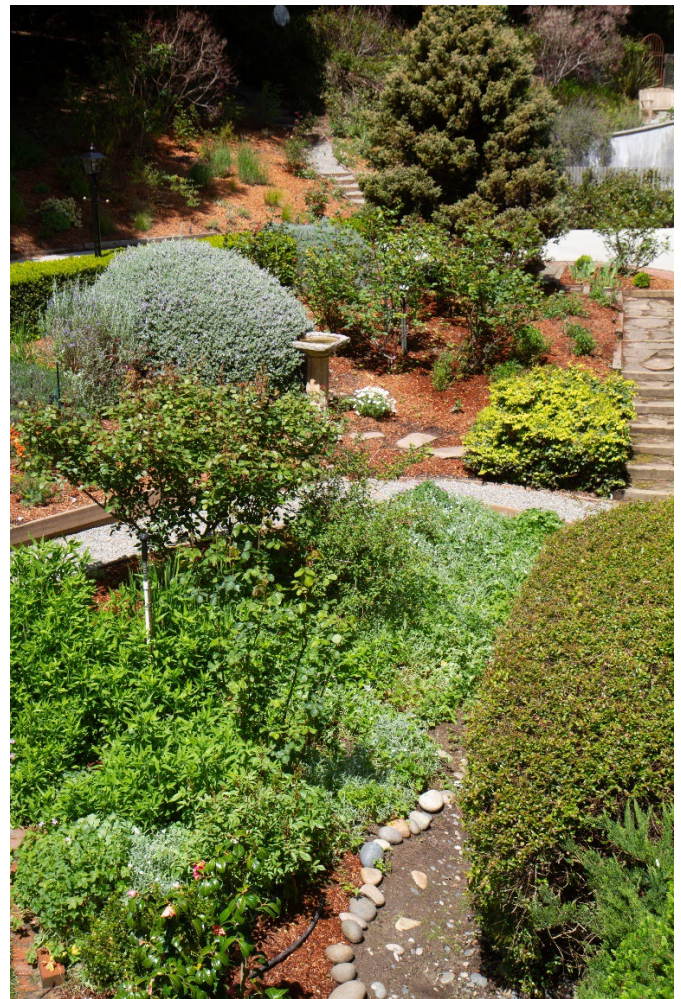
2012

This was a hard year. After Amelie died, Junell decided we had to move to LA. As you can see, our place in Aptos had become everything I always wanted it to be, and I loved it. But Junell did not love it any more. Too isolated, too far from her children. She was a serious person and believed Santa Cruz was not for serious people.

Selling a place like ours was not easy. People looking for nice homes around here want either a view or a place on the beach. We had neither. It took almost a year to sell. For the open houses, we had to leave for 3 hours with all 3 dogs, and then it turned out no one showed. This happened multiple times.

We took down the Boston Ivy and repainted the house. We replaced all the plastic framed windows with beautiful wood framed, all very expensive. Made no difference.

The front gardens were beautiful.



The redwood deck was beautiful.



The firepit area was beautiful.



The pool was beautiful.



The Meadow was beautiful.



The forest was magical.



The kitchen and family room were beautiful.





A great place for dogs. How could anyone not want this place? Easily, apparently. We gave up and went on vacation.

I was giving a lecture that summer at Lake Como, so first we went to Paris. Our trip in 2010 was in winter. This one was much more fun. We walked around a lot, went to Monet's garden in Giverny and Versailles. Had a drink at the Ritz bar, supposedly Hemingway's favorite. Bastille Day! Military parade and fabulous fireworks.

Junell's greatest ambition was to be mistaken for a Parisienne, and here she is in full Paris style.



We liked this café on the Place des Vosges



We always stayed at the Hotel Kepler, small place with the helpful concierges. Junell is at the bar.



We always got this room. Great bathroom, closet space.



Luxembourg Gardens



Monet's garden, Giverny





Monet's house is pink and green



Garden from the house



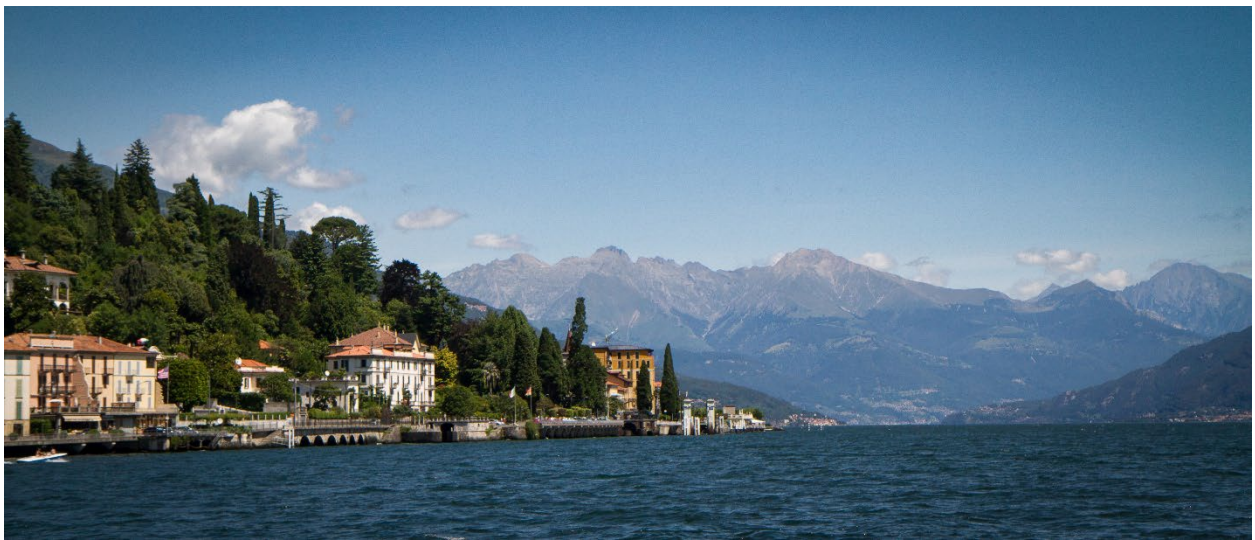
Versailles



Bastille Day, Champs Elysees. Full military parade with tanks and artillery.

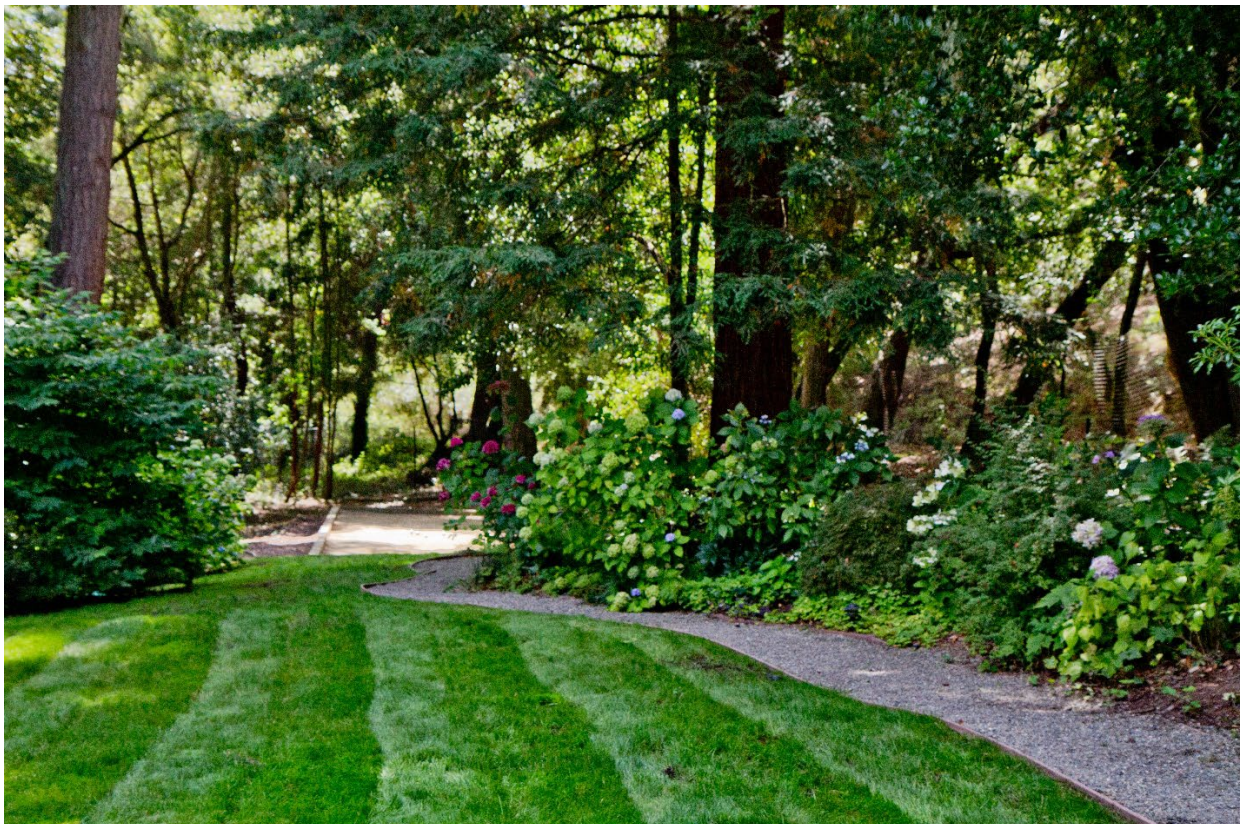


Now off to Como. Water taxi to beautiful villages around the lake.





Back home, still trying to sell.



Selling the house, we almost gave up, but suddenly we had 3 offers. We sold it to a guy with early Adobe money. His gay partner thought he could maintain the gardens... but it turned out he could not. See *Aptos Memories* for that sad tale.

Eddie Orton said he would lend us the cash to buy a new place until our Aptos house sold, and that was crucial. Meanwhile, we had engaged a realtor to look around Pasadena, where Jen and Aaron both lived. Junell had her looking in all these places that were way too expensive, but finally she sent a picture of a place that looked nice and was the right price, not yet on the market. Aaron checked it out and gave thumbs up, so I said yes, sight unseen. It would be a cash offer for the asking price, take it or leave it. They took it. And amazingly, it was two doors away from Jen's house!

It saddened me greatly to leave Aptos. We really did turn it into that fabulous resort for grandchildren and dogs. I loved the cool, misty climate. I loved the quiet. I loved our kitchen and all the improvements Junell had made to the house. But Junell did not love it. Too secluded, too quiet, too far from Aaron and Jennifer. She did not love her private practice any more, or Santa Cruz in general. "People come to Santa Cruz to get away from people like me," she said. So there was no room for discussion, we were out of there.

Say good-bye to Aptos.



Altadena

2012

This was the picture the realtor sent. It looked like this back then, a little nicer now. So in November 2012, Junell and I and three dogs packed up and moved to Altadena.



Altadena from Mt Wilson. Our house is at the tip of the arrow. Altadena Golf Course (the light area) probably saved our house from the fire in 2025. Downtown LA and the ocean in the background



Patio at night in our new home



Of course, although I was not thrilled to be here – the heat, the traffic, no space for a garden – I did admire the house. In the Palisades, where I grew up, the nicest houses on Sunset were the Mediterraneans: grand, stately, my idea of what the best houses in LA should look like. And now I lived in one. And the landscaping, while a bit skimpy and formal for my taste, was well executed. Lots of boxwood hedges and Iceberg roses, definitely a Pasadena thing.

The previous owners had wired every room for cable TV and audio, but not Internet, so I had a bit of work to do. The interior decoration – all powder blues and chrome – was definitely not in keeping with a grand Mediterranean, and Junell dove in to changing all that. Warm colors and wrought iron. While she spent way too much on those changes, in the end I have to admit they were perfect for the house. And eventually I got to putting in gardens that we both were happy with.

Most of all, I have to say Junell loved everything about living in Altadena: the friendly neighbors, the diversity, the leafy streets, easy access to downtown LA, the warmer climate, her book club, and of course the house. Later the county tried to turn our area into a historic district. We fought it and won temporarily, but this year somehow they snuck it back in.

Maia's 6th birthday – our kitchen and Jen's backyard





2013

We didn't do much to the house at first, just painted the interior. Living room looks out on both front and back.



The Library has a Batchelder fireplace. Very Pasadena.



Dining room a striking red. It has different furniture now.



Breakfast room and kitchen, still look the same



Patio was painted concrete, now tiled, looks different



Got rid of the blue furniture





Front now looks different with roses along the border



In March I put on a conference bpmNEXT at Asilomar. Moved it to Santa Barbara a couple years later, kept it going until 2019.



We had to put Cassie to sleep. Age 13, she had a very good run.



Kira's 3rd birthday, Jen's house Altadena







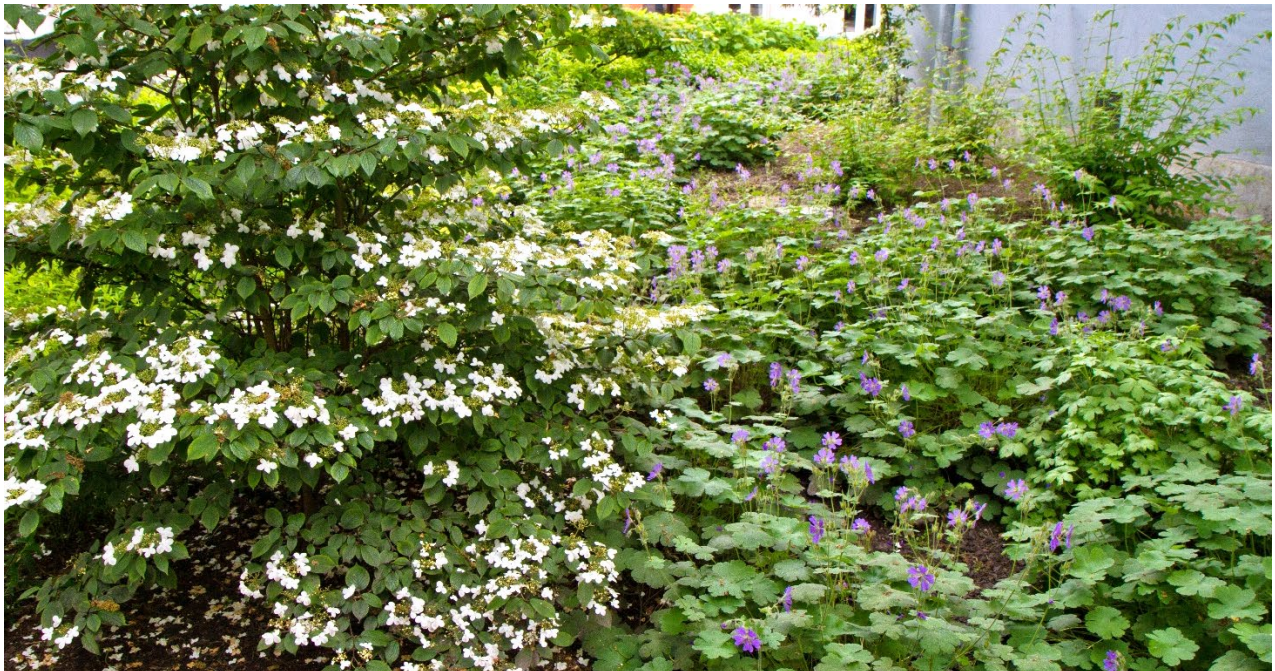
Ricardo and Susan came to visit. Went to the Getty, Huntington Gardens



June, training in Utrecht again. Just me this time.



Hotel garden, viburnum and geraniums - I thought I was back in Aptos!



From there I went to Milan, another training. Didn't go so well but Milan was beautiful. Next to the Cathedral is the Galleria, a giant indoor shopping mall unlike anything you've seen



Lots of wealthy Russians



Then train to Rome, meeting Junell and Weises. We have use of Eddie's fabulous apartment, formerly belonged to his Uncle Carlo. How did he get those paintings up there?



Apartment had a classic elevator

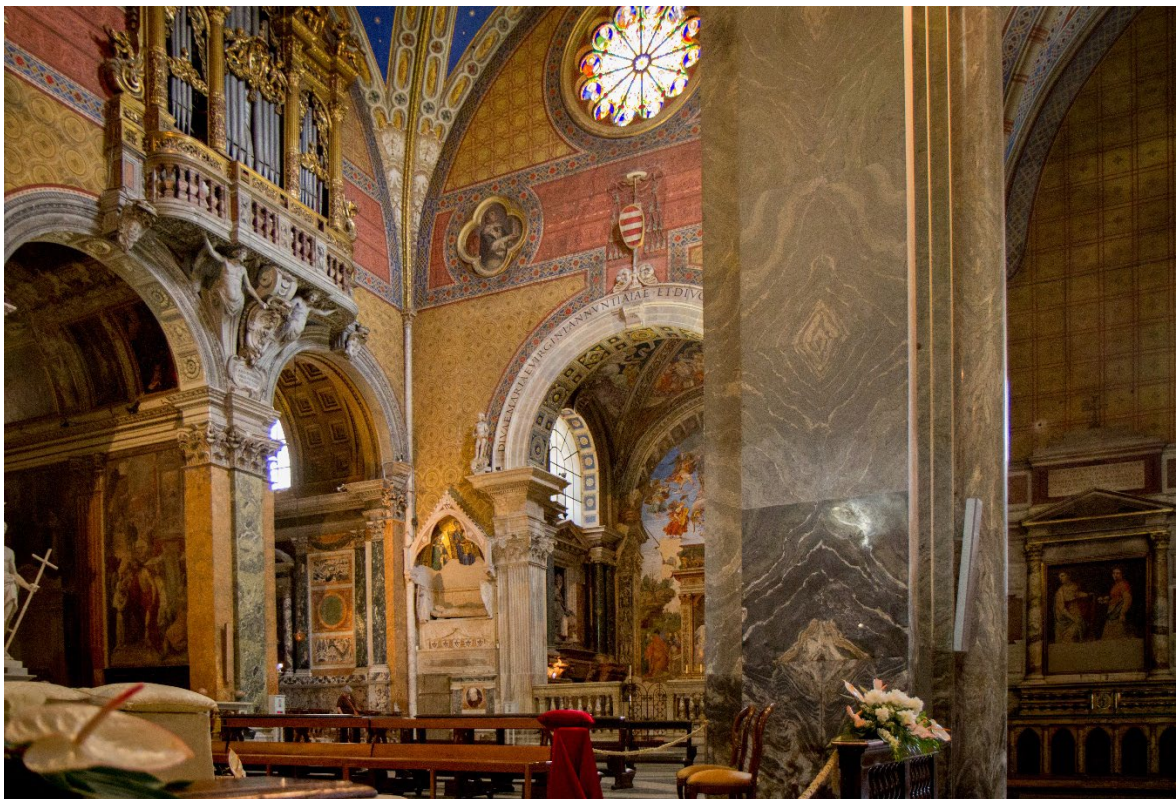


Rome is all about people-watching in cafes.





The churches in Rome are magnificent.



We liked this restaurant near the Pantheon



We hunted for Caravaggio in obscure churches



Our apartment was just outside Piazza del Popolo, my assigned “spot” back in 1974.





A picturesque city





Caffe Rosati on Piazza del Popolo was our go-to spot for afternoon Spritzes



Private tour of St Peter's, well worth the money. Sistine Chapel no pictures!



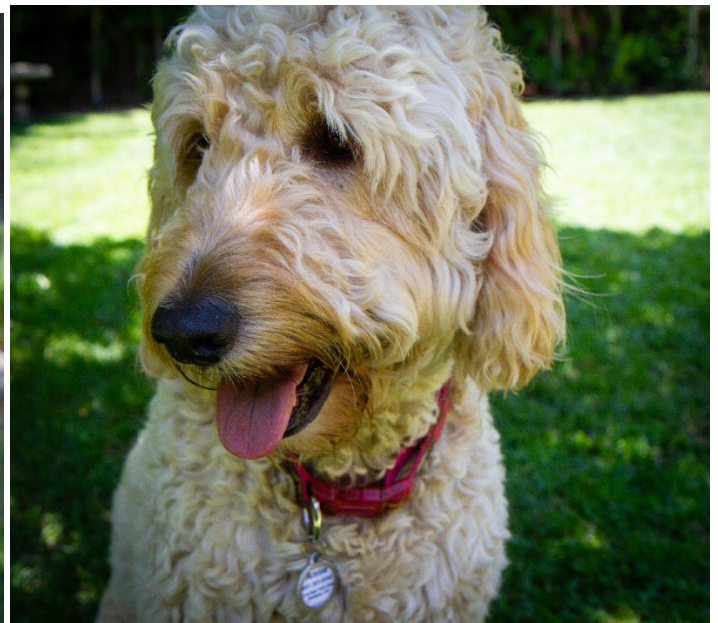
David somebody



Still beautiful at age 68



Back home. Kenna, you're beautiful too. And so are you Annie!





Amy and Eddie's mansion on SeaView, Nick and Katie's wedding





Halloween was always big



2014

Kira is now 4. "Let it go!"



May 2014, Jen's backyard with Dick and Ann McCusick, our next door neighbors. Dick was my best friend in Altadena, a really wonderful guy. He got me seriously interested in trading stocks and we would share information about it a lot. We went to IBD Meetups in Pasadena and Westlake Village. It was a major blow when he died in 2020.



Meanwhile, Aaron and Zita have moved from Pasadena to Byfield MA, near Newburyport. This is their house. Looks like Zita is pregnant.



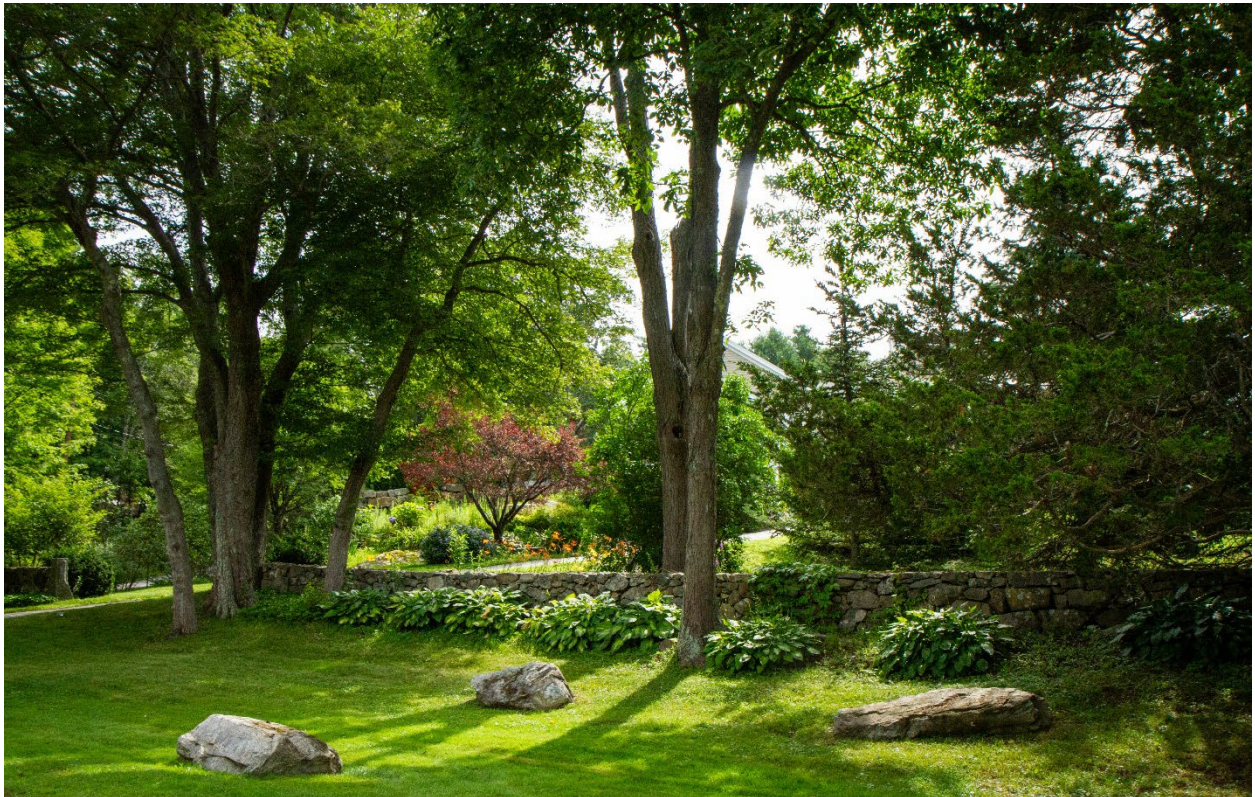
The décor was very Zita.



Aaron's backyard. Very New England



We would stay with Weises in Newbury, as Aaron's house was not guest-friendly. Quite picturesque along the Parker River. Town of Newburyport next door is picturesque also.



Block Island again. Our old favorite house was no longer available. Two different houses this trip. I loved this one, long stairs down to the beach.



View from the porch.



Ricardo came to visit.



Susan and Betty Weis making magic in the kitchen



Storm coming



Junell and Franci, best friends forever



Storm has passed



Oops, suddenly gotta run to Boston. Ryder is born!





Grammy's excited



A long hard road, but now everyone is happy



This was Junell's iphone screen saver



Back to BI. This was the second BI house, very big. We had Jen's family and David Sayles family. Turns out Jen doesn't like lobster. Who knew?



Not my fav, but the kids loved it.



Ice cream in town



Downtown shopping. Very BI



Susan and Ricardo's house and garden, Westport



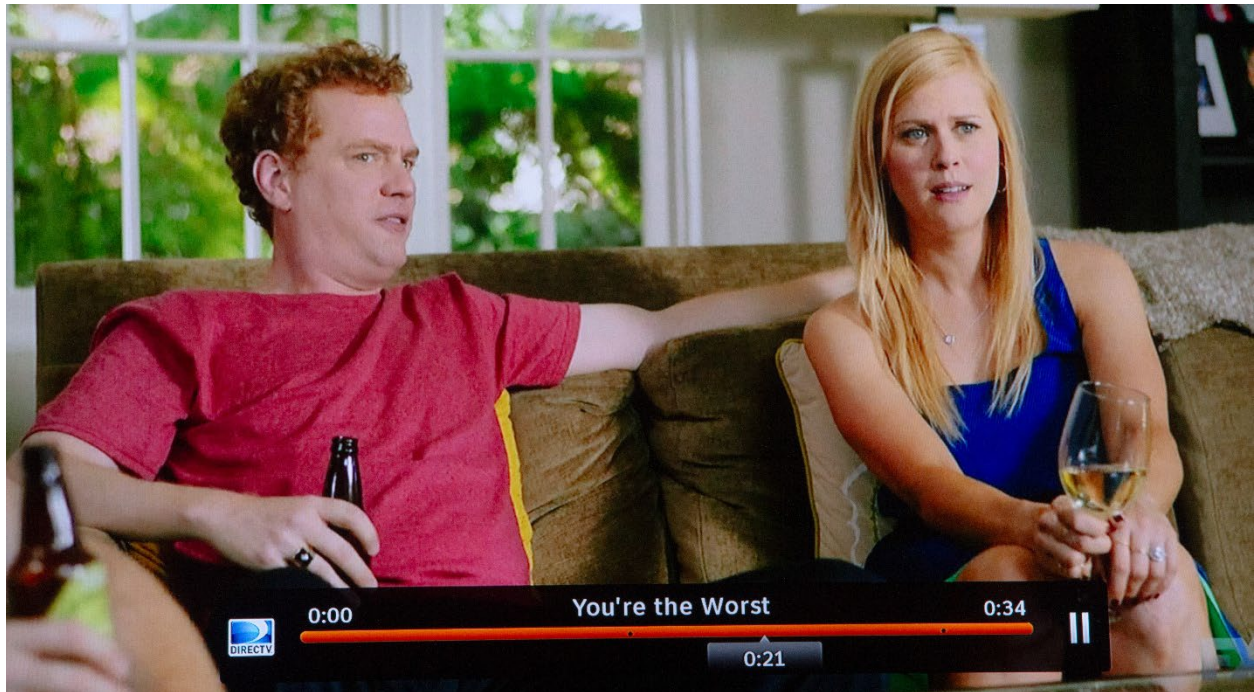
Ryder, Mr Dude, 3 weeks old and 3 months old. Aaron and Zita having a healthy baby made Junell so happy



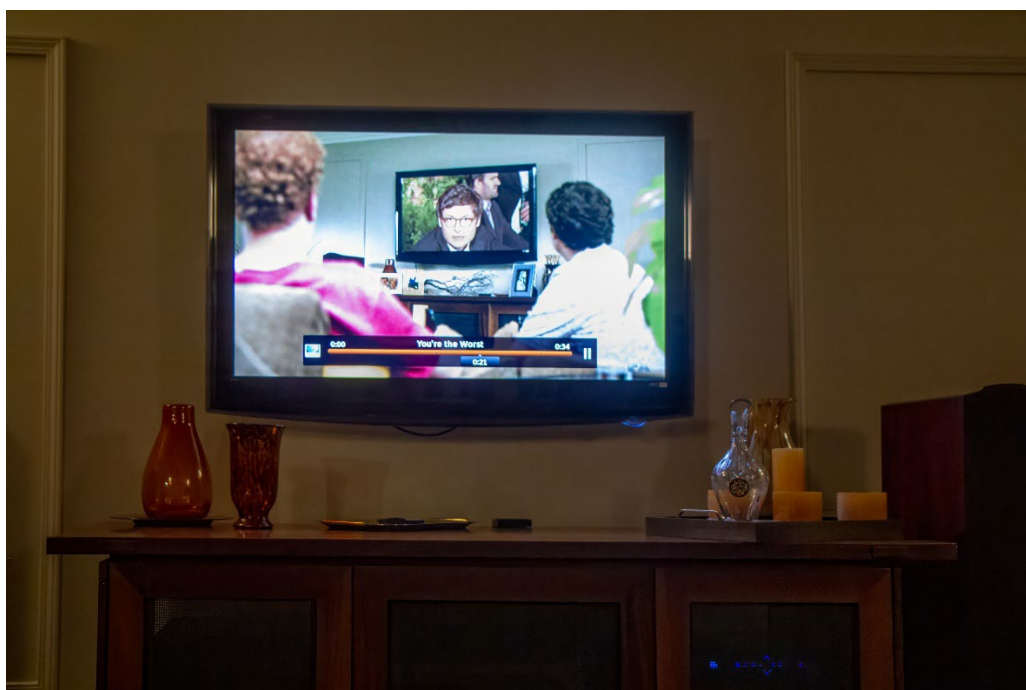
Grammy and Ryder (3 months)



Back home, they are filming the show *You're the Worst* at our house. They film a lot in Altadena because it is unincorporated County, fewer rules than City of Pasadena. This is a shot of our TV in the living room playing the show in which these characters are sitting on the couch in our living room watching TV.



This picture's kind of meta. Our cabinet and TV showing them sitting in front of the same cabinet and TV.



Halloween was always big with Jen's family. They had a thing about the bat.



2015

bpmNEXT in Santa Barbara. We kept it going until Covid.



Ryder's first visit to Altadena, 9 months



Return to Malibu, Amelie memorial



In our basement was a great workshop for Grammy and kids



Neighborhood 4th of July parade



Face paint not enough to win the prize. Maybe next year...



Photo workshop Eastern Sierras with Jim Patterson. Jim was a landscape photographer in Capitola. I loved his photos on Flickr. I had done a rainy workshop previously with him in Big Sur. This one was a full week in the mountains. First up, Mono Lake



Summer is monsoon season.





His workshops were physically taxing. Up at 4am, hike in a few miles with a heavy pack to catch the sunrise, move to new locations, stay till after dark, hike out, home at 10pm. Next day same thing. Don't think I could do it today. But the locations were great, as was his help and advice.









Meanwhile, back home



At Franci's daughter's wedding in Connecticut, Junell fell and broke her wrist. Annie had a sense of when Junell needed TLC. She was always there to comfort her.



In the Fall we went to Copenhagen again, then to Stockholm, which we really liked.



Our suite at the Grand Hotel, Stockholm. Unfortunately I got food poisoning, could not finish our Michelin star meal there. And I really wanted that Grand Cru!





Stockholm is a blend of Paris and Venice. Uniform architecture, water everywhere.



A museum holds the 17th century warship Vasa, sunk on its trial launch in the harbor, preserved in the mud until raised in 1961. Museum is temperature-controlled, constant maintenance to keep this old ship from rotting. It's pretty amazing.



Home for Halloween. Kira's a Girl Scout.



Thanksgiving at SeaView, Joey at the piano. He went on to become a songwriter in LA, now doing off-Broadway musicals.



Grammy and Maia making Christmas cookies



2016

New Year's at SeaView. Amy's troubles just beginning, early Alzheimers. In a few years she would move to assisted living and Eddie would sell SeaView.



Early in the year we liked to visit the camellia gardens at the Huntington. One of the premier camellia breeders is right here in Altadena, Nuccio's. Many varieties are named after them. Their growing area was burned in the 2025 fire, so this is probably their last year.





Maia and Kira both great climbers



Every season of *You're the Worst* tore up the grass under the oak in back. Finally we gave up replanting and put in a shade garden. Also tiled the patio and added brick walkways. Much better!



Summer, back to France. Paris for a few days then wine tasting in Beaune. Ste Chapelle amazing.



Lots of rain, the Seine was flooded



Famous café in St Germain de Pres



Our hotel in Beaune was full the first night, so we stayed one night in a chateau between Paris and Burgundy, Vault de Lugny. That place was the highlight of the whole trip!



It's an actual castle. They gave us a huge suite.



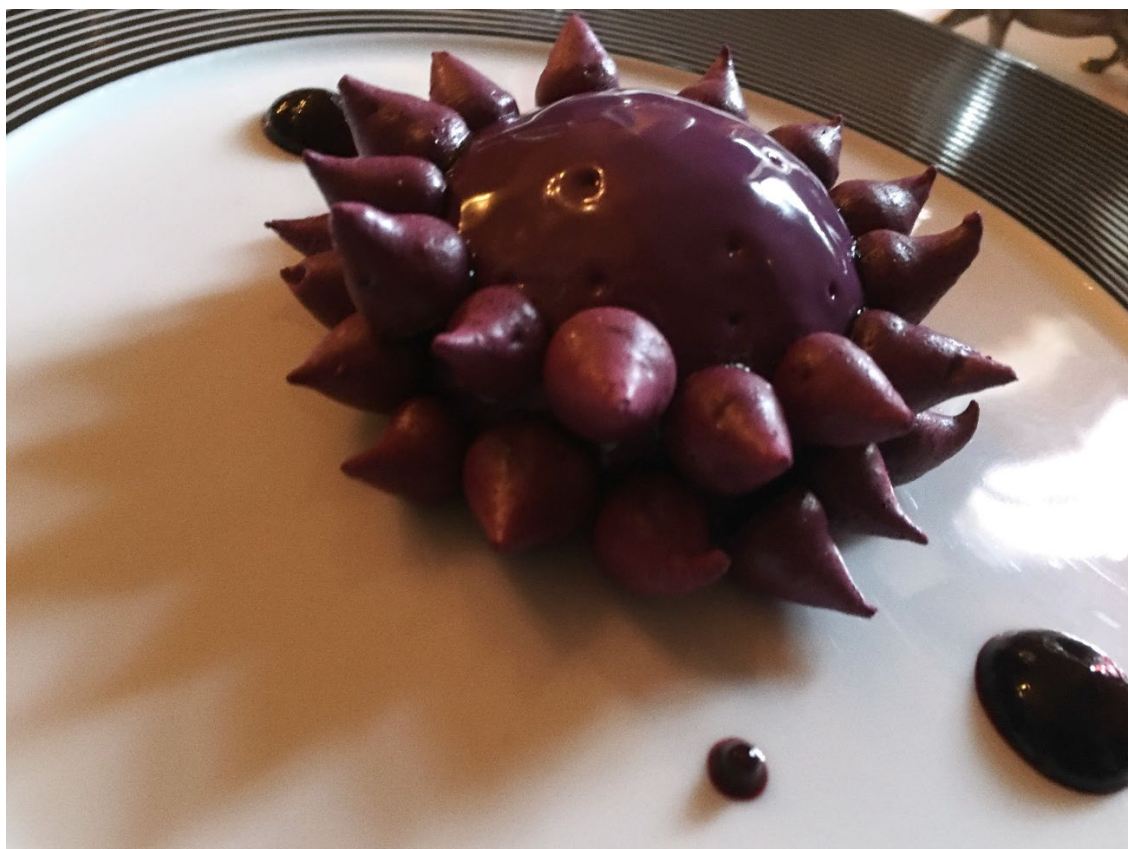
The grounds were lovely



Junell was happy

But the best thing about the place was the food. The chef trained with Paul Bocuse, probably the most famous French chef. We started with some fois gras crème brulee. Seriously. The other courses were no less amazing.





The place was near the Chablis region. Best Chablis ever! Never seen her happier



Beaune is the commercial capital of Burgundy. Not as picturesque as Dijon, but close to the wineries and is where the major shippers are located. Hotel Le Cep is the wine tourists' hotel.



Places like this are why we talked about moving to France if Trump were elected.



Coffee in the bar of Le Cep



Garden of the Chateau de Pommard. Pommard was our favorite red Pinot



The vineyards are just outside the Chateau.



Each section of the vineyard has a distinct soil structure or terroir, reflected in the wine



At the end of the tour is the tasting. Fortunately, in our group was a rich guy who buys a lot of the best wines. He was asking for those in the tasting, so they got added. Our good luck! We went to a similar tour and tasting at Chateau de Meursault. That week we drove all around the area, great wines, great food.



Back home. July 4th parade: In it to win it this year... and Maia did!



Third and last year for *You're the Worst*. They made a man-cave in the media room in basement. Somehow broke the marble countertop in the kitchen. Had to replace all the marble in the room.



In September, we stayed in Ricardo and Susan's guest house in Westport MA, large plot on Buzzards Bay. Met our old MIT lab mates Pete and Bonnie Stephens as well.





Junell and Franci in Westport



Maia the gymnast



Sometime in 2016, we bought a condo in Newburyport. I should say Junell bought it; I had little to do with it. She wanted a place closer to Ryder and Aaron. We rented it out for a couple years, then after Hank died, Franci moved into it around 2019. We could stay there whenever we wanted to. Here is a picture from Google. Our unit is the 3 windows on the right. Our room is the third floor. There is a small patio in back.

Newburyport is a charming town. Junell would visit every 3 months; I would go twice a year.





Amy and Eddie visit Altadena



Maia's soccer team won a trophy



Christmas Eve dinner. Note the new dining room table and chandelier.



2017

Junell with Amy's dog Nova in Piedmont



Protesting Trump. Didn't do any good.

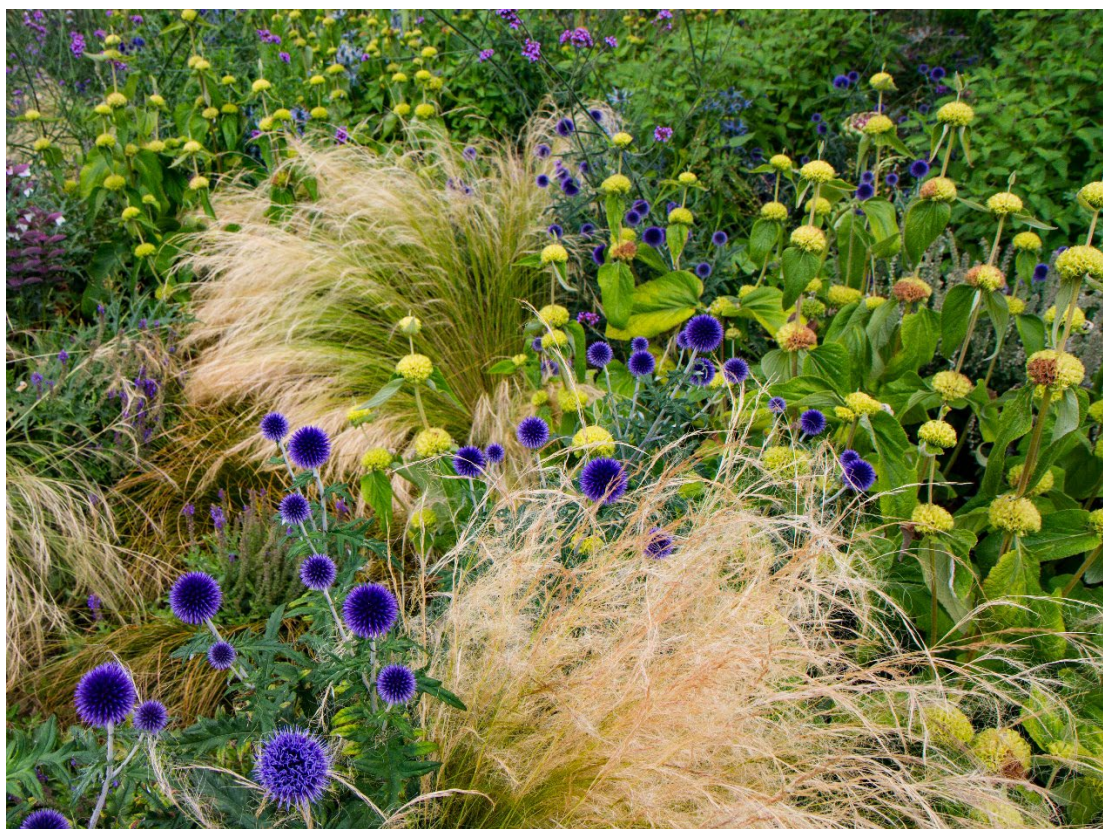


In Summer I was at a conference in London, so we made a vacation of it.



It wasn't the greatest trip. We saw a show, got a couple decent meals – nothing like Paris. The most impressive thing to me were the parks and gardens: Hyde Park, Kensington...







September we visited Newburyport and Westport. Ryder no longer a baby.





Window boxes at our condo in Newburyport



Kira and Maia



Thanksgiving at SeaView.



Kids in the basement of SeaView

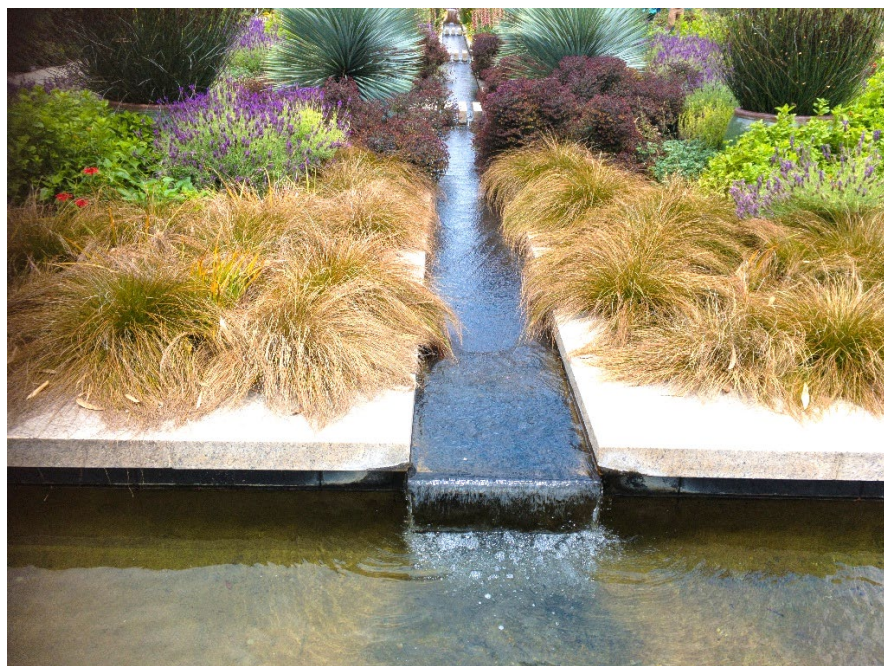


2018

Protesting you-know-who again. Downtown LA



Huntington



Kira (age 8) lunching with Dracula at Universal Studio tour



Amy not doing well. Joy visiting SeaView for the last time



Jen had been working in hospital administration for a few years. Around this time, she got a high-powered job at Inland Empire Health Plan and they moved to Claremont. No longer our neighbors! After a while she was in line to become CEO, but she got colon cancer, followed by a botched surgery. She was very sick for a long time, and in the end lost her job at IEHP.

After she recovered, she began to work as an independent consultant on how health plans could serve Medicaid patients, and did very well at that. This year (2025) she started her own company in that field, quite a go-getter. Good for her!

2018, back to Burgundy, this time on a barge through the canal. This is the lap of luxury. Fancy food and great wine. We were the youngest passengers (!)





Just 4 cabins for 8 passengers. Crew of 6. 5-course meals, stop and tour towns and chateaus along the way.

Going through the locks.



Winery Gevrey-Chambertin



We stopped at a chateau with a Michelin star restaurant and this kissing statue

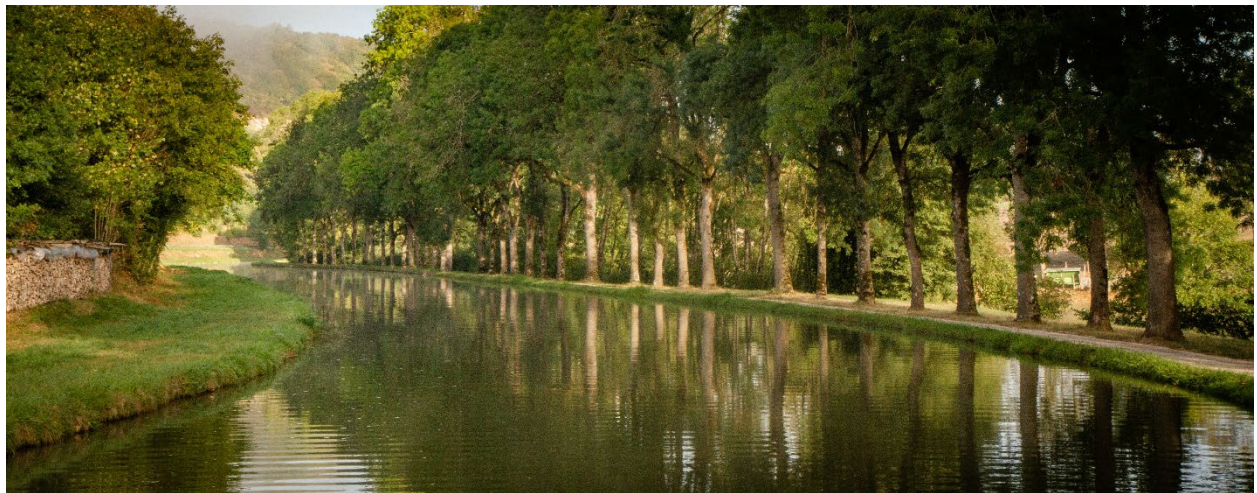


Cooking lesson on board. Salmon baked in salt



Unbelievable food and wine (and place settings)





Back in Paris



Jen and Brent have been remodeling their house in Claremont. A lot of work because it's in a historic district. The architectural detail is beautiful, but Junell looks unhappy.



Jen got a baby doodle, Brody. I love that dog!

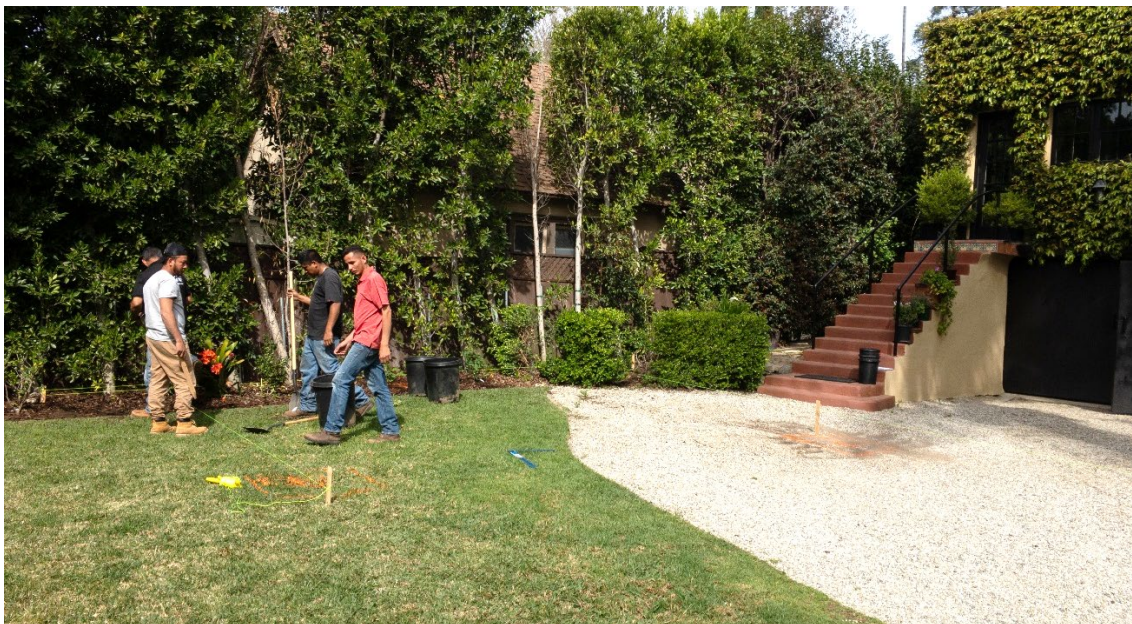


2019

Rainy winter means wildflowers, Lake Elsinore



We added a carport to protect from the sun, and solar panels as well.





Erika wedding Santa Rosa – Our hotel in Sonoma



After the wedding we went to a hotel on the Sonoma coast



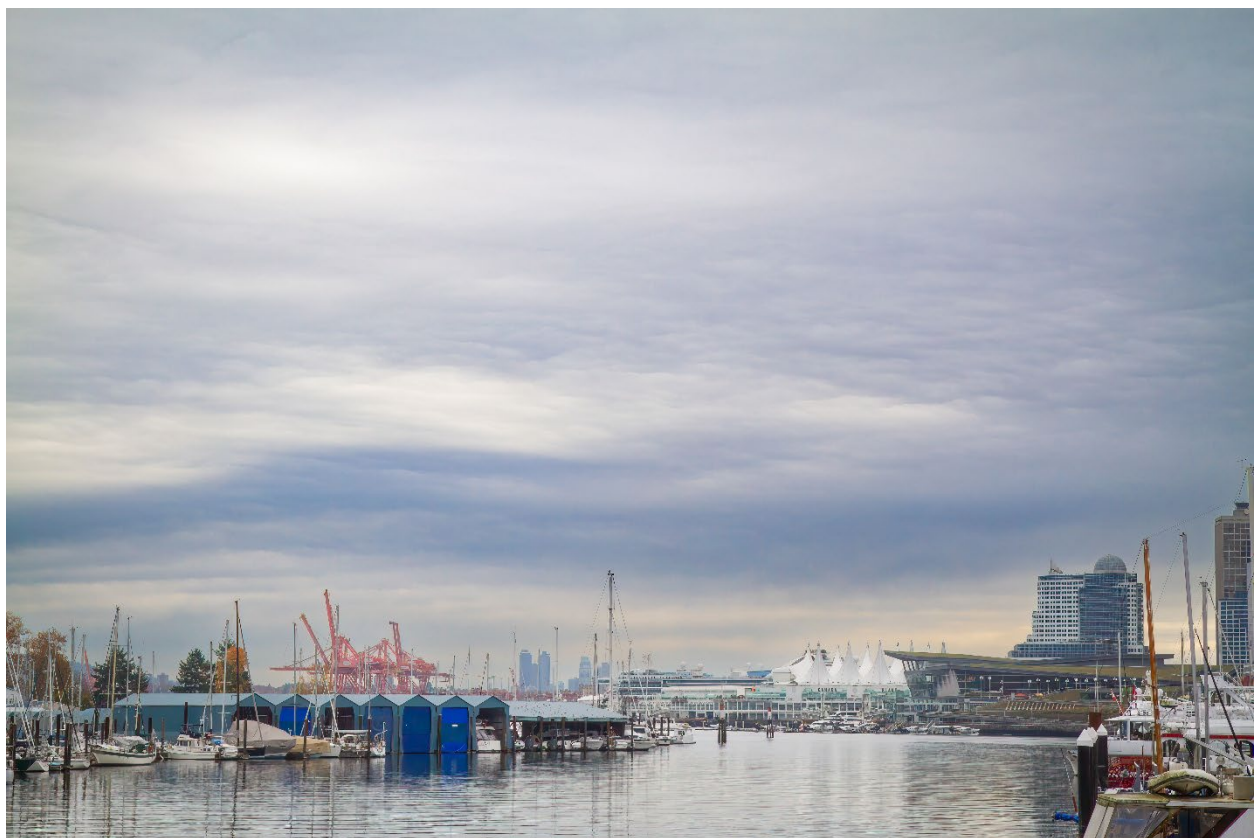
Ryder in Newburyport



In October we took a trip with my Princeton roommates Jeff Greene and Alan Pavilanis (and wives) to Vancouver. I hadn't seen them in 40 years.



We walked all over Vancouver and visited other nearby places in BC

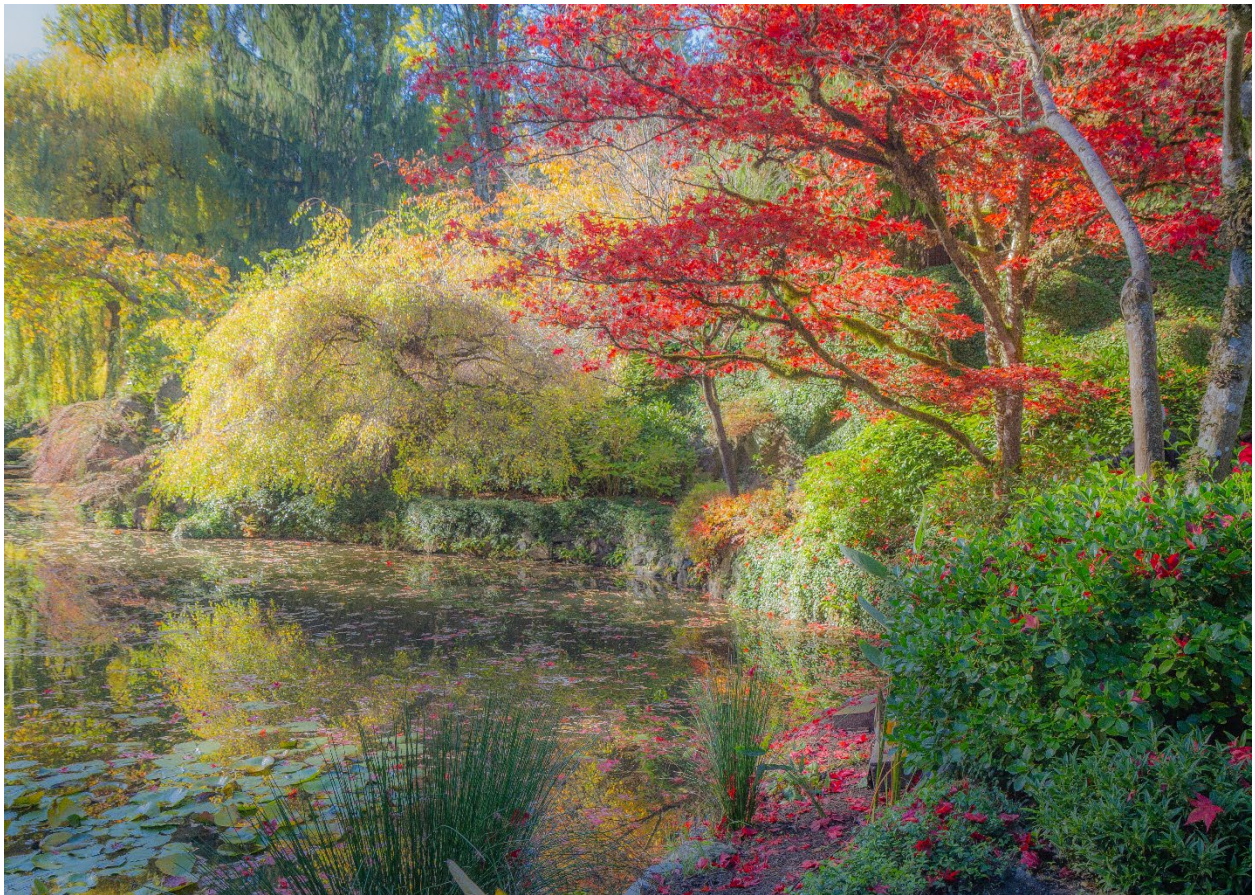






Burchardt Gardens, Vancouver Island







Newburyport condo after Franci moved in. Junell furnished the whole thing. (So that explains those credit card bills!) Looks very nice.



Back home. Patio in the rain



Palms outside our house. Now they are talking about getting rid of the palms. No way!! It's iconic LA.



Christmas Eve





2020

Aaron and Zita are now divorced, split custody of Ryder. Losing Amelie was a big problem, and it was not a great marriage. Ryder and CatDog, at Aaron's house in Byfield



My mom moved to Assisted Living in Lafayette, CA around 2017. She had lived in Las Vegas since the mid-1970s, worked at the major hotels there. She had an annual girls' weekend with the sisters and Junell, and I would see her when I was in Vegas on business. Finally she outlived all her friends and we convinced her to move to assisted living in California. It was ok, better than being alone in Las Vegas.

She died on Feb 14, 2020 at age 93. I was there, Toni too. Right before Covid hit.

Later that month I did a photo workshop in Death Valley with Jim Patterson. The day after it ended, Covid shut everything down





You may not remember Covid in 2020. Had to wear masks, avoid other people. Schools, restaurants, hotels closed. In March/April you could not find toilet paper anywhere in the stores. Trump spread misinformation. A terrible time.

Started to put in some gardens here. Wise Portia roses we had brought from Aptos. Can't get those any more



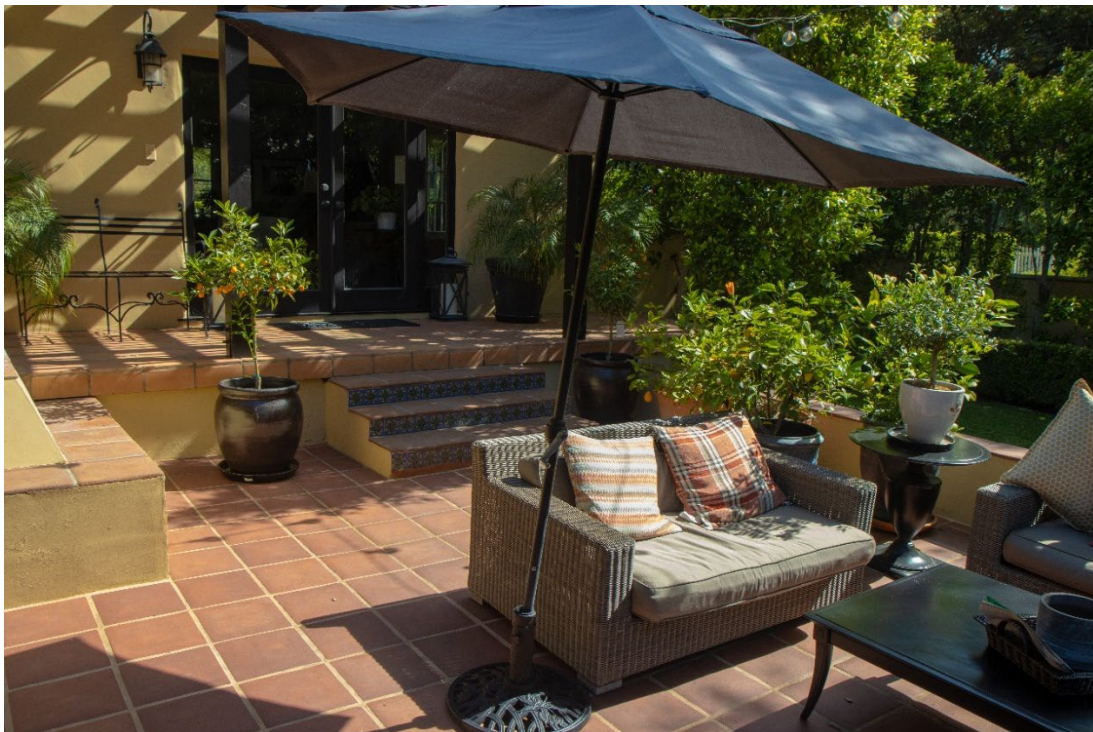
Love the oak leaf hydrangea. Now it's twice as big.



Shade garden taking shape



Junell got new patio furniture. Looks pretty much same now



Added a small garden in front, with stone bench from Aptos. Now I call it Junell's garden.



Bestia reopens, our favorite LA restaurant, July 2020. We got a reservation on the first night.



You could travel if you had a good Covid test, so we got them and went to Newburyport. Condo has better plantings, September 2020. Franci has improved the landscaping.



Franci in back patio, Newburyport



Commemorative benches along the Merrimack in Newburyport. We always talked about finding one for me. Now Franci and I need to find one for Junell.



Newburyport is a wonderful small town, where the Merrimack River flows into the Atlantic.



In 2020 my neighbor Dick McCusick died, brain tumor. He was my best friend here in Altadena, maybe my only friend. He was a retired investment advisor and we would talk about stock trading all the time. He was learning to play classical guitar and was interesting on many levels. When he got sick last summer and fall Junell made fabulous dinners for him and his wife almost every day. Earlier in the year I would take him every day to his radiation treatments in South Pas and we would go for coffee and croissants at a bakery down there. I was really hurt by his passing, and Junell and I were very upset that his wife did not invite us to his memorial service. She was a big Jesus person – the biggest hypocrites of all.

Thanksgiving with Jen and family. This is how the dining room looks today.





By December the Covid vaccine was finally available. We drove out to Sylmar to get it. Then things relaxed a bit, but schools still closed until June, many restaurants did not make it.

Grammy's Christmas decorations are getting more elaborate



2021

Biden won the election but Trump allowed supporters to riot at the Capitol on Jan 6, tried to overturn the vote. Biden's AG Garland did nothing about it for 4 years. Criminal!

This year was almost as bad as the previous one. Schools still shut down, most hotels also. Covid not killing so many people but the economy at a standstill. In January I decided to put in a border garden along the privet hedge in front. At the beginning it was puny, but since then has filled out quite a bit. This picture shows laying out the first few plants. No roses available yet, and almost all the plants are different today.



Maia's doing club soccer now, high level. We did a lot of driving to see her games. She is pretty good.



In the Spring we usually would go visit Carmel and Aptos. Our favorite hotel the Highlands Inn in Carmel Highlands was technically open but not in any fun way. No staff. I backed into another car in the supermarket parking lot and had a big dent in my fender. Bummer all around.



We usually bought a photograph at Photography West in Carmel, and this time we bought a Titarenko. Maybe the last one we ever acquired. From this point on it was hard to get a good smile from Junell. She had always been so photogenic.



The other garden in front, what I now call Junell's garden, in April.



Finally some roses in the border garden.

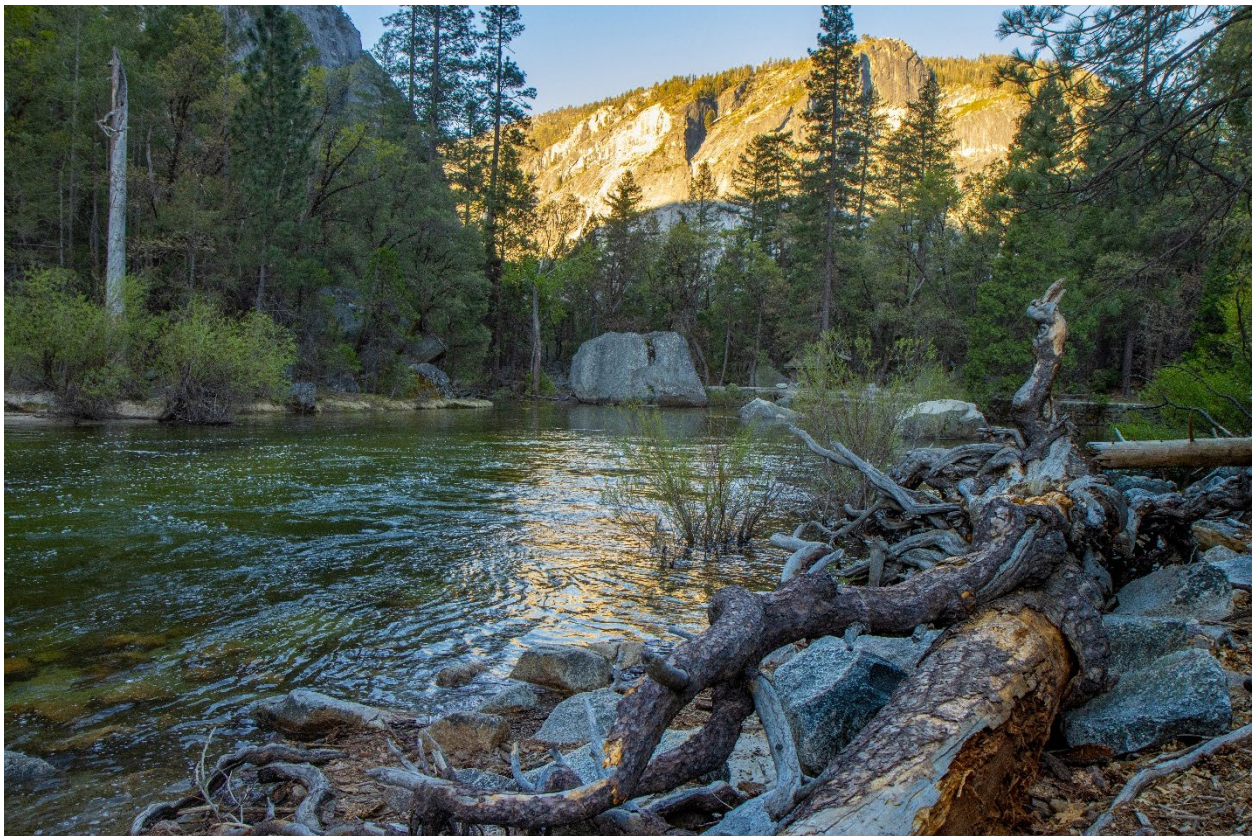


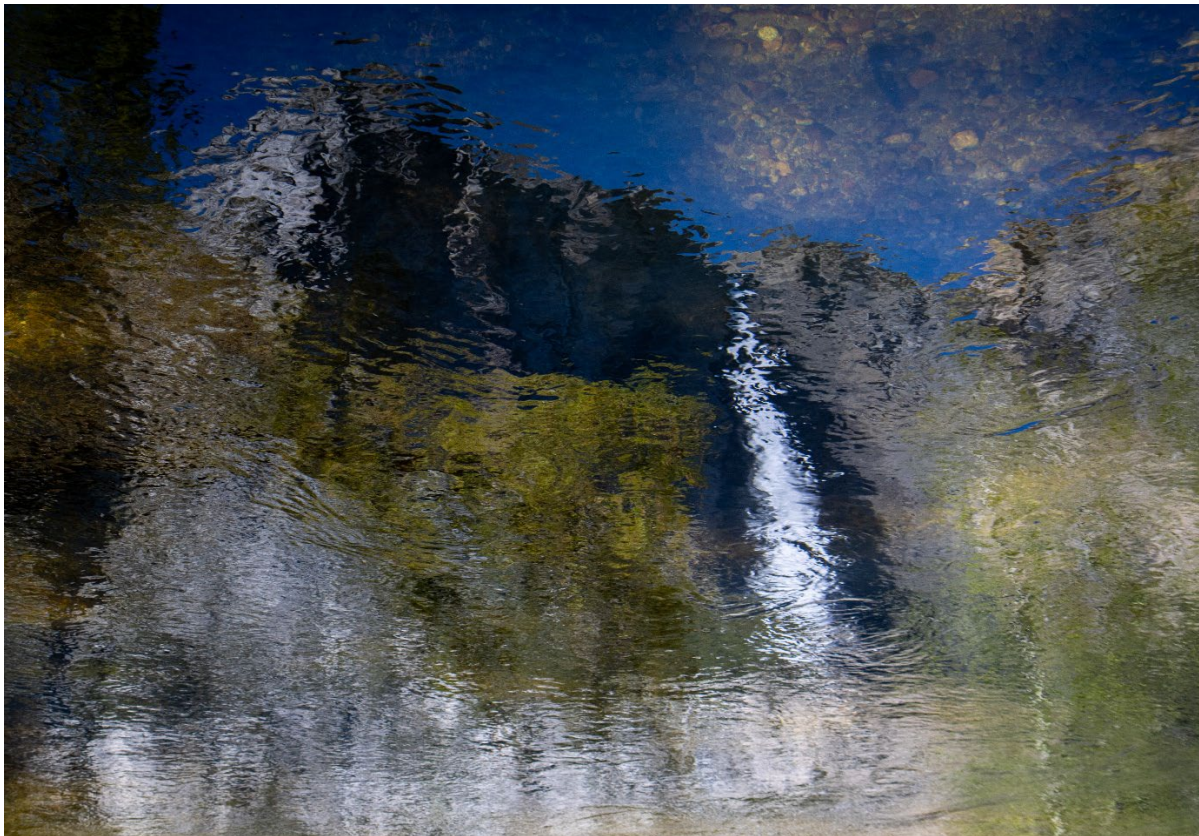
I had previously signed up for a 2020 workshop in Yosemite on printing of digital photographs by Charles Cramer, who was an outstanding craftsman. That got cancelled because of Covid, so they moved my reservation to 2021. To prepare for the workshop he sent out his workbook that explained his methods in Lightroom and Photoshop, which were a revelation to me.

Ultimately the 2021 workshop got cancelled also – so I got the meat of the training for free from the workbook - but I was able to keep my room reservation at Yosemite Lodge, normally hard to get. Since then Lightroom has changed so much that many of Charlie's techniques are no longer the best, but I still use some of them.

In April I went up to Yosemite by myself to do some photography. In the Spring the waterfalls are roaring and it's a great time to be there. While the hotel was technically open, most of the restaurants were not. Even the fancy Ahwahnee restaurant was like a cafeteria. The park simply was unable to hire enough employees to make it functional. This is why the workshop got cancelled. So it wasn't that much fun, but I got some nice shots.







Hiking up to Vernal Falls with 30 lb of photo gear on my back just about killed me. After that I resolved to do more photography with just my iphone. Which I pretty much have done ever since.



Back home in the garden, starting to fill out



For Thanksgiving Jen rented a place in Santa Ynez wine country: hiking, biking, eating and drinking wine



Thanksgiving with Jen family, Franci, Susie Delea

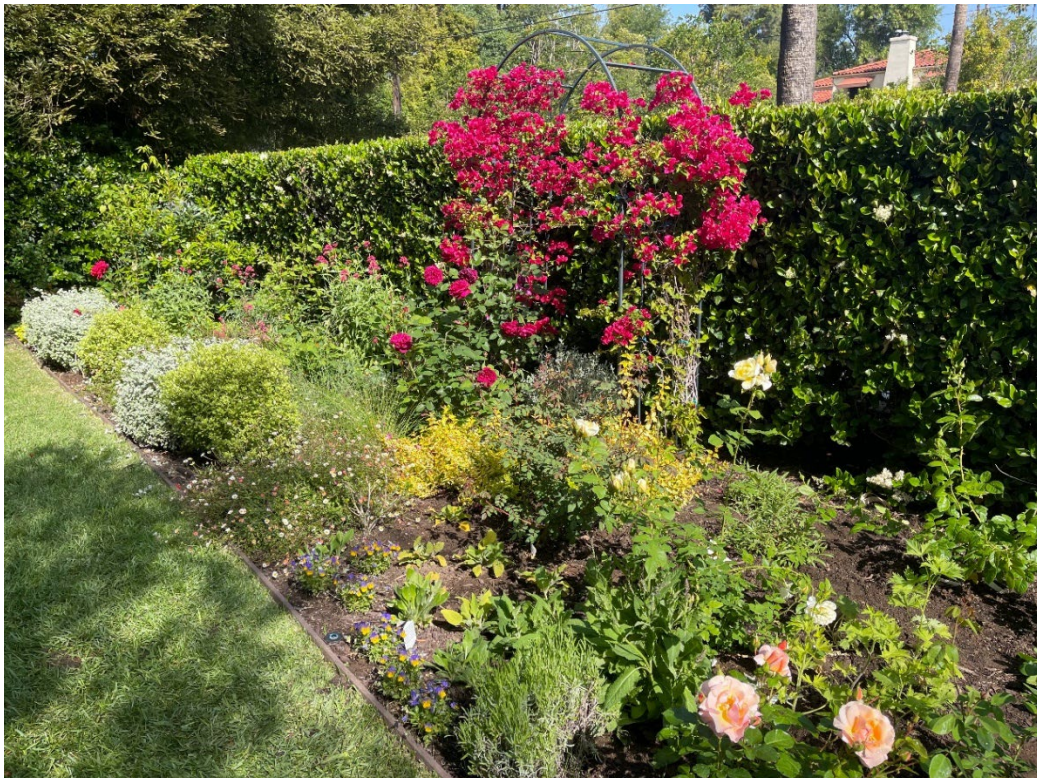


Christmas dinner setup in Altadena



2022

Gardens taking shape slowly. We added an arbor for bougainvillea.



In May, Kenna collapsed suddenly in the yard. We rushed to the hospital but too late. I was never the same after that. I used to walk her every day and we would talk. Good-bye Mr Dog.



Newburyport scenes, summer 2022





Ryder's a rock climber... and a handsome dude



Aaron with Ryder and girlfriend Amy



July – Maia, Sandy Koufax, and I at Dodger Stadium



Annie was old and sick and we had to put her to sleep shortly after this picture taken. We used a service that came to the house and was very loving.. Devastating for Junell.



My Princeton roommate Jeff Greene and I decided we would celebrate our anniversaries – his 50th and our 40th – together in Paris in September 2022. Well, the first week was Paris, then a couple weeks in St Paul de Vence, where Junell had had such a great time in 2006. In Paris we stayed at the Four Seasons George V, a bit ritzy for my taste.



View from our room



Café in the Marais



The Samaritaine department store was amazing



At the Rodin Museum



Special anniversary dinner at the hotel restaurant



The place in St Paul de Vence was truly amazing. A villa just outside the old town, with pool and a maid/cook for breakfast.

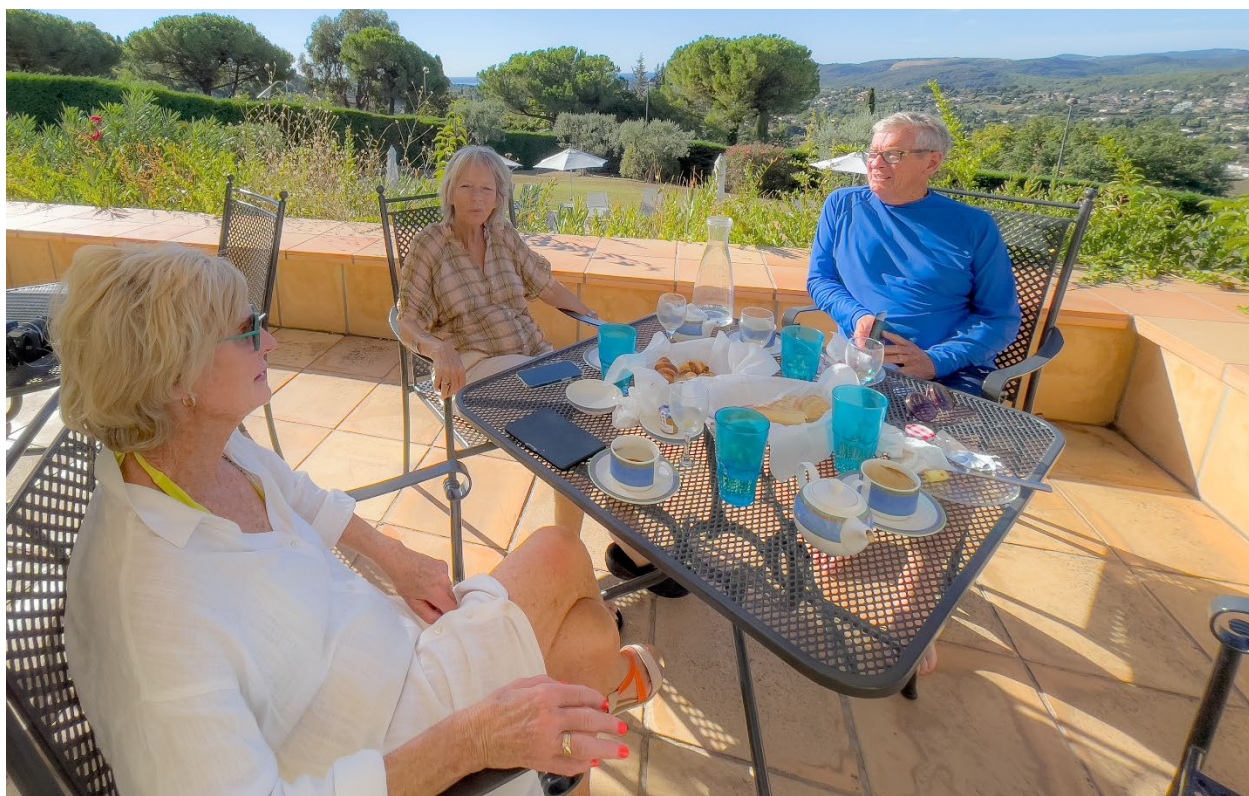




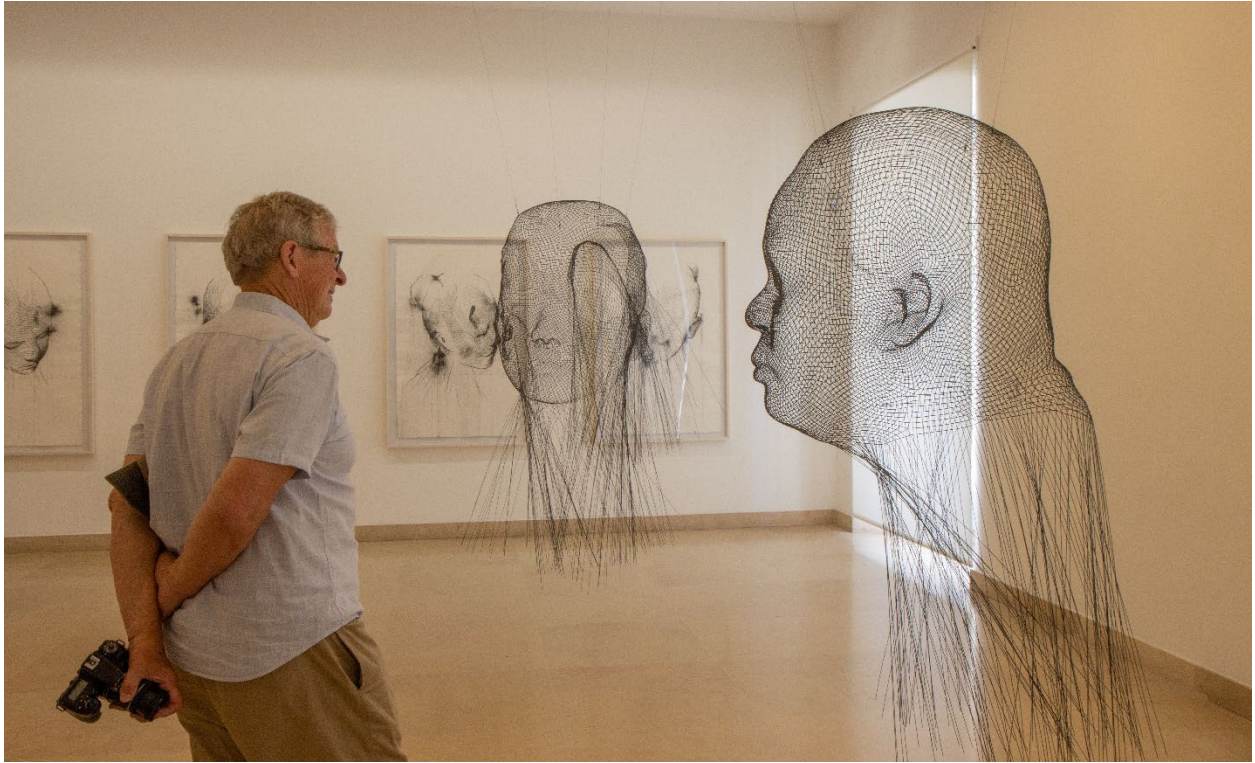








Picasso Museum, Antibes



Galerie Maeght, St Paul de Vence



Chagall Museum, Nice. My grandparents had the book of Chagall's lithographs of the Exodus exhibited here, but it was stolen from my grandmother by home care aide.



Renoir house, Cagnes sur Mer. Studio still looks the same as in the painting.



Outside Matisse Museum, Nice – We couldn't get in, line too long



Our favorite lunch restaurant in St Paul



Chateau at Eze. Fabulous hotel/restaurant, but valets scraped my fender. Always a problem with rental cars in Europe. Big \$\$\$, but insurance covered most.



My beautiful wife at Eze





We had talked about moving to France, but getting home cured us of that. Air traffic controllers on strike, flight cancelled. Had to spend extra night in Nice, another at JFK. The French are always on strike about something. Still, this was a fabulous trip.

Long before we made our plans for France I had signed up for a photo workshop in Yosemite on iPhone photography. It started just a couple days after we got back from France. Junell didn't realize that and was very upset that I was going. As I was heading out the door she asked me not to go. I usually gave in to her when she was insistent, but I had planned for this for a long time and I decided to go anyway. She was angry and it kind of ruined the trip, but I was still glad I did it.



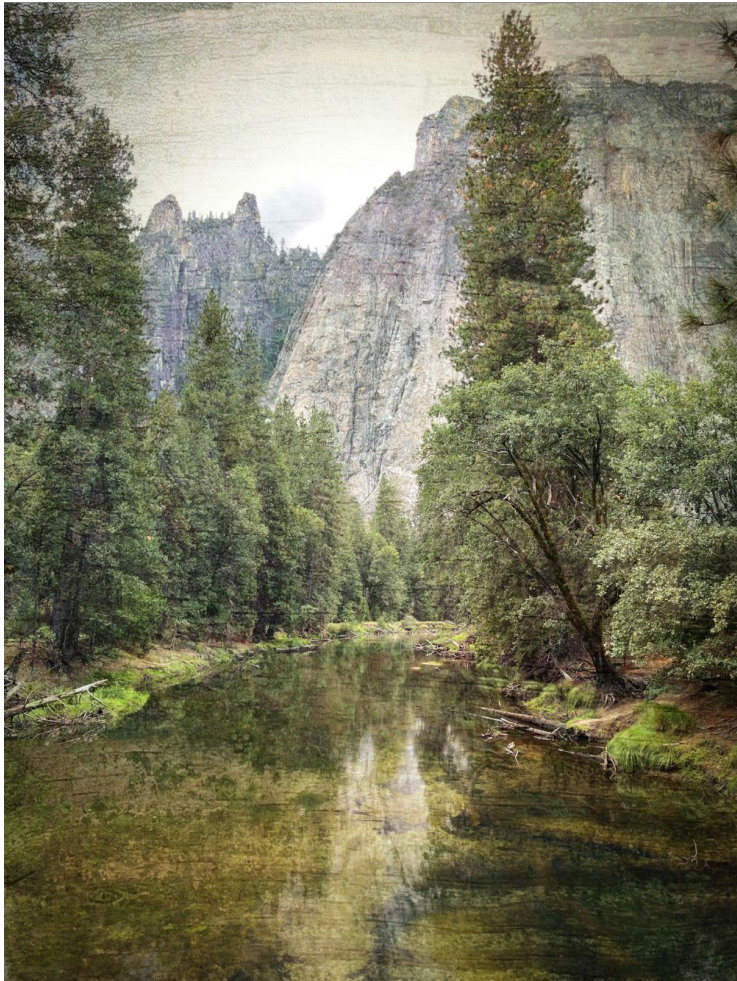
I thought it would be about how to take better pictures with the phone, but it was actually about photo editing apps on the phone. I didn't know about these and they could create some very interesting effects. The class was mostly inside in Ansel's old workshop. I think the same room where we saw Szarkowski's fabulous slide lecture back in 1978. Anyway, there were only 3 people in the class.



We spent a little time shooting, but the locations weren't great. I kind of liked this one of Half Dome reflected in the river in the rain.



Above is an example of an app that gives exaggerated edges. This is an example of Distressed FX, gives a “grunge” overlay to the shot.



This was one of the nicer locations.



Some of these apps are like the presets in Lightroom. Turning a straight shot like this



...into a more colorful one like this



Here are “processed” photos of St Paul de Vence



In December we visited Amy at an assisted living place in Berkeley. Very sad.



Christmas in Solana Beach with Jen's family



2023

This is the year things started to get bad. In January we visited Amy again. I think she was in a different assisted living place then.



Later that month Jeff and Tammis visited us, here we are at Disney Hall.



In February we finished remodeling four bathrooms. Here is Junell's very expensive bathtub.



A little hard to see, but snow on the mountains. Spring is coming!



Azaleas bloom in February-March. Euphorbias and Loropetalum in the shade garden in back.



In April Junell has rented an apartment in Paris for a whole month! It was not my first choice – we had just been there – but she insisted. I think she knew it was her last time. The apartment was fabulous – look at the plaster work – but it wasn't set up to stay for any length of time. We had to go out and completely supply the kitchen, bath towels, etc.

It was a building like this, very close to the George V hotel where we stayed last time.









When Franci came, we shopped at the farmers' market and made a fantastic dinner of scallops (with this weird orange roe thing we don't get here) and veal with morels in cream sauce. Oh, and white asparagus and some puff pastry thing.





Jen came for a bit, and also Aaron and Amy.



At the restaurant at Quai Branly overlooking the Eiffel Tower







And Paris is Paris, of course







We got to know very well the Bon Marche, where you can buy anything at all. At the fish counter is a café where you can get excellent lobster rolls (and wine). Costs less than in Newburyport.



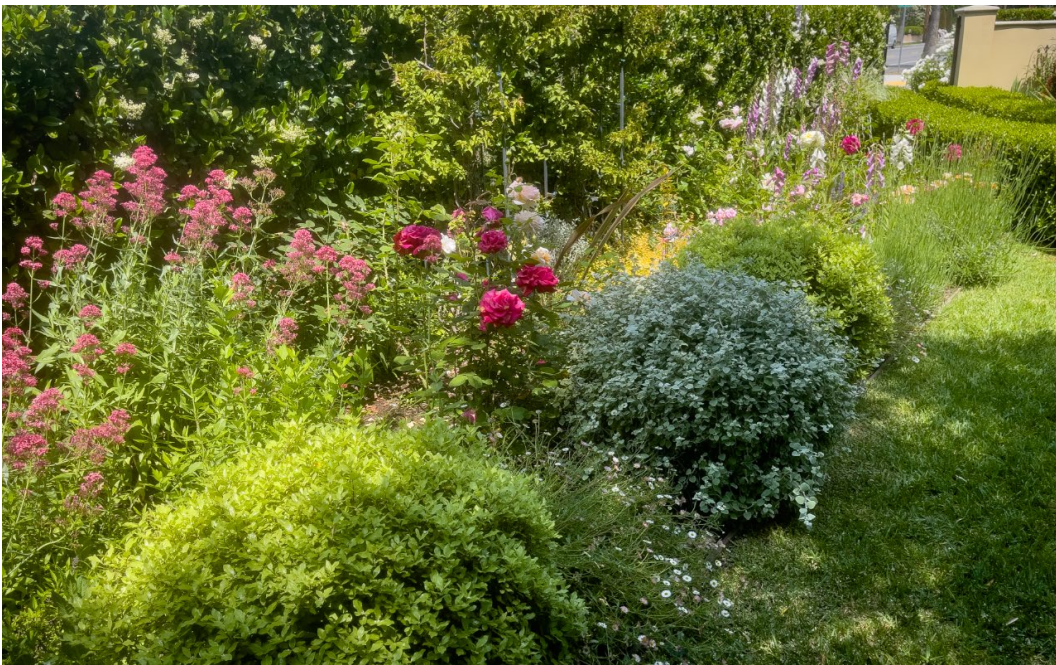
Back home, Maia becomes a track star at Torrey Pines High School. High jump and pole vault. Never having done the event before, she won the gold medal for high jump in her San Diego region!

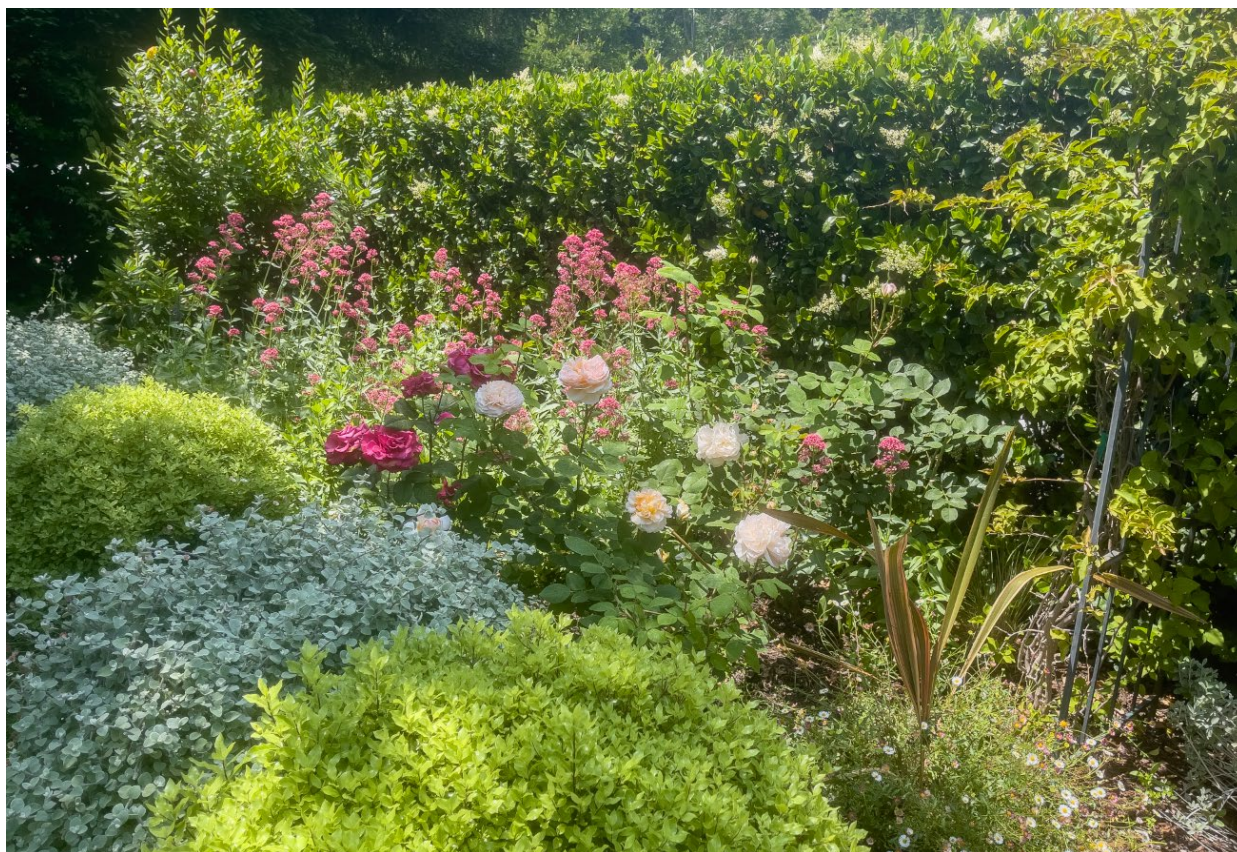


Maia has the same boyfriend Cameron from Claremont. Dressed for the prom. Meanwhile Kira turns 13.



Front garden filling out





Roses and bougainvillea in back



In June we visited Jeff and Tammis at their house in Gig Harbor, WA. Beautiful.



They are into art glass



We got to keep Brody and Kona for a week. Love those pups!



In July, Junell went to Newburyport for 7 weeks. I didn't want to go for that long, so I just went for the last 3 weeks. She decided she wanted to spend half the year in Newburyport and told Franci she would have to move out. I don't remember that, or maybe I just blocked it out of my mind. On my own, I spent more time at the Huntington.



In late August I joined Junell and Franci in Newburyport. She told Franci she changed her mind; she could stay.



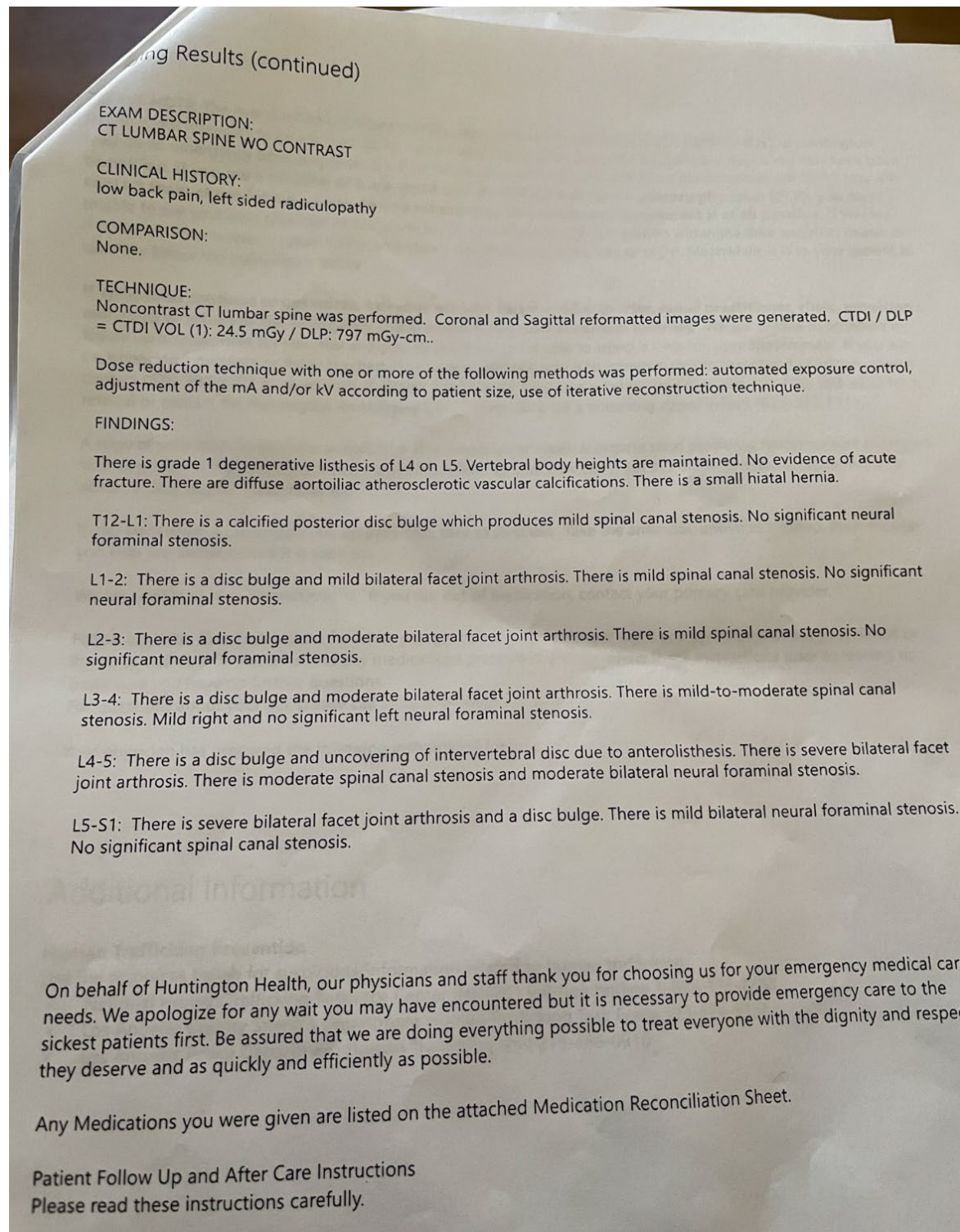
Maia's a senior now. Soon off to college. Time flies!



Front yard in October. Cymbidiums in bloom



November, Junell has severe back pain, in need of surgery, scheduled for December 5. Franci comes out for Thanksgiving, which we ordered from Julianne's. Not a good time.



Somehow we managed Christmas at home, with Jen, Aaron and families. Christmas Eve dinner at home, then Christmas dinner at the Langham.





2024

Soccer season, and Maia is playing both school and club.



Junell not feeling well at all. Back pain persists after the surgery. She has other procedures and lots of drugs. In March we went on a mini-vacation to a beach resort in Montecito.



The hotel was nice but our lives had become very limited.

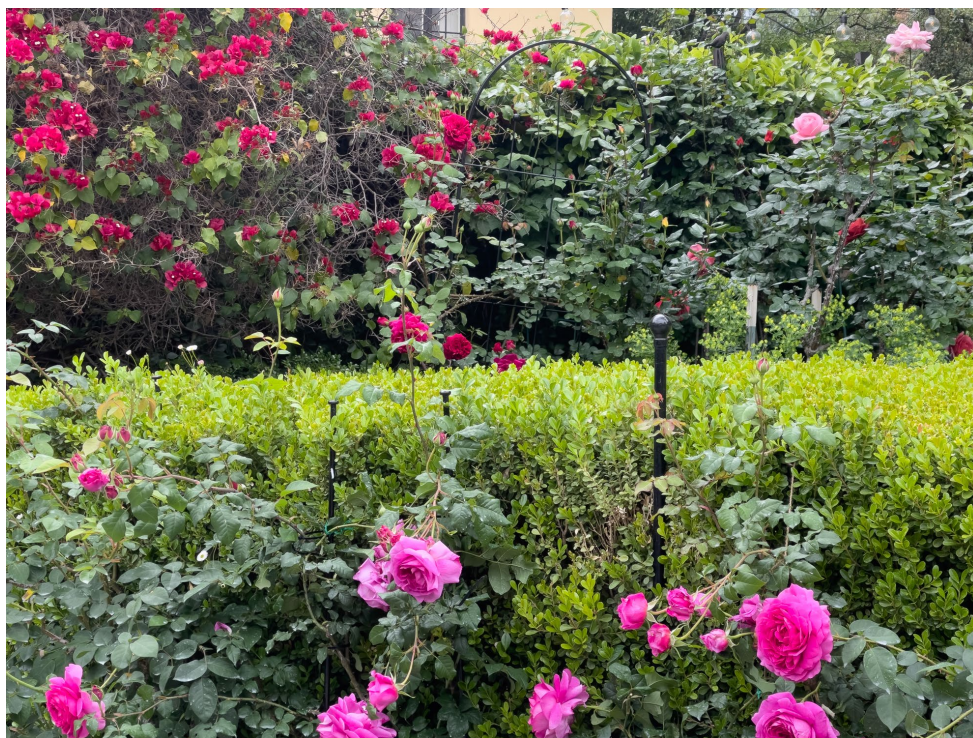




One of the few times I could catch her with a smile. They had a restaurant with fancy food.



Back home, roses beautiful in May. Training Altissimo on the trellis made a big difference.



Mother's Day in Solana Beach. You can see Junell is in pain.



Back home in June. Patio on a beautiful summer day.



Maia graduates high school and is off to University of Georgia. But the most important thing is her sorority.



Christmas at home. Junell goes all in on decorations. She knew this was her last one.











This one makes me cry. I miss her so much.



2025

It all just gets worse from here. On the morning of January 7 the Santa Ana winds were 100 mph. It knocked down trees in the yard, broke fences and the garden gate. And of course the power went out.

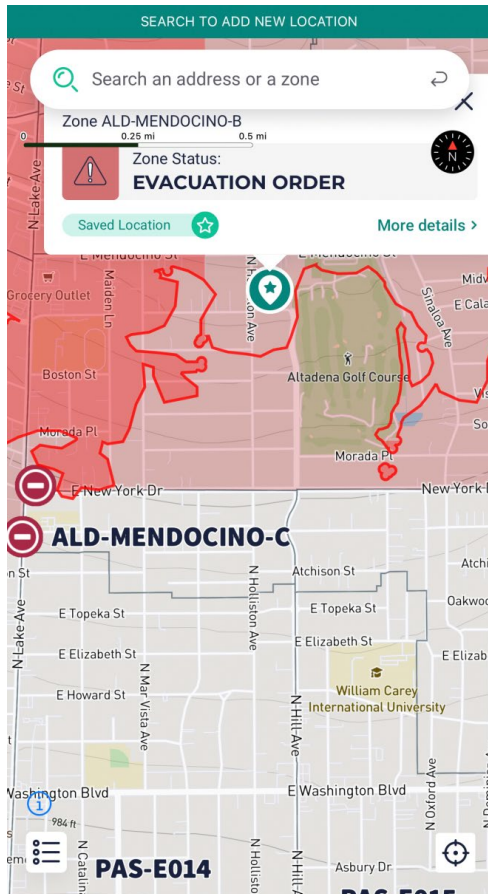




Junell hated being without power so we checked into the Langham Hotel for 2 nights. That afternoon the fire started. By the next morning the lobby of the Langham had a line out the door, little kids in pajamas, puppies on a leash. No one had any idea how bad it would be. In the end, half of Altadena burned, thousands of people lost their homes, a dozen or more fatalities. Our house did not burn – the fire came to a couple blocks away – but the wind blew toxic smoke through the cracks in the doors and windows. We would be out of the house for 10 weeks before it was cleaned up. Fortunately we could stay with Jen and Brent in Solana Beach, but they had moved into a much smaller rental while they built their new house. It was cramped, and Junell was not feeling very well. But it was a lifesaver, nevertheless.

We called ServPro to get going on the smoke remediation, and to get them started we advanced them 25% of the estimate. It was a good thing, because neighbors who waited for insurance before starting remediation are still not moved in, 9 months later!

We were in a mandatory evacuation zone, ALD-MENDOCINO. Not allowed in to see the house, retrieve clothes, etc. They had armed soldiers enforcing it! On the map, our house is on the south side of New York Drive, above the first O in MENDOCINO. On Jan 17 they split ALD-MENDOCINO into 3 subzones, and our subzone C was no longer mandatory evacuation. You can see from the map how close the fire perimeter came to the house, just a couple blocks away.



To compound the misery, Junell insisted on celebrating her 80th birthday at a resort in Rancho Mirage, near Palm Springs. And she insisted that Franci fly out to join us. It was even worse, because when we went back to the house to retrieve some clothes, Junell pulled a muscle closing a window, and now it was really hurting. We spent half a day in Palm Springs at the ER where they gave her a shot.

At the hotel in Rancho Mirage. I don't look very happy, and I wasn't. We celebrated her birthday with a fancy dinner in Palm Springs. You can see she is toughing it out.





Back at Jen's in Solana Beach.



We had to wait for ServPro to finish the cleanup before we could go home. Also, the water was polluted. We needed to wait for the State to declare it safe to drink. Both of those happened on March 14, and we finally could go back home.

It was not good. Most of our clothes were at ServPro's cleaners and we would not get them back until August, after Junell was no longer with us. They had broken some furniture and several items were missing. The battle with ServPro would go on until August.

In April we got to take Brody and Kona for a week. That provided some relief from the misery.



This might be the last picture of Junell smiling.



In May, another problem. Tree roots blocking the sewer line. Fixable but expensive.



They have to dig up the blocked section and fix that, then shoot a plastic liner in so the roots don't get in again. Very expensive, but a 25-year guarantee. Since we had a similar problem the year before, the guarantee was worth it.



Meanwhile, Junell's health continued on a downward spiral. In June she was beginning to get some negative reaction to her main drug Lyrica. She tried to taper off of it, but the withdrawal symptoms interfered. Finally, she began to have a major reaction to the Lyrica, so bad we had to go to the ER. The doctor gave a zillion tests, even the "stroke protocol", CT scans of the brain. We had to wait for MRI. The next morning a different ER doctor said there are no MRI techs at night (which they knew all along), and he said it didn't seem like a stroke (which I could have told him). So she was discharged with the instructions to get off Lyrica 100% immediately.

Well, easier said than done. She found a facility that said they could do that for Lyrica. Almost all hospitals only do that for regular drug addicts. So we went there, Laguna Beach area, and it was like all the others, a locked facility, cavity search, etc. I couldn't go in. We called it the prison. Checked her in for 5 days, but after 3 days she said come and get me. So I did. She knew she could stay off the Lyrica, but she was taking enormous doses of Tylenol and Advil.

To make a very long, very sad story short, the Tylenol stopped working and she was miserable. One last hope was her pain management doctor, but when we met she said the pain was so bad she could not go on like this. Nolt something you ever say to a doctor. Apparently this is not uncommon but the doctor had a fit and tried to get her committed to a psych ward at a community hospital, since the main USC hospital did not have in-house psych. She needed a better physical examination and medicine that worked, not psych. Anyway, we walked out of that place, against his orders. Next day we checked in to Huntington Hospital... and a few days later she was in hospice and died at home on June 23. The details of that last week are too painful to go into here. I still miss her so much.

In fact, I think this is where I need to stop *My So-Called Real Life*. Because it's where the life I had known for 45 years ended. I went to a therapist, who basically said I had sacrificed too much of my own needs to make it ok for my wife – maybe so, but not helpful – and my main task now was to figure out what I wanted and just go do it. Is that therapy?

Anyway that is what I have been doing since around August. Talking to Jennifer, Aaron, and Franci has helped me overcome the guilt and shame, although I still have so many regrets.

Today is October 1. I fired the therapist last week. I talk to Jen and Franci several times a week. I am doing new things, learning to cook and bake – made a Linzertorte today - , starting a wine club, off on a photography trip to Spain in February, bike tour in Bordeaux next year sometime. Hopefully it's the start of a new so-called real life.

Epilogue

Today is October 24. Our first wine club event is here this evening. Five Pinot Noirs, blind tasting, 10-12 people coming. It's a warm day, so we're having it on the patio outside under the party

lights. My heavy grieving is over. My focus now is doing new things, making new friends, trying to be a better person. A better father, a better brother, a better friend, a better neighbor. I've had neighbors over for dinner twice already. Too late to be a better husband, but I think about that most of all.

I had a wonderful life with Junell. Rereading this book lets me remember it all. Falling in love, fixing up a house – three houses, actually – raising kids, trips to the Caribbean and later to Europe. It was all good, and I could not have asked for more.

I miss Junell terribly still. I always will. But I actually think I'm a different person now. I'm trying to be, anyway. I saw Jeff and Tammis Greene last week in San Diego. Tam said she saw a new spark in me that wasn't there in 2023. I believe that. Franci helped with that, as did Jen, just talking and listening. I'm resolving to address all those regrets.

So this wine event tonight marks the start of a new chapter. I'm thinking of doing a new book, *Afterlife*, to see where this all leads.